CO-CREATIVE PUBLICS
AND PUBLICATION DESIGN
PRACTICE

Marius Foley
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Marius Foley
S3173399
FOR

Audrey Foley who connects me to the world
DECLARATION

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the exegesis is the result of the work which has been carried out since the official research program; and any editorial work, paid or unpaid carried out by a third party is acknowledged.

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NEW VIEWS #2 CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION: the opportunity to produce the design audio cloud

ACID: support of the pool interaction research and redesign project

ABC RADIO NATIONAL AND MULTIPLATFORM DIVISION: opening the doors to ABC Pool

EDITOR: Anna McArthur
Poole is...

A window framed by the ABC/brand/ RN culture to look at a new creative paradigm.
This study is situated in the practice of publication design. I characterise publication design as the act of bringing thoughts, opinions, information and stories into the public realm. A publication artefact in this study refers to the material and non-material form that the communication takes, such as print, web, audio, or discourse and event.

Through this study I make the case that the professional, mainstream practice of publication design will change in relation to the way a public for it changes. In this, design practice is likely to be transformed in a way that is similar to the transformation in other related practices such as media and commerce.

To explicate this change in the practice of publication design, I use the design conversation as a leitmotif to highlight the communicative interactions within design and between designer and audience. The term design conversation, represents the communication flow within the designing and decision-making process (and among the stakeholders in the design process). It also refers to the communication flow created by a design artefact (or event) and a public that forms around it.

Once design moves out of the process (making) phase into the public sphere—as a publication—the communication flow alters and
expands. Other forces, such as new interlocutors and the way that
design is read, come into play, disrupting the flow and shaping new
communication pathways. I look at what the change in communication
flow alerts us to in new practices.

The audience and how it behaves in the contemporary situation is
central to this argument. To gain an understanding of the audience as
a social arrangement of people who gather around a person, event or
object, I start by drawing on the notion of the public sphere, as described
by Jürgen Habermas. I then progress to discussing discrete publics
(known as a public), which form around a specific artefact or event, as
described by social theorist Michael Warner. By defining the audience as
a public I am able to identify the set of relations in which the designer
becomes a part, and observe the changing nature of the audience.

On completion of this study, I believe it can be argued that
publication design is moving from a broadcast medium to a social and
relational one, where the audience participates in the production of
meaning (or sense-making) by attaining a closer relationship to the
production of design. I use the term co-creative public to describe this
audience. The characteristics of this public are that it is self-organised,
freely associated and forms in response to attention (Warner 2002).

As the relationship between designer and audience evolves
reciprocally, it is possible to reinterpret the role of the professional
designer and to identify the new opportunities presented. I use the role
of Social Media Producer, discerned in the research into Pool, as a way
to articulate the designer’s role in a co-creative situation.
CASE STUDY #1

NEW VIEWS #2 EXHIBITION, MELBOURNE MUSEUM 2008: DESIGN AUDIO CLOUD
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INTRODUCTION

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Pool is not a website
RESEARCH STATEMENT

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

This research has explored the practices of publication design as a specific field within the broader domain of communication design. In this PhD submission, I make the case that a publication designer has the capacity to engage with, lead and adapt to contemporary shifts in the way design is being produced and consumed, and how our understanding of what a publication is, and what it is to publish are shifting in line with new communication technologies.

Publication design has within it the keys to extend the social, relational and public orientation of design practice. Through a reorientation away from the medium and towards the audience, this area of design practice has the capacity to take advantage of the contemporary mainstream trend in media and commerce towards socially produced knowledge and meaning. This trend can be articulated as a move away from broadcast communication (one to many) and towards a socially orientated mode of communication (many to many). In socially orientated communication the producers and consumers of design mutually construct meaning, thus forming a co-creative relationship.
Publication design has the intrinsically social purpose to act as a vehicle to facilitate the exchange of messages (thoughts, opinions, information and stories) between people through a third party artefact. This exchange is performed in the public sphere via broadcast and narrowcast publications. While there are some publications that circulate purely among closed or niche audiences, generally a publication is produced to appear in an open public place (a newsagency or on the Internet, for example) where a member of the public chooses from a range of publications what he or she will engage with.

Publication design is also a social practice. By this I mean that the design process involves people from multiple stakeholder positions (e.g. writers, editors, designers, illustrators, commissioners) who each contribute to the creation of a publication.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

I predicate the study on the notion that, as a social act that occurs in the public sphere, publication design is open to interrogation and participation by its public. During the research I became aware of the growth in design literacy and participation by people who were formerly classed as a relatively passive audience or consumer.

As I will show in the course of this text, the shift towards an inclusive design process is possible, due to the formation of a new type of relationship that is based in discursive co-creation. Yet this co-creative situation is distinguished from earlier forms of collective creativity (such as a collective studio), by the fact that by virtue of the affordances of the technology, the co-creative act can be scaled to include greater numbers of participants. This is made possible by the co-creative public comprising autonomous agents who are connected through discourse rather than by location.

As argued by Jessiac Lipnack and Jeffery Stamps (2000: 180) in conventional collective forms, effective co-creation was possible up to
approximately twenty-five people. However in its contemporary form, made possible by new literacies, technologies and practices, effective co-creation can occur at significantly larger levels, which rival the scope of conventional ‘mass’ media. With this, not only is the scale of co-production of a publication expanded, but the people who are able to co-create are also extended in number and expertise.

Rather than pose a threat to the publication designer, this new co-creative situation has the potential to benefit publication designers, by providing opportunities for novel interactions with their audience, which in turn may extend the range of design outcomes that emerge in the process. In this study, I consider the impact of this change for both the designer and the audience.

Two core research questions emerged as a result of this perceived transformation, namely:

What is the place of the designer in an altered relationship between a public (audience) and design? And, in turn,

How can a public become conversant with the language of design and participate in the conversation?

I have used these questions to guide me throughout the study. The questions have acted as a reference point that enabled me to return to the central objective of the research, namely to describe and communicate the relationship I observed emerging between designer and their public in a contemporary form of a co-creative situation.

**METHODOLOGY**

In order to examine the practices and contexts of contemporary publication design and its place in broader design discourse, I conducted practice-based research around three case studies. My intention was to interrogate the practice rather than the artefacts of publication design.

I distinguish between the practice of publication design, which
I define as an act of bringing thoughts, opinions, information and stories into the public realm, and the artefact that is a vehicle for this transfer of knowledge. A publication artefact represents how this act (of making public) manifests itself in media forms such as print, web, audio, discourse or event.

Put another way, this study concentrates on the performance of this act rather than the fabrication of the artefact. While I acknowledge that both the act and the artefact remain implicit in each other, for this study I separate them in order to focus on the communicative aspect of publication design. With this in mind I explore what a publication is in terms of performance, practice and the discourse between design practitioner and audience.

Underpinning this investigation and my desire to explore the future possibilities for a publication designer within broader communication design practice, is my own practice as publication designer. I have been actively engaged in the field of publication design as a practitioner and design educator and researcher for thirty years. As I have worked through the research I have drawn on this practice, critically reflected on aspects of it, and then used it as I have undertaken the various projects of the three case studies that are central to the investigation.

THREE CASE STUDIES

This research through practice has been framed as three case studies of design practice over the past three decades. Each case study offers a different perspective on the practice of publication design with particular insights into how the practice operates and how this can be applied to contemporary contexts.

The first two cases were instrumental in establishing the scope of the research questions. I will summarise them in Chapter 4 of this document with a focus on the insights they offered for establishing a framework for a new kind of publication design practice.
DESIGN AUDIO CLOUD

The first case study was a speculative project titled Design Audio Cloud. In this I use a design project to provoke and develop the research question. Design theorist Christopher Frayling (2004) terms this approach as research-through-design, where the design activity generates the research.

I designed this project to challenge my thinking on what a publication is. In so doing I was able to question my own assumptions, which were based on my practice over thirty years as a print-based publication designer. In this project I was primarily concerned with the notion of publication design as a conversation. I also used the project to explore alternative material forms of publication.

The form the Design Audio Cloud took was an audio installation comprised of recorded interviews with design practitioners. The work was installed as part of the New Views 2 Conference exhibition of design posters in London and Melbourne in July and November 2008.

BACKYARD PRESS/CHAMPION BOOKS COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCES

In the second case study I critically reflect on a seminal period in my own publication design practice. In this reflection on forming and working in the print and publishing collectives Backyard Press and Champion Books, I concentrate on making explicit the social experience of working in a publishing collective. I use this critique as a means to contrast the small-scale co-creative situation as it existed in Backyard Press and Champion Books (physically and temporally constrained) with large-scale co-creation (virtual and asynchronous), which is the case in the Pool (the third case study of the research).

I draw on this reflection to consider how large-scale co-creation can work in a pro-am (professional and amateur) context, by referring to an autonomous, self-managed role used in the Backyard Press collective model.
ABC POOL

The third case study and key research project of this PhD is the ABC Pool project. This project draws together the core themes that emerged in the first stages of the study, namely: the design conversation and co-creative publics. These themes also form the loci for the literature I have used to underpin this practice-based investigation.

In 2008 the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) commissioned research into ABC Pool (referred to in this document as Pool). Pool is a social networking site that is produced by the ABC in conjunction with a social media community comprising professional and non-professional media makers and educators.

As an entity the research commissioned by the ABC into the Pool is greater than the concerns or scope of my doctorate. I have however, used my role as a co-leader of research team within the project as the key site for my own doctoral investigation.

Pool represents a new form of co-creative space. In my analysis I identify and discuss those insights and findings that are pertinent to this doctoral study. In this research I was able to identify two ways in which a contemporary publication designer is able to engage with, and in, a co-creative situation. The first is the design of co-creative spaces as publications; the second is working co-creatively with the audience. I examine the contexts and implications of these options in Chapter Five.

RESEARCH APPROACH

LITERATURE ON DESIGN, RESEARCH AND REFLECTION

I began this research with an investigation into design and practice research methodologies, using the following texts: Peter Downton’s Design Research (2005); Donald Schön’s Reflective Practitioner (1991); and Henrik Gedenryd’s How Designers Work (1998).

As this study explored the transformation in the practice of
publication design, it was necessary to consider what a practice is, and how it relates to research. The authors listed above dismiss the notion that practice is merely the application of verifiable scientific knowledge using a collection of techniques and skills in a predictable and systematic way. That approach was characterised as technical rationality, or a design methods approach. Design writer, Donald Schön (1991), for example, makes the point that this concept of practice orientates it as a problem solving process, which assumes that the problems are well defined. Yet as he notes:

> Increasingly we have become aware of the importance to actual practice of phenomena—complexity, uncertainty, instability, uniqueness, and value-conflict—which do not fit the model of Technical Rationality (1991: 39)

In fact, for Schön, designing is a process initially oriented towards setting, or defining, the problem; combined with using the tacit knowledge of the practitioner; and achieved by knowing-in-action. For Schön design practice is an activity that constructs knowledge as it is being performed. The knowledge can be retrieved through reflection, both at the time of performance (in action) and later (on action). Further, the practice is open to unexpected conditions, wherein a surprise observation can alert the practitioner to new knowledge found in the situation (1991: 56). The practitioner, he notes: “shapes the situation, in accordance with his initial appreciation of it, the situation ‘talks back’, and he responds to the situation’s back-talk” (1991: 79). Practice and research are therefore closely linked in this scenario as the practitioner moves from constructing knowledge to making sense of it and then communicating the knowledge via the artefact or through discourse.

Peter Downton in his book, Design Research, expands on the idea that knowledge is an outcome of design practice. Downton articulates three modes of research associated with design practice: research for; about;
and through design (Downton 2005: 2). These terms are adopted from Christopher Frayling’s writing about research in art and design (Frayling 2004).

Of these, ‘research about design’ deals with what designers do when designing, incorporating a process of making and thinking (Downton 2005: 35). Practice, in this case, denotes the way a designer moves through a process of inquiry by building, identifying and accumulating knowledge, which may be stored and transmitted in design objects. Downton notes that designers cannot ‘intentionally and unequivocally embody whatever knowledge they wish to in any work and do so in a way that is clear to at least some others’ (2005: 106). However, a designer can articulate his or her intention and communicate this to the receiver, making it possible for the receiver to extract the knowledge from the artefact (and construct his or her own meaning from it).

In his Ph.D. in cognitive science, How Designers Work: Making Sense of Authentic Cognitive Activity, Henrik Gedenryd asserts that the interaction that occurs through the making process, produces cognition that while different to, is the equivalent of conventional forms of knowledge building. He defines practice therefore as interaction cognition. Like Downton, Gedenryd sees practice as a dynamic and generative activity, which goes beyond an instrumental routine.

Based on these perspectives, I have constructed the following working definition of practice for this study as: a set of relationships between people, and between people and things, which are bounded by a situation, through which ideas are made manifest into artefacts.

These artefacts can be the inquiring materials—moodboard, sketch, design rough, persona cards (Gedenryd 1998), as well as the final design artefact. Knowledge is generated through the process of making and can be retrieved through reflection and by ‘reading’ the artefacts that are created. This definition points to the method I have used in this study: to view and analyse practice both close up and from a critical distance.
A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As my inquiry progressed, I constructed a theoretical framework for this study, which I discuss in Chapter 2: Two Views on the Research. These views emphasise communication; the public and social nature of design; and an orientation towards audience participation in design.

As this research has been undertaken through practice which is by nature messy and often undefined, I acknowledge that while the research discoveries are presented sequentially here, they were in fact occurring iteratively at different times during the life of the study. Ideas would form and coalesce around certain activities, then recur in another later activity in a different form.

One task in this text has been to trace the threads of these ideas and to bring them together, with their relationship to the practice that prompted them still intact, whilst at the same time connecting the ideas into a coherent argument. One pleasure in the approach is seeing and experiencing ideas manifest in both physical and cogitative forms, which drove this study to completion.

PUBLICATION DESIGN AS MEDIA

The theoretical framework developed for this research is grounded in a deliberate re-positioning of publication design as a part of the full spectrum of the media, rather than situated as a stand-alone discipline in the field of design. This move is based on the following premises, with a particular emphasis on the orientation towards the audience:

1. Situated within the broader field of communication design, publication design performs the same function as mainstream media, or what we know as the media (the industrial production of newspapers, television and so on). That is, publication design carries and promotes values, arguments, beliefs, differences, thoughts and stories, and in turn influences public opinion;
2. The audience (publics) for the media, including publication design, is changing how it behaves in relationship to the media it consumes; in its expectations of participation and engagement with the media; its critical appreciation of, and literacy in the modes of media production; and how it understands and relates to media.

Situating publication design within the media allows me to reflect on publication design from a different perspective, one that includes its impact on the reader and society, which is crucial in this study.

I acknowledge that while drawing on another discipline can provide new insights, it can also be problematic. It can lead to a superficial reading and may miss what is implicit in that discipline, yet this practice of gleaning references is implicit to the practice of design. Ideas, entities, vistas or conversations, are used by the designer to reposition or critique an aspect of design. I have understood the possible limitations of this in the research, yet have also found it to be essential to the research exploration.

These writings from new fields have provided a lens that I did not find in the design discourse that I surveyed. In media studies I found writings on the concepts of the public sphere and publics that were to prove foundational to the investigation. These concepts opened up alternative ways to conceptualise the way communication moves throughout society.

The two views I construct as perspectives on the research are: Design Conversation and Co-creative Publics. They represent two stages in the study, from an internal focus on the design process and then a reorientation towards the audience. I briefly summarise each concept here, and expand on them in the following chapter.

**COMMUNICATION: THE DESIGN CONVERSATION**

Publication Design is a mode or medium of communication that shares similar dynamics to those that occur in a conversation. A conversational prompt is made when a work is published and to a
certain extent, a dialogue is established with its audience.

However, in typical design practice, the ‘feedback loop’ returning from the audience to the designer is not well developed and the communication flow is impeded. There are few ways for the feedback loop to occur. If it does happen it is dependant on the client and their openness to criticism; the type of design artefact and its ability to capture feedback (such as a social media site); or the market context of the design outcome.

In this research I identify the site of this impediment as being one of the central design problems, or research questions, in the study. To address these problems I then posed the question: what exists in design practice that could be used to remove the impediment and free up the communication flow in both directions?

My instinct at the beginning of the study was to propose that the form of the conversation used within the design process is purposeful and well designed, and could contain the answer to the question that I posed. The term ‘design conversation’ used in this study encapsulates a set of communicative instances (conversations) that are found within the design-making process. That is, conversations between the designer and client, design project workers, other stakeholders, suppliers and to some extent the audience (or a segment of the audience such as a focus group used for testing a design outcome).

In this formative stage of the research I identified three key characteristics of conversation that give an insight into what occurs in the design conversation. They are dissonance: which acknowledges the existing ability of design to manage various voices; dialogic: where the conversation within one instance of a design project connects to conversations in other past and concurrent design projects; and listening: which completes the conversational loop by including interlocutors.

From these characteristics I conclude that the design conversation is a mechanism that can be utilised to effectively bring in voices that are
external to the design process, namely the audience. I use the writings of Andy Dong and Ranulph Glanville to explore the act of communication and specifically what role it performs in publication design.

THE PUBLIC NATURE OF DESIGN: THE PUBLIC SPHERE, PUBLICS AND CO-CREATIVE PUBLICS

During the second stage of the research I turned my attention to the audience. As an interlocutor in the design conversation, the audience becomes the loci of this investigation.

At this point, I developed a series of questions to help me identify and describe the audience for design, and to consider the influence this group has or could have on the performance of publication design. How can we understand the audience for design? What are their expectations about their relationship to design? What is their literacy of design and how does this impact the practice? How involved does this audience want to be or can they be in the process? And how can we describe the social formation of people into an audience for an instance of design, such as an artefact or event?

To answer these questions I began by looking at the context that an audience exists within. I referred to social theorist Jürgen Habermas’ concept of the Public Sphere (1974), and follow up by using an exploration of the nature of discrete publics that form around design, referred to here as a public.

In this research I use the features of the public sphere as a way to describe the situation that design encounters once it enters the world. The concept of the public sphere is also useful to use in imagining the virtual public domain of the internet and social media, which I draw on specifically in the section on Pool.

From the literature on the broad public sphere, I progress to Michael Warner’s description of a public, which defines a specific public in contrast to the amorphous public that exists in the public sphere. A
public is a specific instance of a social arrangement of people who share an interest in something.

In this study I look at what happens when a public forms around a publication design artefact. This public can remain as ‘strangers’ to each other, while at the same time engaging in a ‘reflexive discourse’. Warner enumerates seven characteristics of a public as:

- self-organized; a relation among strangers; where the address of public speech is both personal and impersonal; it is constituted through mere attention; is the social space created by the reflexive circulation of discourse; acts historically according to the temporality of their circulation; and is poetic world-making (2002: 62).

Warner emphasises that: ‘a public is the social space created by the reflexive circulation of discourse’ (2002: 62). A public can exist within this discourse and be identified by its relationship to the polemic or conversation.

I use the notion of a public, created and existing within discourse, to delineate the type of co-creative audience for design that I put forward in this text. In this I am not arguing that a member of a public necessarily becomes a direct participant in the physical making of a design artefact. Rather, that their participation can be to engage in the design conversation (or discourse) around design. In turn this discursive input effects change in the outcome.

This is a key finding of the research and my proposed reconceptualisation of the practice of publication design and the acts of co-creation. I will expand on the ways this could happen in practice in the Conclusion.

**Audience and designer as co-creators**

In its modern usage, co-creation is a term used in the Open Source movement in the early part of this century. The term describes a
relationship that is both autonomous and collaborative. David Bollier discusses the ethos of the Open Source movement in his book Viral Spiral (2008). For him in an open source model, a person or group initiates a project, generates programming code, and then shares this source code with others who are external to the core group. Contributors are encouraged to add, edit or delete from the code to create new programs or enhanced functions. The initiators of a project offer the source material free of obligation, other than on the condition that any development is handed back to the community on terms set out in the agreement; Co-creators self-elect to enter this agreement and work autonomously with the source material. The agreement does not oblige the participant to contribute or to continue their engagement. He or she does so out of their own volition.

It is these characteristics—autonomy, volition, self-organisation and agreement—that distinguish co-creation from the type of collaboration that occurs as a result of being part of a pre-established community or belief system. This difference of how we understand, enable and experience creating with others, is the bridge between the three case studies of the research and fundamental to this new practice of publication design.

CONTRIBUTION TO DESIGN RESEARCH
The contribution that I set out to make in this study was to research the discursive relationship between a designer and the audience of the publication design they create. As such the study draws attention to the situation where a design artefact enters the world and encounters a public (the audience).

I argue that it is at this site that a significant change in the relationship between designer and audience is occurring. This is a change that will have an impact on the way a designer performs their role in the future.
I frame the change as a move to a co-creative situation. This involves both designer and audience participating in an open and expanded design conversation, which draws on a facility to incorporate multiple voices (dissonance) and refer to other situations (dialogic). In Chapter 2, I construct a typology of this co-creativity using theories around communication, the public sphere, publics and participatory culture.

In the study I identified a gap in design literature covering this field of practice. Many design writers refer to the social and discursive nature within the design process (Lloyd 2000; Dong 2009), and the impact that design has on the world (Norman 2002). Others, such as Schön, Downton and Gedenryd articulate how knowledge is formed through the combination of making and reflection. Whilst another view on the materiality of design is provided by Carter (2004), de Freitas (2008) and de Bretteville (1999). The publication design as artefact is addressed by writers such as Heller (2003).

Yet in my survey I found little focus on the relationship between the designer and audience in the practice of making. To locate this type of literature I turned to media studies and social cultural theory to describe and explain this relationship.

By accessing literature from other disciplines I have made a case for re-positioning publication design practice as one that is a discursive act of co-creation, which is orientated towards the audience. This is in contrast to the conventional orientation towards the artefact.

In this doctoral research I offer a different perspective on publication design as a constituent of the broad media array. By doing so I am able to bring a range of theoretical positions, such as those in media and cultural studies, to the study of the relationship between publication design, the designer and the audience.
STRUCTURE OF THE DURABLE VISUAL RECORD

This document is one part of a three part durable record of the PhD study: Co-creative Publics: Publication Design. The other elements in the submission are the documented exhibition and presentation.

This exegesis comprises a theoretical framing chapter, Two views on the research; three case studies of the core projects within the study; and the Conclusion. In Two views on the research I develop the argument with reference to the literature that supported my thinking throughout the study.

In the first case study I review the initial project Design Audio Cloud. The second is a critical reflection on my experience of working in print and publishing collectives, Backyard Press and Champion Books. The third case study is a report an analysis of the major research project, ABC Pool research and redesign project.

I conclude with a synthesis of the themes that emerged in the study and resolve the key research questions. In addition I describe two ways in which a publication design practitioner could engage with a co-creative public. Finally I deduce that the context that I describe in the study produces a discourse based, co-creative, publication design practice.
TWO VIEWS ON THE RESEARCH

DESIGN CONVERSATION

CO-CREATIVE PUBLICS
As the research projects evolved and I critically reflected on the issues and challenges that were emerging I realised that there were two distinct themes of discovery forming: the Design Conversation and Co-creative Publics. Each view stresses the communicative nature of publication design. For each of these views, I draw on literature from design, media and cultural studies in order to expand the conceptual framework of the research and practice.

I used these viewpoints through which to critique the case study material. The views also form a theoretical framework to analyse the overarching doctoral research, which considers the changing agency of the designer in the relationship between designer and audience when performed within a co-creative situation.

The view in the Design Conversation is internally oriented, focusing on the design process. It explores existing design practices, such as generating an idea, prototyping and developing the concept and negotiating design ideas within the making phase of design.

The view in the Co-creative Publics, orients outwardly towards the audience, and in particular a co-creative audience that is both design literate and participatory.
THE DESIGN CONVERSATION

At the outset of the study I felt that there was something inherent in existing design practice that could be a key to how designers and the audience could adapt to a different type of relationship in the practices and processes of design. In order to capture the discursive nature of communication design, I compress design practice into what I call a design conversation.

This conversation begins when a design project is initiated. It occurs in the design-making stage, up to the point where the design artefact materialises and is brought to the attention of a public.

The term, design conversation, conflates all the conversations held in the course of a conventional design commission. This includes the conversations that take place between the client and the designer; the designers and others within the design team; the designers and outside service providers (such as illustrators, photographers, editors and writers) and whatever occurs with the audience before or after the artefact is produced.

The design conversation also incorporates the various means and media that designers use to conduct the conversation. These include meetings, presentations, phone calls, emails and web communication, process documentation (such as a brief, return brief, and purchase order), design roughs, moodboards, and so on.

As Donald Schön notes, designers ‘engage in a conversation with the situation they are shaping’ (1991: 79). The design situation forms around the activity, and is bounded by the conditions of that activity, namely the people involved; the context it sits within; and what is to be communicated (in the case of publication design).
Schön’s observation highlights conversation as a creative and influential factor that determines how the design situation is formed. The conversation is not simply an adjunct to, or explanation of, the situation. Schön (1991: 79) goes further to include the notion of backtalk, which implies a response from the situation and materials that the designer works with. As design theorist Cameron Tonkinwise, speaking about backtalk, notes:

though [design] tends to happen in fits and starts, when it does happen designing moves quickly and with a surety because the design is itself a partner in the process, dialoguing with the designer, helping to articulate what the design should be (Tonkinwise 2007: lecture).

Thus the designer, the designing (the process of making), and the design situation, are in an authentic and reciprocal relationship, which embodies a level of confidence (surety) based on how the dialogue is conducted.

Various political and power agendas exist within a design situation. However, it was not in the scope of this study to address those agendas in depth. The design conversation represents the language used in the design situation and how it influences the design activity. Theorist, Andy Dong (2006) asks the question:

If language metonymically refers to design by intertwining with designers in an ontological circuit that harnesses and represents that which can be conversed and said, does language itself participate in the enactment of design? (2006: 5).

For if language and design stand for each other, metonymically, in the design situation, then design can be seen as a language, and the design artefact can be seen as one of the media through which the
conversation is held. As well, I suggest, the artefact is a publication. This is a manifestation of what Dong calls ‘the harnessing and representation’ (2006: 5) of the conversation between a designer and his or her situation. Dong alludes to this, as the performative nature of design, which:

- enacts design through: (1) aggregation — to blend ideas and concepts; (2) accumulation — to scaffold ideas and concepts; and (3) appraisal — to evaluate and assess ideas and concepts. Through these performative aspects, the language of design enacts design and actualizes the designed work (Dong 2006: 6).

This is a useful description of the procedural infrastructure that supports the design conversation. The statement makes sense of the progress from ideas through to prototyping and finally to evaluation of the ‘actualized work’ or design artefact. In a sense, the conversation is the grammar of the process.

However, while this description outlines the structure, it does not tell what ‘goes on’ in the design conversation. For this, I look to two concepts that come from outside the design discipline, namely dissonance and dialogic. These terms, I believe, give some sense of the character of the design conversation, which has a type of unruly communication flow. The concepts suggest energies that a) drive the conversation (dissonance) and b) link it to other conversations and situations (dialogic).

The sketch of the design conversation (opposite) suggests a tangle of various stakeholders, material and informational inputs and a number of outcomes that are generated in the design conversation. The drawing contains open and closed circles to indicate conversations, which reach a conclusion, and those that are still open (Glanville 1996). It attempts to show the interrelatedness of the sub-conversations to each other, and to the overarching design conversation.
The design conversation is a multi-vocal, dissonant space, comprising multiple participants, many inputs and several outputs, including, but not limited to, the artefact. Dissonance (in music) is defined as: the quality of sounds, which seems unstable and has an aural need to resolve to a stable consonance. Musicologist, Roger Kamien describes it thus:

An unstable tone combination is a dissonance; its tension demands an onward motion to a stable chord. Thus dissonant chords are ‘active’ (Kamien 2008: 41)

The urge to find consonance in a music composition may or may not be satisfied, but importantly it establishes a drive towards a stable outcome. The drive to find consonance in a composition is analogous to what happens in a design commission where multiple stakeholders and participants input into the process at various points.
Often the sub-conversations between a designer and the stakeholders that occur within a design context are contradictory or conflicting. As a practical example: a client might specify in the design brief that she wants a brochure, whereas the designer might conclude that a website is a better solution to reach the client’s audience (or vice versa). Thus these differing expectations establish a point of negotiation between the two conflicting intentions.

As one purpose of the design conversation is to move the project forward from idea or desire to the formation of an artefact that reflects, as near as possible, a stable agreement between various stakeholders. An agreement might be made on the communication strategy, the look and feel of the artefact, media selection, material form, cost and so on. Yet it is also possible that the conversation is left unresolved and misunderstandings remain.

SURPRISE

Deliberating on the design conversation led me to the theories of Cybernetics, which include studies of conversations and how they work. Cybernetic theorist Ranulph Glanville (1996), for example, contends that a conversation aims to cycle through a number of misunderstandings to progressively limit misinterpretation of each interlocutor’s point of view. It is through this process that a genuine understanding between the conversers is reached. In Glanville’s view the agreement is to accept some level of misunderstanding, which itself produces understanding.

Misunderstanding, or possibly more accurately, the agreement to allow misunderstanding, would seem to contradict common assumptions about communication. However, as Glanville notes, reaching this agreement (an agreement to not reach perfect agreement) can build a situation where surprise and novel outcomes are valued. In his view, misunderstanding is not only inevitable, but:
...a benefit: for it permits the conversation to move on, ‘of its own accord’, due to the interaction of the two participants. Thus it gives the representer a surprise—something new (Glanville 1996: 11).

Glanville extends his exploration of the serendipitous nature of conversations in terms of novelty (the surprise), which he claims is a ‘familiar feature of conversation...we find we are talking about new topics, and even exploring and expressing completely new meanings’ (1996: 10).

There is an echo here, as well, of the notion of backtalk, as described by Tonkinwise (2007), where design is a partner or interlocutor in the dialogue. Surprise and novelty can come into the design conversation as misunderstandings produce new topics and work to create new meanings. Thus the slippage between the intention of one interlocutor, and the interpretation by another, can produce innovation.

INTENTION AND MEANING

There is debate in the literature over where meaning resides in design. Design writers Nathan Crilly et. al. (2008: 434), in the article Design as communication: exploring the validity and utility of relating intention to interpretation, identify two sides of the debate. One view claims the designer’s intention produces meaning, which is then transmitted to the audience via the design artefact. The other states that the recipient, through inference and interpretation, creates meaning.

Glanville takes the view that meaning is not contained within utterances, pictures, behaviour or any other such devices of communication...but it is constructed by each individual involved in an act of communication (Glanville 1996: 442).

That is, both the representer and the representee (sender and receiver) come together to reach agreement, as much as it is possible,
on the intended meaning. Communication, then, is not the result, but the process of reaching agreement.

Crilly goes further to say that both the designer and recipient make some inference on the intention of the designer as to how the artefact is required to operate. The designer will, for example, infer some characteristics of the recipient (for example their age or social situation), and the recipient may infer the general purpose of the artefact. Crilly notes:

By adopting what the philosopher, Daniel Dennet terms ‘the design stance’, people can conceptualise the operations of products and interact with them more efficiently...therefore the inference of design intent aids comprehension of the system (2008: 441).

In addition, Crilly discusses the view that, due to the distance between the designer and the recipient, the artefact, when it enters the world becomes part of the:

process of mediated communication, where the intentions of the designer for how the product should be interpreted inform the production of the mediating artefact that is presented to the consumer (2008: 429).

In this study I take the position that each of the participants—the designer and the recipient—construct meaning, in most cases, independently of each other. Yet it is through the interplay between each, that meaning is in this case socially constructed. It is also likely that the intention of the designer will influence the interpretation by the recipient, who to some degree infers that intention. In essence, meaning is a process of exchange between the designer and the recipient. The medium and how the text (artefact) is constructed will influence the ‘reading’ (interpretation) of the intention. Further, that context, as Bakhtin claims, has primacy over text (Bakhtin 1981: 428
Glossary). Therefore in order to study communication, it is necessary to understand the way context influences meaning:

At any given time, in any given place, there will be a set of conditions—social, historical, metrological, physiological—that insures that a word uttered in that place and at that time will have a meaning different than it would under any other conditions (Bakhtin 1981: 428)

Returning to the discussion of the design conversation, it is then possible to view the design conversation as a set of communicative relationships, situated within a context.

In addition to the internal impulses that drive it, the design conversation is also influenced by sources that are external to the immediate making-process. These include design research, design discourse, contemporary stylistics and the dialogic conditions of design. These inputs coalesce in the formation of the design artefact.

However, the artefact is not the only outcome of the design conversation. Other outcomes may include research knowledge (Gedenryd 1998; Downton 2005), innovations that occur during the design process (Schrage 2000) and stylistic breakthroughs that emerge from innovation and experimentation (Buchanan 1995).

The momentum to find a stable outcome drives the conversations towards an end point. The design artefact is stable in the sense that it forms an object, which enters the world of objects. So, while an absolute agreement might not be reached, a point in time is marked and the design solution becomes fixed as an artefact.

This also marks the end of the formative design conversation and the place at which the artefact becomes a part of a larger conversation. Once the artefact enters the world it is propelled into a new conversation with diverse audiences and is situated in the broad and ongoing design discourse. This study is primarily concerned with this later stage of the design conversation.
DIALOGIC

As the artefact is forming, and later when it enters the world, the artefact becomes part of a dialogic conversation that links it to other instances of design. It is the dialogic linkage between disparate conversations and artefacts that I look at now.

Dialogic is a concept put forward by Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) to explain how one creative work can be in conversation with another. Bakhtin’s field is literary criticism, specifically about the novel as a unique literary form. He uses dialogic in the entomological, Greek sense of ‘through words’ (dia – through, logos – words) rather than the common usage as ‘between two’. I transpose words with text in this study to include a design artefact as a text, which shares a relationship with other design artefacts.

The dialogic here represents how one text will influence the reading of another and reciprocally, will be influenced by the dialogue that exists between them. In other words, a design artefact or conversation exists in a world of other artefacts and conversations, which affect each other.

For example, how we now see an artefact that was produced in the 20th century is affected by the visual culture we live in. Equally, the way we read a contemporary artefact can be changed when we see something from the past that resonates with it. There is an interplay going on between these two situations, which can be identified and used to explore the dialogue that exists between them.

NETWORKS OF ARTEFACTS AND CONVERSATIONS

The term dialogic also brings into play the idea of interconnectedness between artefacts and conversations. Network theory offers a constructive viewpoint to understand these connections and how they fit into the world of the artefact. In Linked: The New Science of Networks, author Albert-Laszlo Barabasi (2003), outlines how networks form and operate:
when you add enough links such that each node has an average of one link, a miracle happens: A unique giant cluster emerges. That is, most nodes will be part of a single cluster, such that, starting from any node, we can get to any other by navigating along the links between the nodes (2003: 18).

In this way the concept of the dialogic can be seen as a linking device, which creates clusters of design ideas and influences. While each design conversation is discrete and singular, it is linked to others. This creates the broader design discourse.

Barabasi also notes that: ‘networks are governed by two laws: growth and preferential attachment’ (2003: 86). That is, that networks have a tendency to grow in scale, which is achieved by linking to other nodes; and that they prefer to link to nodes that have the most existing links.

This, I believe, helps to explain the way ideas, styles and approaches move across periods in design. A design idea, for example, will seek to grow by linking to other instances of the same or similar idea. It can do this over time and geographical space.

Take, for example, the idea of participation and how it iterates throughout the history of publication design. In Paris, May 1968, the Atelier Populare (Popular Workshop) was formed to support the student protests against what was perceived as an authoritarian, French Government. The workshop printed street posters with titles such as: A Youth Disturbed Too Often By The Future; Yes To Occupied Factories!; Reforms – Chloroform; and Free Press (Rohan 1988). Students and others designed the posters at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, where the Atelier was located. The posters represent the publication of ideas from a spontaneous and mass public action.

This instance links dialogically to the revolutionary movement in 1917 Soviet Russia when activists published posters and pamphlets provoking rebellion. While not the same aesthetic, the posters share an immediacy and collective production method.
Arguably this instance also links forward, for example, to the IndyPress movement around globalization in the 1990s comprising online ‘citizen journalism’. In the Indymedia case the medium is different from the print media of Paris 68 or Soviet Russia. Nonetheless, in each case these activists are motivated to produce media collectively by a desire to communicate their cause.

These publications are dialogically linked through the ideas they represent as well as by the participatory nature of this type of design. Each instance influences the way we read the other. Thus, the printed works of the soviet constructivists can be perceived differently in the context of the electronic outcomes of Indymedia.

I use the characteristics of dissonance and dialogic to indicate points within the design process that demonstrate how the process can be opened to other participants. As these characteristics already exist in design it is possible to imagine them being used to include larger co-creative audiences.

**LISTENING**

Listening is an everyday occurrence that is normalized to the point it is often difficult to extricate it as a discrete practice. Andrew Wolvin (2010), in his book Listening and Human Communication in the 21st Century notes: ‘Unfortunately listening has come to be viewed, at least in American society as a passive, simple act that we just do’ (2010: 1). Nonetheless several disciplines study the act and practice of listening, such as cultural studies, psychology, and interaction-and participatory-design. Listening is also emerging as an interest in social media discourse as new networking practices develop.

I speculate that as the audience becomes co-creative, it is imperative that the listening practices of designers are attuned towards the audience. This sets up a new context for listening to be explored and examined and potentially enhanced.
LISTENING IN PUBLICATION DESIGN

Publication designers spend a considerable amount of time ‘in conversation’ with a range of stakeholders. The act of listening, through which we aim to develop common understanding and meaning, is implicit in the literature on communication in design. Listening is both the reception of the message from the sender (Crilly 2008), as well as a means to process the message (Gedenryd 1998). By listening, the recipient receives the message, interprets and constructs meaning from it.

It can be argued that designers have developed a ‘discipline-specific’ way of listening, using a range of methods to pose questions and listen to and process the responses. These methods include: sketches, design roughs, models, prototypes, personas cards and scenarios, the studio display wall, unfinished models as well as points in the process to approve proofs of the work. This listening process was used comprehensibly in the Pool research, outlined in Chapter 5. ABC Pool research and redesign project.

The methods, mentioned above, are used to put forward ideas in a non-committed way; to check that the general direction is agreed to; and to provide an opportunity for input into the design process from those outside of it. In effect, these artefacts become prompts, which ask specific questions of others in the process and in turn require the designer to process the feedback.

The question could be, for example: does this prototype contain the requisite level of sophistication to engage the specific audience; or, has the material on the wall captured the essential elements of the design situation to allow us to proceed?

LISTENING THROUGH INTERACTION

In his thesis How Designers Work, Henrik Gedenryd (1998) explores interaction cognition; a term he uses to describe cognition that comes
during and after making something such as a design. Gedenryd counterpoints this with the normative view where thinking takes place in the mind and through words, which he terms intramentalism. Sketches, thumbnails and design roughs, for example, become ‘inquiring materials’ in his depiction of interaction cognition.

Cognitive understanding is produced through the process of making, or by working with the materials and paying attention to the feedback that these artefacts induce. Gedenryd further describes the extensive, reciprocal relationship that develops through the process:

In interactive cognition the cognising individual, on the one hand, and the world on the other, reciprocally influence each other. In other words, mind and world interactively determine each other, and particularly, they interactively determine cognitive performance (Gedenryd 1998: 111).

The interaction cognition that Gedenryd describes can, I believe, help explain the nature of design listening, which can be thought of as listening-through-interaction. The artefacts and activities that designers employ through the design process are useful in creating understanding and identifying misunderstanding.

Sketching, moodboards and other devices intentionally open up an opportunity to listen and to provoke novel ideas. A moodboard, for example, is created in the early stage of the design process. It is similar to a sketch and used to stimulate discussion around an idea, putting forward a suggestion rather than proposing a solution. Often it addresses intangibles, such as the way a design might feel, or literally the mood that the piece could evoke.

Design author Remko van der Lugt put it this way: ‘By sketching, temporal decisions are made which allow for evaluation and interpretation of a design solution, without excluding alternatives.’ (van der Lugt 2005: 107). The sketch allows both the designer and
recipient to consider an idea and cycle through various interpretations until some agreement is reached.

Michael Schrage, who writes on collaborative practices, describes a similar design tactic he calls the ‘unfinished model’ that deliberately leaves certain aspects of the solution incomplete so that: ‘others in the process can have input into the result’ (Schrage 1995). It is designed to recruit others to develop a complete solution.

Listening in publication design is conventionally orientated towards the client and other designers and service providers involved in the design commission. A formal structure, along the lines of the one put forward by Andy Dong of accumulation, aggregation, and appraisal (Dong 2006: 6) has been developed to manage the process. Initially, the designer together with a commissioning agent (client) establishes a direction for the project to take.

In the accumulation stage some, or all, of the ‘inquiring materials’ that Gedenryd describes are used (sketches, moodboard, persona cards, and so on). This stage tends to be generative, cycling through proposals and feedback until a concept is developed and a strategy is negotiated to move the work ahead. Ideas and responses are pulled together to shape the direction.

Once a direction has been decided upon, designers then move into the production phase. This involves iterative points where listening is utilized to check the progress of the work. There are benchmark points, such as proofing sign-offs (signed agreement by the client that the work can proceed to the next stage) and resource checks (confirming the budget will cover the cost of production and so on). The designer collects information and feedback and responds to the circumstances as they develop.

The communication flow here is primarily linear, moving from initiation to prototyping and on to final production. However production time is set aside to cycle back through the process to
correct any errors or omissions. A final prototype and ultimately the
design artefact are appraised against the criteria that was established at
the start.

The design process requires efficiency, and to some extent
expediency to complete the work within the project schedule and
budget constraints and is often accomplished with alacrity. Effective
listening is vital to achieving these ends in a commercial design
situation. These demands impel the designer to develop listening
techniques to pick up on the obvious messages as well as nuanced or
concealed messages and responses.

Through effective listening, designers can notice any points
of disagreement such as changes to the agreed brief (design
specifications) or pick up on any contentious issues between partners
that emerge during the process. With experience, some designers
become sensitive to intangible cues that indicate the way the concept is
being received or how the relationships between partners are working.
This is the evolving nature of communication expertise within a field of
practice by a practitioner.

ORIENTATING THE ACT OF LISTENING TOWARDS THE AUDIENCE

In this study I argue that publication designers can develop a more
direct conversation with their audiences and not just those who
commission the publication. The listening practices and interactive
methods described above can be considered as a key to the way the
conversation extends in this direction.

A number of questions emerged as I considered this re-orientation
towards the audience. What would happen if we introduced the
audience into the conversation? How would the introduction of a new
entity, into a closed ecology influence the known systems and actions
of the ecology members? Could the effect of new participants on the
ecology of the design conversation be disastrous?
Certainly it is often challenging to take on the criticism of others within the design conversation without adding to the difficulty through the introduction of more participants. There are clear logistical reasons for not inviting the audience to be part of the design process, such as the time it would take to incorporate them. Efficiency can be lost if this was to be seen simply as an extended consultation process. If the audience is to be introduced into the design conversation, new ways of working will be required.

Despite the logistical challenges, I believe there are two reasons, which I outline below, why it is both necessary and valuable to include the audience in this conversation.

Firstly, my research identifies that the distance between the designer and the audience is diminishing. This is highlighted by the research into Pool and is apparent in the way media is being produced and consumed in the mainstream media context.

Publication designers now share their ‘tools of trade’ with a broad public. Non-designers can now produce design outcomes using computers and other digital technologies. This is creating a growing literacy of design practices and techniques such as typography and layout, and a sharing of technical design terms like font, grid, layers and so on. Additionally, access to image capturing devices, such as digital cameras as well as the software to manipulate images, introduces a general public to techniques that was once the preserve of professionals.

Media researcher, Jay Rosen, wryly describes some contemporary publics as: ‘the people formerly known as the audience’ (Rosen 2008 blog entry, accessed 22/01/09) to indicate that some are also producers (also know as prosumers: producer/consumer). The tension between the new amateur (prosumer) and the professional helps to redefine communication design. How that evolves is yet to be seen.
The second reason for including the audience in the conversation more fully is to take advantage of the potential to stimulate and improve communication flow. Thus the design process becomes a conduit both forward towards the initiator and backward from the recipient. This sets up a new reciprocal relationship of initiating co-creator/s and other co-creator/s, where the designer and audience are able to share these roles. This new relationship requires removing the impediment to the communication flow between designer and audience.
CO-CREATIVE PUBLICS

The changing nature of the audience, characterised by an advanced literacy of design and a greater expectation of being engaged co-creatively is pivotal to the case I make for re-orientating the practice of publication design. Indeed, the term ‘audience’ is now inadequate to articulate the relationship this group has to design as it denotes passive reception (viewer, listener, reader and so on). Whereas the relationship I describe is driven by a shift in how communication flows and how meaning is exchanged between the audience and design entities.

These entities are co-evolving, responding to each other and their environment; and yet a distinction exists between the two despite the blurring of some boundaries. In this section I seek to delineate the difference, through a re-definition of the audience by how it functions in a public context. I look at the concepts the Public Sphere, publics (a public), networked publics, and ultimately co-creative publics, as a way to define this type of audience.

THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Jürgen Habermas initially put forward the concept of the ‘Public Sphere’ in his work: The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedic Article (1974) and later developed in the Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society (1989). This is the public sphere understood as the civic space of a literary, culture-debating discourses, encapsulates the experience of modernity. The term refers primarily to the development of the public life of private citizens as society transformed from a feudal form into a bourgeois, industrialised structure. The public sphere is used in contemporary academic
literature to redefine the public space and now includes the online public (Moulthorp 1994; Warner 2002; Ruiz 2009).

In the public sphere ‘conversation, reading and plain speech as worthy forms of discourse’ operate to produce the then radical new notion of public opinion (Habermas 1974). The public sphere and public opinion variously formed the pre-condition for modernity, as well as being modernity’s recursive effect.

The 18th c. industrial revolution, coupled with Enlightenment thinking, unsettled the existing social order and feudal structures. When the mode of production shifted from agrarian-based communities to industrial urban centres an opportunity emerged for people hitherto outside of the existing elite to participate in forming opinions and making decisions. Public opinion, which aggregated the thoughts and decisions made by the public, emerged as the space where ideas were contested in the open. The conjuncture of new thinking and new technologies produced alternative ways for people to organize themselves.

The bourgeois, middle class, developed and moved into a position of wealth and influence by building industry and employing people in production. The socio-economic shift produced a fundamental shift in social relations, which describes the shift from one social order to another, involving politics, culture, social participation and influence. As Habermas notes: ‘With the emergence of early finance and trade capitalism, the elements of a new social order were taking shape’ (Habermas 1989: 14).

Habermas limited his study of the public sphere to the European experience. The public sphere is further limited by the fact that it acknowledged only the discourse that was based on property ownership and literacy. Therefore, the public sphere excluded people who were not property owners or literate, thus unable to voice their opinions with authority. Public education was itself just emerging as
an aspect of public participation. Yet, while the concept of the public sphere was not democratic in the sense of being fully inclusive, it did expand the sphere of influence in society. It set the conditions for modernity and all that subsequently encompassed.

Habermas traces the emergence of the public sphere through the ‘world of letters’ and the culture-debating discourse, both of which are pertinent to this study. Habermas describes the emergence of publications such as newsletters and journals as vehicles for public discourse and information sharing and as items of exchange in themselves. He also discusses the way these were transformed in the 19th century from arenas of culture debate and opinion forming modes (Habermas 1989: 51, 159) into the comodification of knowledge for a consumer audience (Habermas 1989: 169). I discuss these themes here.

EMERGENCE OF INFORMATION SHARING AND PUBLICATION

The shift in the ownership of productive capital and subsequent social authority were the drivers of the social and political change that produced the modern public sphere. In order for this to happen new information channels were necessary, and the location of production facilities and the flow of information between the drivers were instrumental in this change. As Habermas states:

The great trade cities became at the same time centers for traffic in news. The organization of this traffic on a continuous basis became imperative to the degree to which the exchange of commodities and of securities became continuous. Almost simultaneously with the origin of stock markets, postal and the press institutionalized regular contacts and communication (Habermas 1989: 16).

Paper and print technology serviced this imperative. Publication technology and practices developed rapidly. Initially, hand-written private correspondence that was the basis of the early industrial
capitalist operations, contained reports of: ‘Imperial Diets, wars, harvests, taxes, transport of precious metals, and, of course, reports of foreign trade’ (Habermas 1989: 20). This became the foundation for literary and trade journals, periodicals and newspapers. Through this process, from hand-written private material to unit based news and affairs information was transformed into a commodity, with its own industrial basis and influence on the cultural transition. Consequently, it became not merely a matter of efficiently moving news for the benefit of the merchants.

The content of the publications was also in flux, as new types of information emerged forging a new discourse in society. This produced the conditions for the public sphere to expand into a space for forming culture through debate and opinion. Initially the merchants were the source of material:

the merchants were indispensable to the journals. They were called custodies novellarum [custodian of the new] among their contemporaries precisely because of this dependence of public reporting upon their private exchange of news (Habermas 1989: 20).

As the exchange of information was converted into an industry in its own right a number of changes followed that set the foundation for both the publishing industry, and more broadly the public sharing of information. I pose the following three reasons for why this is significant for our conception of publics and publication.

Firstly, turning private correspondence to public news had the effect of producing public commentators. That is, a private individual could experience what ‘publicity’ (being public) meant by making and sharing an opinion and thus joining in critical debate and opening themselves to scrutiny. This experience, once it spread formed the basis of public opinion as a critical expression of political and cultural views. As Habermas argued:
It provided a training ground for a critical public reflection still preoccupied with itself—a process of self-clarification of private people focusing on the genuine experiences of their novel privateness (Habermas 1989: 29).

I return to this point in the Conclusion where I look at the similar contemporary experience of expressing public views in the social media space.

Secondly, over time, the experience of ‘publicity’ was shared by a larger cohort in society:

scholars, doctors, pastors, officers, professors etc, rather than the burghers, merchants, entrepreneurs were the real carrier of the public, which from the outset was a reading public’ (Habermas 1989: 23).

Publicity later extended to trades people and retail owners and others in the general public who were literate and able to contribute.

Thirdly, as an industry that over time became independent of the owners of capital, publishing could build its own economy, by selling its work to the literate public. This gave rise for the potential to employ writers, editors and technology workers (printers in this case). It also enabled the development of an independent sector of cultural and political debate.

Each of these outcomes consolidated the public sphere into a critical component of modernity, and drove the growth in rational and critical thinking and expression which continues to transform over time.

FROM LITERARY PUBLIC SPHERE TO ADMINISTERED CONVERSATION

Despite the origins of the public sphere in the exchange of news and information via newsletters and journals, according to Habermas at a point in the nineteenth century the media itself became commodified
(Habermas 1989: 160). While the ‘commercialization of cultural goods had been the precondition for rational-critical debate’ (Habermas 1989: 164), these media, in fact, operated outside of the market. He cites a number of causes of the change in the nature of the media. This ‘public of private people’, lost its political character when the ‘rational-critical debate of private people in salons, clubs and reading rooms’ was drawn into the ‘cycle of production and consumption’ or ‘individuated reception’ (Habermas 1989: 160). With this shift came a leveling of the threshold between the world of letters and consumption. In other words, the proprietors of the emergent media lowered the entrance requirements for the consumption of their products, in order to optimize the growing market. The rational discourse previously performed by the bourgeoisie became part of the function of the media. This, Habermas claims, was accelerated with the introduction of subsequent new media such as radio and film and television:

Today the conversation itself is administered. Professional dialogues from the podium, panel discussions, and round table shows—the rational debate of private people becomes one of the production numbers of the stars in radio and television, a salable package ... (Habermas 1989: 164).

This was coupled with a level of penetration by the new media, to a larger extent than was possible for the press, which changed the way communication occurred. Debate and unmediated public opinion was replaced by a type of entertainment, fashioned to appeal by offering minimal challenge to the consumer.

It can be argued that Habermas’ view is not consistent with the contemporary media literate contemporary audience, and may have overstated the situation even at the time of writing. Nevertheless, I use it in this study to mark a point where the public sphere underwent a significant structural transformation. The sociability of the discursive
meeting place was replaced by a consumer culture, one where a ‘noncumulative experience goes together with the sociological criterion of a destruction of the public sphere’ (Habermas 1989: 167). The public sphere, in other words is sustained by an aggregation of opinion and discourse, not by saleable experiences.

Writers, such as Pollyanna Ruiz (2009) introduce another dimension into the debate about the public sphere. She argues that the modes of communication in the concept of the public sphere should include image and spectacle, which re-instates the concept of the public sphere as a means to understand the social organisation of the modern.

VISUAL DISCOURSE AND THE PUBLIC SPHERE

Ruiz argues that Habermas based his concept almost entirely on verbal discourse and the written word, and was hostile to the visual metaphor in communication (Ruiz 2009: 104). The bias against the image was evident in depictions of the early public sphere, and has only recently been reconsidered. According to Ruiz, Habermas now accepts, albeit grudgingly, the inclusion of ‘inclusive, and more or less discourse-resembling communicative processes’ (Habermas, qtd Ruiz 2009: 105).

Visual historian, Barbara Stafford articulates how written and spoken word is privileged as a consequence of the Enlightenment suspicion of the image:

In order for text-based theories, systems and methods to become autonomous referents, divorced from the sensory sphere above which they floated, the matter and manner of vision had to be demoted to intellectual nullity’ (Stafford 1996: 47).

The role of the image, as a ‘discourse-resembling communicative action’, is important in the discussion of the contemporary public sphere. It recognizes that certain types of imagery are an ‘untranslatable constructive form of cognition (expression), rather
than equivalence (illustration)” (Stafford 1996: 37). That is, that imagery can express thought in a way that is different, but equal to the written or spoken word. The re-integration of image and text thus produces a richer public discourse by drawing on the communicative qualities of each.

This re-integration also extends participation in the public sphere to people who are visually rather than textually literate. While still not satisfying the democratic vision of full social inclusion in the public discourse, it does open opportunities that were not available otherwise. The non-text literate person can participate via image-making and image-reading. As well, the text literate person benefits from the alternative communication that images offer. In my Masters (Research) High Fidelity Image: tracing the emergence of a new constructed image, 2004, I examined Stafford’s idea that the image is once again finding equivalence with text. Over the past century the image has begun to develop in the way that text developed under the aegis of the Enlightenment. In that period of rationalism, text accelerated in disciplines such as literature, law, medicine and science to articulate the new thought precisely. In a similar way, image is developing now to take up a large part of public communication via television, film, photography, advertising, publication and other communication design, architecture, fashion and so on.

The contemporary public environment is saturated by imagery performing a discursive role. The urban space, for example, is a site of corporate advertising, public information and wayfinding systems that all use images to communicate. Various other forms of imagery exist alongside of officially sanctioned communication, such as street posters, graffiti, and so on. This range is replicated online and on mobile technologies.
VIRTUAL PUBLIC SPACES

In a sense the emergent online public space is similar to the nascent public sphere that resulted from the industrial revolution. It is an outcome of a technological revolution; requires its population to talk publicly; and is a disruptive force on conventional cultural modes. Writers such as new media and democracy theorist Lincoln Dahlberg (Dahlberg 2001) and media and communications researcher, Sonia Livingstone (Livingstone 2005) uses the Habermasian concept of the public sphere to make this new space comprehensible as well as analyse it.

The concept of the public sphere is often used as a means to assess the claim that the internet enhances democracy through a superior information exchange and participation. In this study, however, I am interested in how ‘publicity’ is being extended and how the experience of communicating in public assists us to understand the audience in the contemporary context. In other words, in this new or expanded public sphere, especially since the introduction of social media, people are learning how to communicate in the public and engage more directly in less mediated forms.

In the public sphere that Habermas describes, writing private correspondence, which was then transformed into the material of publications, provided a training ground for those involved to understand publicity.

Equally the conditions that surrounded the public sphere excluded many from this experience. These conditions appear to be similar in the virtual space. On the one hand, large numbers of people are experiencing what it means to make a public statement and reveal private interests and information through comment boards or social media websites.

This is especially the case in social media where the lines between private and public dissolve. On the other hand, the current population of this virtual public space involves those who are literate in the
technologies and practices of online media, and who have the resources to devote to it. It excludes people who are not literate or who are unable to access the requisite technology.

Given the pace of change in the technology and the uptake of internet-based relations, we can imagine this public sphere will transform relatively quickly, yet how it transforms will be different from the past. The new public sphere may, in fact, re-introduce some of the social conditions of Habermas’ original depiction of the critical discourse that took place in the salon, journals and public life of the time.

The contemporary public sphere, including the public sphere online, is made more complex by a number of factors. It is known and measured in a way that the original was not. The public sphere has been the object of study in sociology and marketing, which, for example, can describe how it works and thus how it can be influenced. Public opinion (the thoughts of the public expressed in the public domain) has been commodified into market research, opinion polls and focus group reports. Social theorist Michael Warner notes that this type of activity also: ‘systematically distorts the public sphere, producing something that passes as public opinion when in fact it has nothing of the open-endedness, reflexive framing, or accessibility of public discourse’ (2002: 54). Public opinion, in other words, is coerced and directed by the systems that measure it and loses its relationship to genuine public debate.

The public sphere by itself is insufficient as a means to understand the audience that this study investigates. In the next section I look at how this amorphous space can be broken into smaller component parts.

**PUBLICS**

The term Publics, or a public is used to distinguish a social grouping, within the public sphere. Publics are self-organising entities. One can exercise taste and inclination to deliberately and voluntarily become a
part of a public. There is no explicit structure built around this public. The connection to other members is exercised through discourse around an artefact or issue and this instance may or may not connect to other instances of discourse.

According to cultural studies researcher Michael Warner (2005), one becomes a member of a public by being addressed by and in turn paying attention to something. There is no obligation to become a member of a community; meet the other members; nor share any other beliefs or interests.

Warner (2005: 55) stipulates that a ‘relation among strangers’ was a requisite condition for modernity to develop. In his words: ‘The modern social imaginary does not make sense without strangers’ (Warner 2002: 57). The concept of relations among strangers enables the modern marketplace to form. It relieves the modern public of having to associate together in tribes or kinship groups and replaces these social forms with the marketplace, which does not require consumers to know or be associated with each other.

Warner further contends, ‘a public is the social space created by the reflexive circulation of discourse’ (2002: 62). This echoes the notion of the dialogic that I refer to in the design conversation, where a dialogue goes forward and backwards between instances of the design process. Warner notes: ‘It is not the texts themselves that create publics, but the concatenation of texts through time’ (2002: 62). It is through the linking of texts and discourse through time that allows a public to take shape. A public can therefore exist within this discourse and be identified by its relationship to the polemic or conversation.

The mechanics of how this discourse works across time, different locations and distinct social groupings can be known as circulation. This returns me to the idea of communication flow, which now extends itself outside of the linear flow between two points (people). Now the flow spans across time, and incorporates others, or more specifically
acknowledges that others are being addressed as well as oneself. Here Warner also includes others who are ‘onlookers’ seemingly not directly involved on the conversation.

CIRCULATION

Warner (2002) stipulates the connection between periodical print publication and circulation is in the timing of a publication. Timing was part of the mechanical nature of circulation: a newsletter, published on a specific date, would mark a point in the public discourse. This is challenged by the asymmetrical temporality of internet publication, where the event of publication is not tied to a specific scheduled time.

It is interesting, for example, to note the two positions in regard to timing, exemplified by the release of secret diplomatic documents on WikiLeaks (January 2011). By publishing the information in conventional media such as the newspapers regularized the irregular release of documents on the web. Discussion of the reports followed the newspaper release date, rather than the source (web) release date. Similarly, this disparity between the mechanics of conventional and new media is evidenced at ABC radio where production clusters are organized around publication times. Therefore, programs that go to air each day are produced by the Dailies cluster, those airing each week by the Weeklies, and all others by the Arts (considered non-temporal within the scheme of things).

NETWORKED PUBLICS AND COMMUNITIES

In this study I do not address the literature and ideas about community, which has been prevalent in much of the writing about the virtual space. See for example Felicia Song’s book Virtual Communities: Bowling Alone, Online Together (Song 2010), in which she critiques the community as a metaphor for online interaction; or Danah Boyd, writing in A networked self: identity, community and culture on social network sites (Boyd
Instead I am interested in how the concept of networks provides a different way to understand social relationships online. Dimitra Milioni proposes the notion of ‘networked publics’ as an alternative to community as a descriptor of the type of social relationships that form online. In Milioni’s view ‘multiple publics exist and one can belong to many different publics simultaneously’ (2002: 53). Milioni conflates ‘two important shifts in socialization and public communication: the shift from communities to networks and the shift from media to publics’ (Milioni 2009: 276; author’s italics).

In the first shift, the often romanticized notion of community gives way to network sociality, which she describes as ‘informational’ social relations, formed by temporary but intense encounters based on individualization and technogenic closeness’ (2002: 276). That is, that people are connected by their personal relationship to information, often via electronic media situations. In a sense, this is similar to Nardi and O’Day’s notion of locality (Nardi and O’Day 1999: 55), which extracts and detaches the qualities of co-presence and co-location and proposes them as experiences outside of those physical conditions.

The network is an alternative metaphor used to describe the connection that takes place online, and which incidentally relates to the networked structure of the internet itself. It is also useful in conceptualizing relationships that exist across both the internet and physical worlds. It is on this basis that Milioni is able to move away from the earlier idea of community towards networks, which she defines as social systems that expand according to the level of activity within the system (Milioni 2009: 276).

In the second shift Milioni identifies a move from media to publics. Media here refers to traditional media structures, which are imposed to mediate information and control its flow. Publics, on the other hand, are envisaged as active, communication-producing entities. These publics are diverse and participatory, involved in the production of
media as well as consuming it and they exist within ‘networked flows of communication’ (2009: 276).

**CO-CREATIVE PUBLIC AND NETWORKS**

The characteristics of a public that Warner (2002: 50) enumerates (he lists seven in all) help to compose an alternative picture of the contemporary audience, orientated towards public participation. Instead of passive consumers at the one end of the spectrum or committed community members at the other, this social clustering, which I term co-creative publics, is active but non-aligned.

Co-creator is a term used in social media to identify a relationship between people whose intention it is to jointly create a media outcome. Co-creation occurs in several different ways. It is evident in open source software development where a beta (prototype) version of the software is uploaded to the internet by the developer/s to make the full software code accessible to other developers. This is done without charge. Participants are invited to modify the software and repost it online with the condition that he or she does not charge for the improvements. As the process develops the software is improved by the co-creators and finally released for use by the public. The open source movement has had an effect on the ethos of internet development.

In *Viral Spiral*, David Bollier (2008) outlines the history and ideology of the open source movement and the critical place of the co-creator and socially created value. A co-creator is one who contributes to the value of the technology or service produced. It is not necessarily a situation of equal contribution, nor is it essential that the co-creator is involved in generating the initial idea. He or she simply joins in and participates in a way that is appropriate and viable. This marks a different social and creative relationship from the one a conventional collaborator might engage in. A collaborator is likely to be more closely committed to the project or venture: working as a partner, conceiving the idea and/or
developing the project and bringing it to a resolution. While there are numerous types of collaboration, the general sense of collaboration tends to be that it is relatively equal and negotiated.

A co-creator on the other hand is less predictable in his or her participation. It is possible for the co-creator to join a project under different terms and conditions. He or she, might for example, contribute only what is in their own interest, or participate only in part, not all, of the venture. It is this potential distance from the venture that distinguishes the co-creator from the conventional collaborator.

The distance between the two types of participatory commitments is similar to the type of independence that distinguishes a public from a community. A public, according to Warner (2002), self-organises and is comprised of strangers. A co-creator could be seen to share these characteristics. That is, he or she organises their own relationship to the venture; in addition, it is not necessary to know the other participants to be a part of the venture.

Take, for example, a co-created social media site such as Vimeo. A co-creator is not involved in the initial design or intention of the site. Yet he or she can contribute feedback on how the site works and the offer suggestions for improvement. As this type of site is intentionally iterative and seeks ongoing feedback, a participant in this is a part of co-creating the ongoing site. In social media this type of co-creation operates on the principal that the social media website is itself an ongoing creative artefact, constantly being modified and improved by its users and proprietors.

In addition to the potential to contribute to the working of the site, the co-creator can also contribute to the body of work that the site contains. He or she is not obliged to contribute anything other than what they are personally motivated to do. They could post an image, for example, or a comment on another participant’s contribution. It is possible that through this level of involvement the co-creator engages with another
creator, in order to collaborate with them on their own project. However, this level of activity is not essential to being a co-creator.

The independence between the co-creator and the publishing venture marks one distinguishing feature of co-creation. Another is that the relationship between one co-creator and another is not necessarily equivalent. By this I mean one co-creator could contribute 80 percent of the input to a project and another 20 percent, or one co-creator could be an amateur and another an expert, yet it is still a co-creation.

Interestingly, as the attributes of a co-creator move across from the raw amateur space to the refined professional space it is likely that they will alter and evolve in the transition. Nevertheless, something of the loose, emergent nature is retained and circulated through the practice to keep the relationship between designer and public fresh and responsive.

Thus the ambition in this study has been to conceptualise the designer differently as someone who can adapt to emergent practices in the professional situation; and in turn, be open and attentive to challenges and changes within the design situation.

THE DESIGNER AND A CO-CREATIVE PUBLIC

In this study I propose that mediation is a valid activity and one that is essential to the way a networked public works, and how communication flows across the network. Mediation is a means of sense-making, As researcher, Angelina Russo, explains in terms of storytelling:

What you’re trying to do is move people away from the story itself and move them towards how to communicate that story. What is it about that story that is important and meaningful to other people? What’s the problem we’re approaching here, how does the story illustrate what you’re trying to communicate? (Russo 2010).
Being able to take a story from the person who is invested in it and then re-purpose it into something that can be communicated hints at the type of function the publication designer can do.

I explore the potential for how a designer might refashion their role in a co-creative situation in the chapter on Pool. An innovation by the Pool team that emerged in Pool research is the role of Social Media Producer. This is someone who can be a professional who works in the social media space to collaboratively develop a participant’s response to a call out; and in my experience of being part of a design team who created a design for the co-creative space.

At the Conclusion of this study I draw together two instances of the notion of the designer as a co-creator, that emerge in two of the case studies. These are the practice of self-management, identified in the case study into Backyard Press and Champion Books; and the social media producer as an example of professional co-creative practice (from Pool). I define the co-creative situation with reference to Michael Warner’s depiction of a public, combined with the contemporary usage of the term co-creator that was associated with the Open Source movement in computer programming. I then develop two scenarios for how the role of the designer as a co-creator could be envisaged.
CASE STUDY #1

DESIGN AUDIO CLOUD

EXHIBITION SPACE AT NEW VIEWS#2 MELBOURNE MUSEUM 2008. AUDIO SPEAKERS INSTALLED IN THE CEILING
At the outset of this doctoral study I had a broad sense of my area of inquiry. I had selected the field of publication design as a vehicle to explore the broader practices of design, with a particular focus on the communicative nature of the practice.

In a manner similar to the practice of resource collecting and sketching in the initial stages of a design project, I designed a research project that would allow me to consider what a publication is. There were two important aspects of this: the form and the content. In relation to the form I was interested in challenging my conventional practice of designing physical artefacts such as a book or paper publication.

Such a publication had to communicate something, as such I decided to use this project to explore how the act of communication works in design as the content, using the different conversations that occur in the practice.

These two foci of the project allowed me to explore the practice of design, through practice, and to challenge assumptions about publication design. This became the Design Audio Cloud, the first Case Study of this doctoral investigation.

The Design Audio Cloud was a publication that used sound as its medium. Designing a sound publication forced me to move out of my 

This project was carried out under an RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee application (CHEAN B): The Design Conversation: design as conversation; conversation through design
usual practice of print and web based publication design. The different medium made me aware of practices that had become routine and therefore somewhat elusive. This enabled me to think through the characteristics of a publication from a material point of view.

In order to investigate the conversational nature of design practice, I decided to undertake a series of conversations with peers, from the field of communication design. I recorded designers talking about topics they selected that were current in their own thinking at the time. My aim was to use these conversations with peers as a means to reflect on and critically position my own observations within the broader context of my sphere of practice. The conversations became the material that I used in the design of the publication, expressed in the form of audio tracks, these functioned in the way that I would otherwise use text/typography in a print publication.

The Design Audio Cloud was included in an international exhibition and this very public manifestation, alerted me to what later became central to the study, namely the public dimension in publication design.

I first outline the Design Audio Cloud project in detail. I then discuss the discoveries I made in this project and how these led to insights that drove the doctoral research, thereby prompting further lines of inquiry. These discoveries are the threads that connect the three case studies and lead to the Conclusion.

**AUDIO CLOUD PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Design Audio Cloud became a compilation of short audio interviews with practicing designers and design educators. It was the initial research project for this study and was made as a contribution to the New Views 2 exhibition of posters. The posters were curated into a visual exhibition for the New Views 2: Conversations and Dialogues in Graphic Design Conference, at the London College of Communication, July 2008 (http://newviews.co.uk/gallery/posters). The posters were design responses to
a question about the future of graphic design, the aim being to use an iconic graphic medium to speak about the future of graphic design. It was proposed that the Design Audio Cloud would extend the curatorial aim of provoking a discourse about the field, through the field, by simulating design artefacts talking to each other. In November 2008 the exhibition and soundscape were later installed in the Melbourne Museum.

In order to recruit interviewees I sent the following invitation to participate in the Design Audio Cloud project to potential participants (see front of invitation, above).

Dear .... ,

I want to capture some thoughts on design and present them in an audio cloud installation at the New Views 2 Conference this year. So I’m writing to you to entice you to let go of some of yours.

The theme of the conference is Conversations and Dialogues in Graphic Design. The question that I would like you to respond to is: Design Is...?
You have been chosen because you have been identified as someone who represents a particular aspect of contemporary design and has a reputation for thoughtful reflections on the practice.

To construct the soundscape I conducted interviews with fourteen designers and design educators. Initially I used a strategy of providing participants with a set of randomly arranged words to trigger their responses. The words included: outputs / pattern / voice / precise play / flaneur / ratio / heteroglossia / porous / variable / act / mask / dialogue / edge / vessel / object. However, I found that this strategy became a distraction and focused the contributors on the structure of the investigation, rather than their own thoughts about what matters to them in contemporary design practice. Once I realized this, I simply asked contributors to respond without preparation to the question: Design is?
With this change, it appeared that the designers were able to talk more freely about issues or aspects of design that were something that he or she was thinking of at the time. This produced responses that were more conversational in tone and of particular interest to them. This tone was appropriate to the concept behind the installation, namely to simulate the experience of overhearing designers talk, as if the exhibition visitor was ‘listening-in’ to studio discussions.

The two installations (in London and Melbourne) were different as the spaces and the playback facilities varied. I installed the Melbourne installation along with the Melbourne Museum’s curatorial staff. In this case selected responses were edited and compiled into three audio tracks. These were played concurrently over three speakers, which were located on the ceiling of the gallery space. Visitors were able to position themselves under one speaker to hear the track independently of the
others. Alternatively he or she could move to a place where the tracks overlapped, to hear it as if multiple conversations were taking place.

The voices in the ‘cloud’ represented a mixture of people who practiced and/or taught design. Some participants were interested in the details of practice. Others discussed design education and some of the issues they confront in the way design is taught and what it means to be a teacher of design. One designer discussed the place of structure in his information design business and how it works with the wilder aspects of creativity. Yet another talked about the essential nature of communication in forming a community, and from there, producing beauty.

The diversity of the remarks from disparate viewpoints gave a sense that design thinking extends past the practical and instrumental act of making a design artefact. The ideas ranged from the interchange found in education, through to concepts of sustainability and community. It was this diversity that prompted me to think about the concept of dissonance, which I later explored when working on what constituted the design conversation (see P. 34)

The conversations in this project also established a sense of connectivity between the respondents who shared the experience of being design practitioners and educators, but who each approached his or her practice differently. These ideas prompted me to explore the place of design in the world; the disparate voices in design; as well as the connections that exist within design practice.

The aural overlay of voices added the additional aspect of random thoughts being passed between numbers of interlocutors. I was interested to see if I could suggest links between one instance and another, where the influence goes both ways. That is, by hearing the intersections of disparate ideas, the listener would hear the ideas influencing each other. This was to suggest that design ideas are expressed discretely as design artefacts (i.e. the posters on the walls), which relate to each other when they come into the world. These
connections suggested a conversational relationship between the works. I followed this line of thought and the sense of interlocking conversations, which led me to Mikhail Bakhtin’s notion of the dialogic.

The context of the recordings and the exhibition of posters was also important. The fact that the recordings were being played in a public space meant that the thoughts and comments of the designers were being taken out of the closed domain of professionals and opened up to public scrutiny. As they come into the world these thoughts form an artefact that is situated in the public. The compilation is perceived and received differently from when the recordings are separate, disconnected pieces.

THE SOUND-PIECE AS A DESIGN ARTEFACT

The Design Audio Cloud was a soundpiece designed as a publication of numerous voices, with an implied link to the images on the gallery walls. In a sense it was a three dimensional publication that incorporated the space, the walls, images and sound into one publication format. The grid, one of the prime design devices in the design of publications also became three dimensional, following the cubed shape of the gallery space and accounting for the angles at which the sound was directed towards the listener. In addition, the differences in tone of voice in each participant’s response and level of thought gave weight to the various ideas and statements.

SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

The Design Audio Cloud was the first step I made into the overarching inquiry of the PhD. It was intended to be a sketch of the central argument and to highlight, if faintly at the time, the key points in constructing the argument.

Through this project, I constructed the methodology for the doctoral study of researching through practice, context and materiality. The method prompted a number of higher order ideas to consider. These
included the concept of the design conversation as a means to explore the communicative nature in publication design; the relationship between the designer and audience; the inherent public-ness in publication design; and the value of experimentation in publication design. I take up these threads in the following case studies.

DISCOVERIES

This project resulted in two key discoveries that became pertinent to the entire doctoral investigation: the notion of a publication as an act, which is performed; and that it is an act of making public thoughts, ideas, opinions and stories, and is performed through conversation.

The interviewees in this Audio Cloud were a random set of people I recruited from my own contacts and associated networks. Participants were asked through the interview process to reflect on issues they thought were important to contemporary design practice. Each of the participants conveyed a clear sense that they were constantly thinking about how they worked and the impact they made as designers and design educators.

The term ‘design conversation’ coalesced as the focal point in the research at this time. I was using the term to capture the communicative situation within design.

At this point, I began to consider that the design conversation could have a broader application. While this thought did not come directly from the interviews with practitioners, it occurred to me that the design conversation might be a way to open the design process to non-designers.

As I reflected on the materiality of the publication and the conversations I was having with peers, I became increasingly aware of the possibility of publication design as a manifestation of a conversation, which could be deconstructed and its component parts identified. If this was possible then, as Nathan Shedoff (2001) tells us in Experience Design, once we can identify and isolate the components of a situation we can
then design with them. If this was the case, and a publication design is a form of design conversation then there was the potential to re-design the design conversation to include the audience in the design process.

PUBLICATIONS AS AN ACT

As I reflected on the Design Audio Cloud, I began to think that the conversations held in design practice had an agency beyond the design artefact. That is, that while conversations are embedded in the artefact as the artefact is being made, a larger, extended conversation can be said to occur beyond the point where the artefact enters the world and into the public.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the concept that language enacts design and that this process is performative, which Andy Dong (2009: 16) claims, helped to orient my thinking. The connection between language, design and public confirmed for me that the design conversation would provide a rich place to explore as a preliminary site of inquiry.

The Design Audio Cloud raised a number of early stage, sub-questions for me which would become essential to the latter stages of the study. These included things such as: what is the nature of the design conversation as it currently exists in design practice? Does an energetic discourse through a design project necessarily lead to an energetic design outcome? Or is the outcome influenced by the client's expectations or the designer's intention?

The first of these questions led me to consider how design practice incorporates conversations as a means for the making of an artefact. These conversations are structured deliberately to move the process through its stages and to ensure that some level of mutual understanding is reached at key points. I expanded on this concept in Chapter 2: Two views on the research.
PERFORMING THE ACT OF PUBLICATION IN PUBLIC

The questions about the relationship between the design conversation and its outcome opened up another path of investigation in the study. Recently movements such as participatory design and co-design have been developed to include the client, commissioning organisation, or user group as an active partner in the design process. This would involve them being more than a commissioning agent for a design (client, author or publisher) to being a co-designer in the design process.

This realisation prompted me to consider that if it is possible to include the client in the design conversation, is it then also possible to turn this conversation towards the audience and include them in a similar way? This thought framed the initial ideas around my second research question: How can a public become conversant with the language of design (the design conversation)? Although such a perspective is becoming increasingly common in many areas of design practice, it is relatively new in publication design where the audience is firmly framed as the consumer of the design outcome.

SETTING A DIRECTION FOR THE STUDY

This identification of design as a performance of a conversation with a public, set the direction for the next phases of the study. In the following case studies my understanding regarding the nature of design artefacts, conversation and communication, the public sphere, publics, networks and form of collaboration that emerged in the project, continued to evolve.

I reflected on my own practice, specifically my experience in print and publishing collectives Backyard Press and Champion Books. This extended my deliberation on the material nature of publications (print, web and other). From the experience in the collectives I started to tease out several threads of thought to do with types of collaboration as well as types of audiences. I discuss these in the following case study.
At the same time I undertook an investigation into research into communication and conversation through the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, Andy Dong and Ranulph Glanville among others. I used this foundation to form a description of the design conversation and the potential of this conversation to extend to the audience.

The confluence of making the Design Audio Cloud and the lines of inquiry it provoked, also led me to consider the way that artefacts are used in the design process to construct a listening structure.

Artefacts such as sketches, mood boards, design roughs and the schedule of proofing points, which Henrik Gedenryd calls inquiry materials, show how a designer uses these artefacts to ask questions of the client or commissioner. Then the a designer listens and processes the answers, often through other artefacts, such as diagrams, ‘walls’ and data visualisations.

Later, particularly during the research project into the Pool social media site, I addressed the nature of the audience, using the lens of the public sphere, publics and networks.
CASE STUDY #2
PARTICIPATORY PUBLISHING
BACKYARD PRESS
CHAMPION BOOKS

BACKYARD PRESS AND CHAMPION BOOKS WERE HOUSED IN TWO ADJACENT DOMESTIC BUILDINGS SHOWN HERE
In the late 1970s I co-established Backyard Press, a semi-commercial print collective and Champion Books, an associated experimental publishing venture. These two entities were located together and shared many of the same workers, yet each entity had its own character and orientation.

I use my experience of working at Backyard Press and Champion Books as the second Case Study for this doctorate as they provide two instances of participatory publishing in a conventional sense. Participation, in these contexts includes the activities of the people who worked in the two collectives, as well as the various audiences that formed around them.

As the doctoral study evolved, I came to realize the importance of comparing conventional collaborative or collective methods of engagement with contemporary social and participatory media. This case study with its reflection on these two print collectives, provided me with a way to discuss current electronic forms of collaboration in the context of its antecedent analog approaches to production. In particular, I concentrate on the self-managed producer (in Backyard Press) as an analogy for the co-creator who represents collaboration in contemporary social and participatory media. I look too, at the
audiences around Backyard Press and Champion Books as examples of co-creative publics, which engaged closely with the work we made. The design conversation is also evident throughout the interactions at both Backyard Press and Champion Books. Here the conversation exists in the form used by workers within the operations, as well as in a number of interactions with the publics around them.

I begin this section with background on the two collectives, Backyard Press and Champion Books. I distinguish between them based on their differing core activities, organizational structures and their influence on the culture of the time. This is followed by highlighting the discoveries and research leads, which are pertinent to the overarching doctoral study that emerged in the reflection.

This description of the collectives, in terms of their structure and characteristics defines the context of this case study. From that I am able to compare the types of collaboration in these experiences with the sort of participation that has evolved in contemporary social and participatory media context.
AUTHOR [LEFT] WITH COLLEAGUE DAVID RAE AT THE RECENTLY ACQUIRED 20" X 30" HEIDELBERG KORD PRESS C.1980
BACKYARD PRESS WORKERS
L TO R: CHRIS WHITE, AUTHOR,
MARK CARTER, PAUL GREENE IN
THE KITCHEN/PRE-PRESS ROOM
BACKGROUND TO THE COLLECTIVES

BACKYARD PRESS

Ted Hopkins is a poet and author who, at the time of founding Champion Books, was intent on producing books that would not otherwise be published. In 1976 he and his partner Sharon Hill set up Backyard Press and Champion Books. Backyard Press was a commercial venture and Champion Books was an experimental book publisher. Ted inherited an offset print machinery plant from his father. Circumstances led him and Sharon to bring the machinery from Moe, in regional Victoria, to re-establish the press in Prahran, Melbourne. When I became involved shortly after we consolidated and established collective frameworks for joint venture.

In 1977, I started working at Backyard Press and Champion Books. As well as my interest in book publishing, I was keen to explore collective practices with other creative practitioners. As the venture grew I directed the development of Backyard Press as a worker-controlled collective.

Backyard Press became a part of the music scene at a time when the local performers, promoters and venue managers in Melbourne were starting out. These people would come in to the Press to commission the publicity work themselves. They tended to be as inexperienced at business as we were, but the micro-economy of live music was sufficiently buoyant to keep the money flowing. Work and social life bled into each other, with invitations to the venues and gigs, and wads of cash a regular part of the payment system. As the bands and particularly the promoters and music labels—like Mushroom Records,
Frontier Touring Co, Premier Music, Suicide Records and others—grew and morphed into the mainstream, so did Backyard Press.

There was a loyal following that pushed us to keep pace with their demands: greater quantities of print material, larger sizes of street posters, more expensive colour printing, new technologies that allowed quicker turnaround and so on. Initially, we would print one thousand copies of a pamphlet, which later became fifty thousand when the promoters established themselves.

The early 1980s was the beginning of the transition from a music scene, characterised by a ‘garage’ economy to a music industry, which was coordinating the activities of musicians, promoters, publicity and events. Its evolving program of major local and international acts expanded the audience and produced an industrial base.

For us this meant the publicity increased in scale as well as quantity. Promotional posters went from A3 up to 60” x 40”, and then to 4 and 6 sheet posters (4 large sheets making up one billboard sized poster). Over time we improved our facilities to include an A2 Bromide Camera and platemaking facilities, Heidelberg KORD 20” x 30” offset press, a 60” x 40” semi-automatic screenprint table, upgraded small offset printers and a Roland 60” x 40” offset press. The latter was acquired in a merger with VersaPrint who had previously been supplying us with high run, large format, colour posters.

People in inner urban Melbourne at the time, would have passed our printed work on the streets and music fans would have been able to pick up our pamphlets at music venues. The posters we printed dominated railway underpasses and building walls. It was a heady time, and I found it exciting to be part of something that impacted on the Melbourne’s cultural life and public space.

The printed work helped to define the visual style of the period. This was at a time before mainstream advertising recognised the street as a space to colonise. At the time, the communication channels for
RAINER LINZ (BOTTOM) CHECKS POSTERS COMING OFF FROM THE 60" X 40" ROLAND PRESS
these events and venue programs were printed material, ads in street magazines, word-of-mouth and community radio.

Initially the artwork that was printed at Backyard Press was immediate, hand done and reproduced using the lowest cost technologies available. It was bought in as camera-ready (set up to have film and plates made from it); often it was done by a member of the band or a friend with some design or illustration skills.

Over time, the quality and finish of the design improved as the budgets that bands were able to spend increased. The music ‘community’ transformed into the music ‘industry’, a change that brought with it new opportunities for designers and publishers like ourselves. It also connected us to changes that were happening overseas, particularly in England and America.

The Australian music industry started to link into the international music scene. In England, designers such as Neville Brody and Peter Saville were closely connected with the UK music scene and influenced the style of the times. Graphic design in this field moved from the raw ready-made look, popular when Brody started out designing publications like The Face, towards more sophisticated work represented by publications such as Arena magazine.

Locally, promoters began to employ designers, replacing the informal arrangement where a band member would do the design, or ask a friend to design material for them. A new and creative area of work was opening up for local designers. Close attention was paid to the work coming out of the overseas design scene and it was often emulated in Australia.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE ALTERNATIVE MEDIA CULTURE

The large format screen-printing facilities that Backyard Press built up for the music posters also became a desirable way of making political art. This resonated with the vibrant poster art being produced by
number of other collectives around the country such as Another Planet Posters, Bloody Good Graphics, Jill Posters in Melbourne, the Tin Sheds in Sydney, and Redback Graphix in Wollongong

Ian Robertson joined Backyard Press in the early 1980s. He came from a background in performance art but his interest shifted to making highly crafted posters. At Backyard Press he produced a series of posters, often up to 12 colours, on the theme of accordions, Mao and feminist politics. Titles like: *A political accordion snap, Accordion to Mao and Xmas Dinner 1981*, give some idea of the ‘dadaist’ approach to political themes. Making these posters was only possible with around the clock access to the print facilities. Each poster set could take several months to complete: 12 colours meant 12 separate prints through the press, in multiple copies.

Along with Ian, several poster makers used the facilities to create a type of political art output that opened Backyard Press up to a new community. Through my own contacts, we produced a number of works for the Australian Surrealists Group, located in Adelaide. Another group of friends within and around Backyard Press set up the RASCALS, the ‘Rational and Sane Citizens Against Liberal Stupidity’. This was at the time when Malcolm Fraser seized power from the then Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. Whitlam was ousted at the 1975 Federal election, following what is now known as ‘The Dismissal’. Fraser’s Liberal Opposition blocked supply in the Federal Senate and the Governor-General at the time, Sir John Kerr, de-commissioned the Whitlam Labor Government forcing an election. The elected Fraser Government was divisive and led to strong and lasting popular opposition. The RASCALS group produced a number of anti-Liberal Party postcards and other items for the 1980 election. Humour was the key to anything that came out of RASCALS. Slogans such as: *I’ve Had a Fraser of a Day, He Lies and He Knows He Lies, Beau’s Not Voting Liberal* (Beau
was the Backyard dog), all of which worked on the idea of making political communication that didn’t rely on appealing to the serious-minded voter.

Robertson’s work and the material that was coming out of RASCALS were both highly visual and disruptive. The Mao series played with the visual metaphor of a political icon, satirizing Mao’s celebrity while at the same time finding pleasure in the political tension created by what Mao had come to mean in the context of ‘fear of invasion’ and cultural difference with a conservative Australian audience. RASCALS experimented with the idea of disrupting familiar spaces, like the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Malcolm Fraser was the Number One ticket holder at Carlton Football Club. Around the time of the election we produced a facsimile newspaper display poster with the splash: Blues Drop Mal, and posted them around the MCG when Carlton (the Blues) was playing. It was commented on in the media and many believed it to be true. Media and cultural studies author, Pollyanna Ruiz makes the following comment on a similar action set in a Macdonald’s café in the UK, as this type of unsettling political activity:

In this way, protesters create an ‘ambivalent position between strangeness and familiarity’ (quoting Cuppers 2005) which jolts spectators out of their usual state of distraction and encourages them to reevaluate the discourses which surround them (Ruiz 2009: 211).

We enjoyed the unusual place we occupied. We owned the type of print facilities that were often out of the reach of other activists, yet we also worked outside of the traditional Left structure. The pleasure of making unlikely political work attracted others to participate. Some participants became a part of the ongoing collective, while others moved in and out.
CHAMPION BOOKS

Champion Books had a different agenda from Backyard Press. It set out to experiment with book publishing, using and pushing the facilities and expertise we were developing in Backyard Press. It involved some of the people working in Backyard Press, but also drew in others who shared an interest in small-scale publishing. We never thought of Champion Books as a fine art publisher. To us, Champion only made sense if it was challenging publishing conventions in one way or another. In particular we sought to unsettle the production process, or an idea of what literature looked like and how it could be read.

Ted Hopkins also thought ‘through’ the book form as he came to conceive and realise both Teledex (Fig. 3), a simulated phone directory (containing his poetry listed alphabetically); and The Book of Slab (Fig. 4) that takes its cue from the popular Time Life Science book series. The Book of Slab is both a compilation of writing and a collection of what was possible in printing at the time. The connection was a deliberate strategy that brought the materials and processes of printing into discourse with the writing to create an integrated text.

Material thinking leads to a type of insight that comes from the interaction between people and materials. Henrik Gedenryd (1998) refers to this as interaction cognition. He points to the conversation that we can have with the materials in making something like a book, but also directs us to consider the interaction we have with the other people involved in the process (Gedenryd 1998: 7). Nancy de Freitas, discussing Paul Carter’s concept of material thinking says:

(Carter) describes the way in which the material world exists between collaborators who contribute the discursive performances which result in the materialisation of their thoughts and ultimately the inventions of their joint work. It is an optimistic way of viewing the creative method that collaborative artists and designers use in constructing the world (de Freitas 2008: 6).
This takes us back to the social dimension of a collective and how to conceive of collective thought. The combination of ideas and opinions naturally lead to something de Freitas identifies as ‘more generous than each might have been on its own’ (2008:6), but it goes beyond this as well. It could be described, as a ‘social imaginary’ (Habermas 1974: 104), where we construct something that represents those involved in the process as well as the world we inhabit. It creates an identity and provides a way to understand ourselves in the world.

We did, however, always think about how the final object would address its public. The launch of the books was often a staged event and an outcome in itself. These events worked as alternative publicity—bringing into the public space—that operated outside of the mainstream publishing and distribution networks. These book launches were an acceptance that the works did not sit comfortably in a conventional bookstore, nor were they comprehensible to mainstream book reviewers. Today this alternative distribution occurs on the web where publics meet directly online. That was not available to us at that time, instead we brought the audience to the works, by staging performances and events to mark the publication.

REFLECTING ON THE PRESSES

As I reflected on Backyard Press and Champion Books for this doctoral study I could see that my experience at these two publishing collectives would offer me an opportunity to draw on a deep knowledge of working collectively, in practice.

The Design Audio Cloud project triggered thinking about the form of a publication; the social context in which it is produced, represented by conversations; and the performative and public nature of publication design. Each of these had resonance with the conversations, collaborative platforms, audiences and public events that were very much a part of a living publishing collective, which I recount in this chapter.
DISCOVERIES

Two discoveries emerged out of the reflection on my experiences at Backyard Press and Champion Books. The first was that the form of self-managed workflow at Backyard Press could be used to understand the contemporary, autonomous co-creator – a role in online collaborations that is discussed further in the next chapter. The second was to do with audience participation in the actions of the collectives which can be one way to understand co-creative publics.

THE LINEAGE BETWEEN SELF-MANAGEMENT AND CONTEMPORARY CO-CREATION

In a conventional collective situation, roles are likely to be deliberately undefined in favour of each member sharing responsibility for all

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Special Thanks to Graeme Reid, Paterson Crest Graphics.

Cover by Paul Greene.
A great day for the start of a fable.
a collective to flatten any distinction between its members. By limiting
the concentration of power by individuals or small groups, a sense of
equity is generated and, participation is spread across the group.

In both Backyard Press and Champion Books we diverged from this
ideal in different ways and for different reasons. We created a fusion
of a self-managed production role, within a collective structure. This
fusion produced an innovation that is instructional when looking at
similar innovations in the current participatory context.

Backyard Press needed to produce commercial work effectively and
repeatedly. For this to happen, we needed to set in place a structure that
relied on individual responsibility for certain tasks. In a sense this followed
the standard rationale for a production-line approach used in most
industries. That is, by breaking the production chain into observable links it
is possible to identify the workflow and where it is blocked or underutilized.

 Nonetheless, for us there was also a political imperative to counter the
standard production-line approach. To resolve this tension we instigated
a self-managed approach informed by the libertarian principle that an
individual is an independent and active agent within a group.

In this structure the individual had responsibility for the production
role they took on in Backyard Press and could develop it as they
saw necessary. In some instances this meant the individual had
purchasing power in their area; or the ability to negotiate workloads;
or opportunities to develop their expertise as required. Each member
would manage their own role in partnership with the others in the
collective. This set up a two-tiered structure: the broad collective,
which was in turn made up of self-managed work areas.

Over time Backyard Press grew to include more people working in
the day-to-day operations (up to 16 during one period). From the start
the intention was to operate as a worker-controlled collective. While
the print machinery used at the start had belonged to Ted Hopkins,
who founded the operations, most of equipment was replaced out
of the income generated from ongoing commercial work. This established the common ownership of the plant.

The structure was fashioned to allow us to share in the income of the press as well as fund our other interests, such as the publication of books through Champion Books. The collective structure was a work-in-progress throughout the life of the press. We were keen to understand it as it evolved and had the opportunity when the press gained government support to develop and to document its development.

DOCUMENTATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT
In the 1980s, the Victorian Labor State Government supported new and existing co-operatives as a way to stimulate employment. The government set up the Co-operative Development Program (CDP) to fund a range of collective enterprises such as Backyard Press. The CDP underpinned the co-operatives with finance, business support and information about co-operative case studies. It demanded, however, that the funded organisation were statutory co-operatives.

By this time Backyard Press was constituted a Propriety Limited Company (Pty Ltd) to secure the resources of the group. Incidentally, this was a more appropriate legal structure to reflect the group’s worker controlled, collective intentions rather than a co-operative. The Co-operative legal structure required an external (non-worker) based directorship, which contradicted the notion of internal control. We negotiated the structure and intention with the CDP and received approximately $80,000.00 in funds.

This support gave Backyard Press the capital it had lacked, and introduced industrial award based pay scales and compliance with health and safety regulations (both welcomed by the group). The changes resulted in some changes to the way the collective worked, yet the core principles were maintained. Importantly it did not alter the relationship between the dual objectives of the collective, namely
THE BOOK OF SLAB BY TED HOPKINS. DOUBLE PAGE SPREAD
CHAMPION BOOKS
collective decision-making on essential issues; and autonomous worker control in a self-managed production process.

In 1984 the CDP funded a case study research project around Backyard Press. Independent researcher, Stan Anson and Backyard Press member Chris White wrote a draft for this study: Ministry of Employment and Training Co-operative Case Study: Backyard Press Pty. Ltd. Draft One, 3-5 August 1984 (Anson and White 1984). In this study Anson defined the motivations of the collective members in what he describes as a ‘decision hierarchy’:

The motives are listed in order of indispensability: the first could not be abandoned without destroying the central purpose of the enterprise (nor, for practical purposes, could the second, but as we have seen the first could not be abandoned in the interests of the second); the last could be abandoned with the least threat to the central purpose of the enterprise.

Sequence of Motives:
1. autonomous and democratic work organisation
2. viable source of livelihood
3. exercise of craft in the production of printed material
4. access to means of self-expression
5. broad congruence of extra-enterprise views and values [political and social orientations] (Anson and White 1984: 9)

Anson goes on to mark these principles as the reason why:

the turnover of members has not threatened the viability of the enterprise. It has meant, if you like, that BYP has functioned less like an organism, in which one part endangers the life of the whole, and more like a mechanism to which (within limits) part might be added or subtracted or interchanged freely (1984: 9).
The self-managed structure, in other words, provided a process that eased people into the collective and coped operationally when people left the collective. It represented a viable network, with independent agents, supported by a collective infrastructure.

In retrospect this was an achievement that we were not completely conscious of at the time. Anson notes the potential contradiction between the two goals of ‘greater democracy and greater autonomy in the workplace’ (1984: 2). Democracy privileges the majority view, while autonomy is orientated towards the individual.

The solution consisted of several aspects worth noting. Democratic decision-making in the collective was made by consensus rather than organised voting. This type of decision-making was made at regular meetings that were held to decide on issues that affected the whole collective. This might include, for example, the purchase on new equipment, the need for extra staff, or allocation of resources to Champion Books and other external activities.

These meetings were largely amiable and consensual. However, if there was something contentious to be decided on, the meetings could be argumentative and often unresolved. Yet there was an underlying sense of collegial good humour that militated against us taking our organisation too seriously.

At the day-to-day production level, decisions were made based on self-management principles. Full-time workers were responsible for their own area in-conjunction with the others working directly with them. That is, while each of us was involved in many aspects of the production, we each managed a specific area. These areas included sales, accounts, scheduling and resource management, pre-press preparation, offset and screenprint production and finishing. This approach created issues of co-ordination, but gave each worker control of their own production process, and created the autonomy we sought.
In the case of the day-to-day decision making, a morning production meeting was used to co-ordinate and communicate the workflow. The process operated essentially as a ‘federation’ of worker-managers who met to confer on what was to be done. On many occasions interim meetings of small working groups would be called to respond to issues that emerged during the day. For instance if the paper stock required to print a job was not available; or if work was proceeding more slowly than expected, the sequence of work needed to be re-arranged.

Each worker was also responsible for his or her own training and development, funded by the collective.

CRAFT OF PRODUCTION
Underlying the type of collective organisation that we built for Backyard Press was a keen interest in the craft of printing and publishing. Anson identifies this as: ‘an orientation towards, and a capacity to take pleasure in, the physical production of (as it happened) printed material’ (1984: 4).

This took in an experimental approach to the work that was done outside of the commercial production process. In fact the knowledge built up in both the commercial and experimental work contributed to each other. Our close relations with commercial printers exposed us to new techniques and resources; in turn the experiments in printing and processes assisted our productivity in the commercial operation.

The spirit of experimentation extended to the way we worked together and how we drew others into our orbit. It could be argued that the organisation was keen to experiment with the material of human interactions and interest in collaboration. The character of Backyard Press could be defined as multi-vocal, reflecting the interests of each of the workers and to some extent the people who congregated around the press. It defied the notion of a ‘company style’, instead giving space
Journey of a Wise Electron

JOURNEY OF A WISE ELECTRON
PETER LYSSIOTIS
PHOTOMONTAGE AND TEXT
CHAMPION BOOKS
for many outcomes and personal expressions to emerge. Each person provided a different view of the shared experience.

The group was nevertheless based on the common goal of creating a model workplace that Anson describes as an ‘autonomous and democratic work organisation’. It was enthusiastic (sometimes naively so) open to new influences and prepared to risk its security.

An example of this character in the Backyard Press context was the group the RASCALS. Most of the members had little design or print production expertise. The design ideas were put forward by a member, who then worked with someone with experience to produce it as a printed artefact. In other words, the design conversation expanded to include the non-expert.

The Backyard Press iteration of a collective structure could be characterised as a collection of independent, yet highly interrelated actors. Each actor needed an awareness of his or her own place in the structure, through which he or she had an impact on the collective structure and how it worked.

CHAMPION BOOKS’ ALTERNATIVE COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE

Champion Books, on the other hand, had a different way of working and organizational structure, which were the outcome of distinct motivations. Champion Books was not commercial in the same way that Backyard Press was. The group was motivated by the act of publishing experimental works in different ways. As such, it was not necessary to establish an efficient production system (in some senses chaos produced the outcome we were aiming for). The people involved in Champion Books were less concerned with the political imperative of forming a collective. It was more organically collaborative, forming and re-forming around whatever publication was in production at the time. Once the decision was made to take on a publication and funds were secure, the decision-making became the responsibility of the author or
project manager. As with the self-managed approach in Backyard Press, this gave discretion to the person or people most involved.

Applying Anson’s ‘Sequence of Motives’ to Champion Books would result in inverting the imperatives to read:

1. access to means of self-expression
2. exercise of craft in the production of printed material
3. broad congruence of extra-enterprise views and values
4. autonomous and democratic work organisation

While point four: autonomous and democratic work organisation, was present in Champion’s structure it was incidental to the primary aim of creating innovative publications; yet it was indicative of a co-creative impulse within Champion Books. The collaborative work process, albeit more fluid than that in Backyard Press, helped to make the first three motives possible. Time was also a factor in the way Champion Books was organized, as its publications took much longer to produce than the work that went through Backyard Press. As a result, the group would meet when necessary rather than regularly, and the focus was seldom on the internal workings of the group.

AN ALTERNATIVE COLLABORATIVE ARRANGEMENT

The Champion group operated in a different manner from Backyard Press. Initially there was an editorial group who oversaw the material. Over time this changed towards a more conventional editorial relationship, otherwise the group operated fairly loosely. The most active person at any time tended to exert the most influence on what was produced. Authors such as Peter Lyssiotis were drawn into the group for the duration that their work was being produced. And many, like Peter, would continue to contribute to the ongoing publication venture.

The output from Champion Books was not extensive. The production was costly and long lead times were required to fit around the commercial
demands of Backyard Press, demanding a high level of commitment from the people involved. However, despite the scale of the output, Champion Books managed to exert a reasonable impact on the local publishing scene, and gave a few people a start in their own careers.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: CO-CREATIVE PUBLICS

The experiences of social/production collectives that I related here also indicate something about a participatory audience that exists immediately outside of the core, work-based collective and its direct community. This audience is once removed from the one that forms the community. Yet, it exists because the people who constitute it, pay attention to the artefacts (including the collective as an artefact itself) and are addressed by the artefacts. In other words, it forms what Michael Warner (2002: 50) terms a public that is directly associated with the press.

For example, the music posters printed at Backyard Press circulated within the public domain. They appeared on walls and posts and were displayed in public venues. In some cases they dominated the visual environment due to their scale and number. Many in the general public would only pay attention to them if they couldn’t avoid it. However, a more specific audience relied on these posters for information, such as what band was playing at a particular venue and date. This group became a public for the poster as well as the musicians. The audience engaged in a public-like discourse around the material, feeding information into various networks. As Warner notes in his depiction of a public, the people in this public can remain as strangers to each other.

The audience in Melbourne at the time was sufficiently large that members may not have known each other. This is where, as Milioni (2009: 276) points out, small, interconnected groups, which nevertheless act independently of each other, form a larger networked public. Network publics then create a rhizomatic channel through
which the discourse flows. That is, the people who link the networks together act as conduits to ‘spread the word’, which then moves through each hub.

So too the audience that congregated at one of Champion Books book launches demonstrates this effect. It attracted not only to a publication, but also to the live-ness of the event that surrounds the publication. A small ‘world’ or culture of interconnected groups and individuals develops around the artefact as it enters the world.

This culture allows the audience to participate actively as makers of the culture through discourse, not merely as consumers of the artefact. In a sense this audience represents the pre-consumer public sphere that Habermas (1989: 150) describes, as a culture-debating rather than culture-consuming public.

Looking at this audience I started to see the genesis of the type of co-creative networked publics that are part of my argument about the changing nature of the audience for publication design. Contemporary participatory publication is possible within a community framework at an intimate level, such as a defined online community.

It is also possible to envisage a networked public that is composed of smaller distributed entities. The co-creative activities, in which this audience participates, include designing and making in the case of production-based publics; as well as discourse in the culture-making publics.

In the next case study into Pool I develop the idea of several types of co-creative public as a way to represent this levels of autonomous making and/or discursive participation.
CASE STUDY #3
RESEARCH AND REDESIGN PROJECT
ABC POOL

ABC POOL: RESEARCH AND REDESIGN PROJECT
SECTION OF ‘THE WALL’ IN THE RESEARCH STUDIO
The ABC Pool research project is the final Case Study of this PhD. It was a field study into the redesign of a hybrid media environment where conventional media and social media intersect inside the national broadcaster, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). Pool is a social networking site for storytellers and media makers and a hybrid of social media, with a community of people attracted to the space; and conventional media represented by the broadcaster.

In the review of this project I draw on the views that are articulated in Chapter 2: Two Views on the Research, of the Design conversation and Co-creative publics as a way to articulate the core argument of this doctoral study.

I use this project in social and participatory media as an example of future contexts and forms of publication design with a particular focus on co-creation as a new design approach to publication design. The concept of autonomous co-creative publics that I developed throughout the study is used to describe the character of

This project has been carried out under the auspices of The Australasian CRC for Interaction Design (ACID). They are part of a wider program of research called Multi-User Environments, and are included under an RMIT Human Research Ethics Committee application # HRESC-A-074-05/08
the participatory audience. This type of audience is an outcome of the development of media and design literacies coupled with lived participatory experiences.

Further I review the Pool research in order to discuss how a designer can transform from author to co-creator within a co-creative situation.

Two insights or discoveries in the Pool research, are the focus of this Case Study. The first is identifying the role of Social Media Producer as a way to describe the potential for the designer as a co-creator. The role, as it operated in Pool, is an example of one that combines professional practices and expertise with a direct interaction with non-professional participants.

The second is recognizing Pool as a hybrid media space, which is instructive as a way to understand a transition in practice and the situation.

The Pool project was a funded collaborative inquiry undertaken within the Australasian CRC for Interaction Design (ACID). I was one of the Chief Investigators in the research team, and although the overall expectations of the project are broader than my doctoral investigation, I have used this project as a means to explore this transformation of my practice and this possible new context for practicing publication design. In the following pages I provide an outline of the entire Pool project, to aid the reader in understanding the complexity of the project, I then focus on my particular area of interest as it relates to my doctoral investigations.

I conclude this chapter by drawing connections between the Pool research and publication design from two perspectives. Firstly, the design of discursive media spaces as publications. Secondly and more broadly, how publication design is subject to similar forces to the ones impacting on conventional media. That is, that the move towards a participatory mode of communication is as prominent in publication design as it is in contemporary media.
LINKS TO THE PREVIOUS CASE STUDIES

The Pool research and redesign project took forward the core discoveries from the previous case studies. In the Design Audio Cloud I concluded that a publication is the act of making thoughts, ideas, opinions and stories public, and performed through conversation. In Backyard Press and Champion Books I considered the way that self-management in the collective workplace provides a model for an autonomous co-creative practice. I also noted several forms of audience participation that occurred around the collectives.

These themes recur in the Pool project, giving evidence of a new expression of publication and publication design as a co-creative and public activity. I use the experience at Backyard Press and Champion Books collectives as a means to compare and contrast these expressions over time and based in different technologies. That is, the analogue print-based collaboration at Backyard Press and Champion Books and the electronic web based co-creation of Pool.
I initiated and co-led the ABC Pool research project with colleague Jeremy Yuille, and research assistants Chris Marmo and Reuben Stanton. The project was commissioned by Pool and funded by ACID. It was a collaborative effort by the research team across the breadth of the research, with specific areas of expertise falling to each of us. Jeremy Yuille managed the interaction research and design. Chris Marmo was involved in user experience research. Reuben Stanton developed the information architecture and visual design and I liaised with the ABC, conducted stakeholder interviews and oversaw the project.

The research team was commissioned to make the Pool site legible. Pool had developed in an ad hoc fashion as a beta, or prototype site. People who used it regularly became familiar with its peculiarities and knew what was possible on the site. But it wasn’t clear to many other people, including those inside the ABC, what it was, how it worked or what it represented. In this case, we defined legibility as: to know where you are, who you are with and what you can do, immediately and at all times; and to establish clarity of voice and movement through the site.

The first stage of the research concentrated on identifying the motivations and behaviours of the people who populated the site and identified as being part of the Pool community. The primary objective was to design a satisfying user experience for this group, which would then become a foundation for further improvements to attract new participants.

Ultimately we aimed for an integrated ‘lean-forward’ and ‘lean-back’ experience. Lean-forward describes an active interaction on the site, such as uploading a media piece or commenting on someone’s work; whereas lean-back depicts the conventional media experience
Your Collaborations
By miles 10
Some great material came out of last week’s speculative history exercise, here’s just one, have you seen the others?

Your Collaborations
By miles 10
About the contribution Meditation in a Paddock (Video)

In The Dark Australia
By miles 10
About the project In The Dark Australia

Featuring Brian Howley
By miles 10
About the person Brian Howley

XPress Ink
By XPress Ink
About the project XPress, Ink.

Music on Pool
By miles 10
About the contribution The Same Cloud

ABOVE: THE REDESIGNED SITE, LAUNCHED FEB 2011
of watching, reading or listening. Both of these were valuable for the success of the site by providing a variety of ways to use it, responding to the inclination of each visitor.

To develop an understanding of each of the constituent groups in and around Pool, we designed a research process based on interaction design principles and methods. We interviewed several active members of the site, as well as stakeholders in the ABC, such as the Pool team, management personnel who had a direct interest in Pool and radio producers who used Pool as an adjunct to their radio programs.

We conducted a user experience survey and observed users as they navigated through the site. A set of artefacts, such as persona cards, diagrams and maps, were designed to take the stakeholders through our design response and interrogate the data using discussion, diagrams and visual propositions (sketches and models) to reach our conclusions and design proposal.

After analysing the data we set out to enhance the clarity of this particular social media venture. The findings of our research were manifested in the final information architecture and visual redesign proposal for the new site, reflecting that Pool is an open platform where people share media and collaborate on projects (from the homepage descriptor).

The key features that were highlighted in the research, namely people, media and projects now form the navigation points for moving through the site. The ABC accepted the interface design and information architecture proposal, and implemented it in 2010. The new site (http://www.pool.abc.net.au) went live on 21 February 2011.

ABC POOL: BACKGROUND

Pool was established by experimental radio makers in Radio National, one of the stations on the national broadcaster. Experimental radio is a recursive practice where radio artefacts, such as sound and word, are explored in order to create new radio forms.
The site’s founding executive producer, Sherre DeLys imagined Pool as a ‘keeping place for experimental practice’ (DeLys 2009). The Internet was seen as an alternative platform for experimental programs on Radio National, which were being phased out of the programming schedule. It was seen that the internet could, over time, support higher fidelity programming and bring the audience into the program.

The format for Pool was developed in conjunction with a group of media and design educators who formed the Pool Consortium. This consortium was established in 2005 to confer on what this website could be and how it could be built. The discussions in the group covered the scope of the project, the technologies available at the time, and the relationship with the ABC. From the outset there was an intention to include media education in the mix of social media activities.

The original concept, formed in 2003 pre-dated the large-scale iterations of social media such as YouTube (2005), Facebook (2004) and MySpace (2006). There was no template for the format. However Web 2.0 developments brought the component parts together to afford more direct public participation in uploading content to the Internet.

As established by the Cosortium, the Pool’s aims were explicit: to create a space where an audience could be brought into the creative practice around media; to highlight the conversations around experimental media ideas; and to connect Australian academic institutions with the national broadcaster. The perceived value of the university connection to the ABC was two-fold: it brought together media researchers to consider imminent changes in media, made possible by the emerging participatory cultures on the Internet.

The student population in university courses also held the promise of developing a new, more diverse audience to what currently existed for Radio National. A case was made that a new audience could be generated by introducing tertiary students and other emerging practitioners into Pool and thus to Radio National and the ABC.
Initially, Pool was housed in Radio National which proved to be successful, even thought at times it was a somewhat unlikely affiliation. Radio National houses much of the ABC’s talk and cultural programs. This located Pool in an established intellectual sphere of thought and critique within the organisation.

The seemingly unlikely connection between an audio medium such as radio and the text- and image-based Internet, provided a new way to perceive the future of media production (at the time video was only starting to emerge as a viable web medium).

The Consortium discussed issues ranging from how the ambience of sound could be used to reconsider the fixity of image and text (proposed by consortium member Brogan Bunt), through to the unlocking of ABC archives through Pool (as put forward by members Ross Gibson and Sherre DeLys) and issues of intellectual property and sharing (raised by Greg Schiemer) (Delys 2007). These ideas were strengthened by the group’s intention to create a different audience experience through direct participation in making media. This intention was initially seen as being driven by educational projects, but this expanded as the site developed.

A pilot (or beta) version of the site was developed in 2006 as a proof-of-concept, which was used to interest ABC management in extending the trial. Pool has since been acknowledged in the ABC as a viable research and development space to explore and report on issues of social media production and audience engagement.

Pool is recognised as a predictive project: one that aims to spot changes as they occur and to look ahead to what might be coming in media practice (DeLys 2009). It has a remit to translate what is found in the Pool experiment out to the rest of the broadcaster where applicable.

An active community of users had grown around the beta version. Our research identified approximately 3000 in 2010 (in 2012 this reached 6500) registered users, with around one-third of those...
constantly or regularly active. A core group remains actively involved on a regular basis, while others are intermittent.

The Pool population also receives stimulus from regular co-productions by ABC radio producers and Pool. Radio producers create ‘callouts’ which is essentially an open-ended recruitment for contributions to a project theme. In a callout, audience members from a producer’s radio program are brought together with Pool members to work on themed projects. For example My Tribe was a project themed around the concepts of interconnectedness, communities, tribes and networks. The project was initiated by Kyla Brettle as part of a co-production with ABC 360 Documentaries and the RMIT Media Program. The My Tribe callout invited people to:

Join my pack, my posse, my people, my network, my mob, my family – MY TRIBE. We will be calling all makers to explore the theme of ‘my tribe’ in a creative work that can be shared on the my tribe pool group as part of a public exhibition. Works can be uploaded as audio, video, text, still images or in any other form via a web-link. For time-based work there is a limit of 10-minutes and text pieces must be 1000 words or less. With your help the my tribe pool group will be a rich and diverse public media experience for all (Brettle 2010).

Pool is a space for user-generated content (UGC). Members produce and upload audio, visual and text files to the site. This is considered a way to engage the audience as makers, providing a venue for a member to display works.

The site supports the member whose ambition is to enhance his or her own reputation as a media maker. Users can engage in Pool in a number of ways: on callouts (a themed project initiated by ABC staff); remix the media that others provide; collaborate directly with others on the site; or comment on works and participate in the discussions on the site.
CREATIVE COMMONS ON POOL

To underpin the potential for collaboration, the Pool Team led the development of an innovative legal agreement for a tailored Creative Commons license for Pool. It was developed in conjunction with Creative Commons Australia and the ABC Legal Division.

The Creative Commons (CC) license allows people in the Pool community to share and re-mix each other’s media, thus facilitating open collaboration. A Creative Commons license creates a set of options that members can nominate to protect their intellectual property and have their creative work attributed. The following excerpt outlines the user’s options to license their work (accessed from www.pool.org.au 06/08/2010):

At Pool you can select from the full spectrum of rights for your contributions, from all rights reserved, to some rights reserved, to no rights reserved.

You declare clearly what you permit to happen with your work; copy, share, reuse and remix.

Whatever licence you choose, you’ll always be credited for your work.

All rights reserved: You have the option to put your work up under full copyright - which means no remixes, and no redistribution unless you give someone specific permissions.

The instruction details another four options open to the member to select: Attribution (BY), Attribution Share-Alike (BY-SA), Attribution, Non-Commercial, Share-Alike (BY-NC-SA), and Public domain.

The tone of voice used in the description of the options highlights the Pool Team’s informal and enthusiastic communication with members of the Pool community. Nevertheless, it is also clear that the intention to safeguard member’s rights has been addressed.
The innovation encompassed by the Creative Commons License helps to model the type of interaction that the Pool Team establishes with its community. It builds a secure and open space in which people can work. By communicating in a direct, informal and open way, the site gives itself character.

Creative Commons is a copyright system that allows a creator to license his or her work under a range of license types. The system facilitates the type of media sharing that underpins Pool operations.

Creative Commons was an outcome of the Open Source movement in the 1990s, which promoted sharing program code between technologists, on the basis that once shared the work would be improved and feed back into the community. Law students from the Harvard Law School took this as framework to do the same with media artefacts (Bollier 2008).
I led the liaison and communications between our research team and the ABC, specifically the Pool Team (ABC staff overseeing the project). This entailed Chris and I visiting ABC Sydney and interview 23 people from the Pool Team, Radio National producers, representatives of ABC Innovations, ABC Management and people from outside the ABC who used Pool for education and research projects. Talks with ABC management included speaking to the Managing Director and the Head of ABC Radio.

In addition, we ran a workshop in Sydney that re-presented initial research and design ideas back to the stakeholders. This was based on the information we gathered and the ideas we were working with. I was in regular contact with the Pool Team during the process, relating the conversations back to the research team.

My own intention through the project was to explore the idea of conversation as a medium. My key role in the research team was to manage the communication between all parties involved in the project. This gave me a central position from which to participate in and observe the conversations that occurred in the project.

Jeremy Yuille led the interaction design research and development of the site re-design. He bought a process to the project that utilises visualisation of information (diagrams, images, maps) and making artefacts (persona cards, mental model). These were used as ways to think through the information, as well as to communicate the ideas that emerged throughout the project.
Chris Marmo undertook user-experience research, and Reuben Stanton was in charge of the interface design solutions. We were all involved in the discussion around the current site and put forward ideas for the proposed site structure.

The mix of people and expertise influenced the outcome, but it should be noted that another team would might have come to a different outcome. This is the subjective nature of the design conversation in practice. It will always differ based on the context and the participants.

COLLECTING THE DATA

The first stage of the project required us to examine how the existing user experienced the site.

Over three days in June 2008 we held open-ended conversations with stakeholders in Sydney and later over another day in Melbourne. Our intention in these meetings was to collate a range of views and to dig as deeply as possible into how the site satisfied or didn’t work for each specific situation.

The research team concentrated on people who we felt, and were advised, were key to the operation of Pool. It was necessary to talk to management, who had strategic concerns around Pool and how it would continue to interface with the conventional operations in the ABC.

The meetings also bought us into contact with those who were using the site as a way to extend particular Radio National (RN) radio programs into the social media space. These people were gaining personal experience of working in social media, and had a working knowledge of how the site performed from the back-end (the administrator’s perspective).

We talked to educators and researchers who were using Pool for other reasons, and who were following its development; and we communicated with the Pool Team. These were the people who were
managing Pool at the time and working out ways to make it more responsive to the needs of the Pool community.

The range of people we spoke to led to a similar range of topics, in and around Pool. The topics included the strategic viewpoint, such as the desire on the part of the ABC to have a way to understand social media from the inside; the funding required to produce Pool and how that impacted on the rest of the organisation; and the other social media instances that were occurring in the ABC.

The radio producers spoke of their experiences, both positive and negative, of using the current site; how they felt about introducing an audience into more direct contact with the radio-making process; and the potential improvements that would make their role more efficient.

People who were using Pool from outside the ABC mentioned ease of use; legibility; and the need to make the space relevant to professional media makers as well as amateurs.

The Pool Team discussed innovations they were making to produce a stronger user experience and the roles that each played in creating Pool.

These conversations aligned with my overarching idea of the design conversation as being disparate and dissonant, but clearly focused on moving towards a solution.

AN OBSERVATION ON THE LOCALITY

A tangential observation I made at the time was that the corridors and offices were full of analogue studio equipment, which had been replaced a few years earlier by new digital equipment. The equipment was well designed and crafted, in the style of Swiss modernism of the 1960s that might have come from the Ulm School tradition.

Ulm was the home of a new generation of industrial and graphic designers in the mid-20th century. Ulm had a progressive charter, connecting function and aesthetics, following on from early modernism characterised by the Bauhaus school. The analogue control
desks and recording equipment have brushed aluminium knobs and slides that could be turned and moved to affect the sound quality required. The desks were finished in teak to give the sense of quality and physical presence.

It was clear that there was still an attachment to these artefacts. They had made their way from the corridors into the offices of the people who had once used them on a daily basis. This suggested two things to me.

Firstly, a nostalgic link to a past practice that was characterised by physicality (the manual action of turning knobs, rather than using a screen and keyboard), and technology that was crafted to define the working space to fit a practice (as opposed to the non-specific digital screen and box, which could be used for any practice, from design to medicine).

Secondly, it made me think that the attachment was to do with a role itself. In other words, that the technology represented a clearly defined role (such as radio producer) rather than the emerging fluidity of practice that digital technology and a range of new demands on media bought about.
PROCESSING THE DATA

Following the workshop we returned to the research studio at RMIT in Melbourne to compile and work with the initial data collected from the interviews, online survey, and a number of user-experiences tests that Chris Marmo conducted. A user experience test explores how an advanced site user navigates the site and makes it work for them. He also observed users who are new to the site and the type of navigation moves they make to work their way through an operation.

THE WALL

Once compiled, we pinned the information to a wall in the research studio. This allowed us to literally see what ideas would surface. Verbatim interview transcripts, survey results, quotes from the participants and preliminary data graphs created the first layer of information.
We then looked for connections that we could make between the materials we were looking at. We noted the like comments (similar issues raised by a variety of respondents); the ones that were surprising; and what was not coming through but necessary to consider.

We used marking pens, post-it notes and diagrams to visualise the connections, surprises and omissions. This part of the process was compelling. The wall became an attraction in the studio; it took on an organic sense of growth and emergence.

The space constructed gave the research team a way to communicate with each other and explore ideas and it was possible to bring others in and talk about the ideas that were coming through. Further, the information and our scribblings created an artefact that later became a way to take the stakeholders through the process and communicate the ideas.

A display wall is common in many design disciplines, such as communication design, interaction design and others, to present
ideas in a material form: text or image on paper, contained within an observational space. The forms then seem to become ‘actors’ performing a role in the development of solutions. The ‘actors’ visualise information in a way that is easily comprehended, using quantity and scale to depict commonality and intensity; connecting lines represent links that appear between disparate responses. Thus the wall can be used to identify like ideas, which can then be clustered together (see Mental Model, below).

THE WALL AS A PUBLICATION
The wall became the first publication of the research. This type of publication can become a primary model for mediated emergence. That is to say that a level of mediation occurs in selecting the material to display and the organisation of that material. Yet, it also allows connections to form between the elements, which in turn can pose solutions or ways towards solutions.

For example, quotes from participants were selected as key ideas and highlighted by enlarging these and taking them out of their context (within the verbatim speech). This represents a decision, similar to design decisions that establish spatial hierarchy, or editorial decisions about the prominence of certain ideas within a publication, yet these decisions, while limiting some connections to form, enable others to become obvious.

An instance of this is a quote by one participant who alluded to wanting other people on Pool to engage with the ideas around a work prompted discussion on participants’ motivations: “Things on Pool are things you’ve thought about and want other people to think about”. In this case the speaker emphasised sharing ideas. This opened up a line of enquiry into what motivates people to join the Pool community.

Other comments and responses suggested that some participants were motivated by having his or her works seen by ABC staff; still others aimed
SECTIONS OF THE ‘WALL’ USED IN POOL RESEARCH AND REDESIGN PROCESS
to collaborate on making new works with people they met on Pool; and for some it was a way to tell stories, incrementally and in a social space. We noted too that some people joined Pool because of its strong connection to the ABC and the ABC brand values of trust and collegiality.

Many of these ideas were either reinforced or challenged as we delved further into the material on the wall. Gradually a picture emerged of a community that was shaped by its conditions, including the lack of functionality, yet one that was also determined to optimise the situation and find ‘work-arounds’ to make things happen. In other words the community had developed the ethos of a shared space, which had its own conventions and codes.

As new material was generated, diagrams, stories and notes, for example, they were added to the wall, further refining some concepts and opening up others. We noted that the wall, representing a stage in the design process, at this point became as Tonkenwise points to: ‘a partner in the process, dialoguing with the designer, helping to articulate what the design should be’ (Tonkenwise 2007: lecture).

This interaction occurred between the research team and the wall, with which we had now become familiar. However, the wall also became a way for us to articulate what we were finding in the research and processing stage. In other words, the conversation reached out to others who were attracted to the ideas being generated, and the physical and visual space that the wall created.

The wall became our first publication of the findings, and a place we could test the ideas with others. We used this aspect of the wall at a workshop with stakeholders, which I detail later in this section.

INQUIRING MATERIALS

In the next phase of the project we produced a set persona cards to further interrogate the research data. Personas are used in interaction design to create a more clearly defined sense of a user. The word
Alex
Alex has been working at Radio National and in broadcasting for 20 years.

Astrid
Astrid is a 21 year old from Mudgee, studying journalism/media arts at UTS.

Mollie
Mollie is a 32 year old freelance film producer.

Penny
Penny is a 34 year old producer for the weekly program “360” on Radio National.

Lara
Lara is a 26 year old community manager at Pool.

Sam
Sam is a 39 year old process engineer at a Zinc refinery in Townsville.

Ruth
Ruth is a 58 year old semi-retired ESL teacher from Dandenong.

Ken
Ken has taught media arts and design at UTS for the past 6 years.

Pool has 1621 registered users. 484 have uploaded, 172 have made 1055 items. 129 have been active in the past 6 weeks, 1928 items.

442 text, 499 images, 680 web links, 47 videos, 250 audio.

What is your main reason for using Pool?

- To feel part of a community
- To get recognition from the ABC
- To get recognition from other users
- To find other artists I can collaborate with
- To find inspiration
- To display my work
- To give my work a chance of being used by the ABC
- To get recognition from other users

persona card fronts and information graphics and diagrams from pool research phase
persona derives from the Latin for a kind of mask made to resonate with the voice of the actor (per sonare meaning “to sound through”). A persona card uses common characteristics, motivations and behaviours shared by a number of people and personifies them into a fictional, but realistic character profile.

Several persona cards were written and produced to represent the key motivations and behaviours we found. These profiles then become reference points, similar to the guiding principles, to test design solutions by building likely scenarios (see below).

The profiles below give a sense of the process as well as the participants. One persona card, for example, is for Astrid who posts work to the site on a regular basis. She might be motivated to be working in a space managed by the ABC, with the potential to have work featured by an ABC professional. Astrid’s persona card describes her interests and behaviours:

Astrid moved to the city a few years ago, and uses sites like Facebook to share photos and to keep in touch with family and friends from back home. She lives in a share house with 2 other students - there’s no TV in the house, but they all have laptops.

She and her friends in Sydney often meet between classes and after school, where they talk about uni work, travel and their careers. Astrid has mentioned her plans to study abroad for a semester next year - an idea her friends are encouraging.

After uni, she has her sights firmly set on a career in the media, and is trying to build a solid portfolio and gain relevant experience before she finishes her studies. She enjoys receiving constructive feedback, although she’s always a little apprehensive before showing her work to others (excerpt from Astrid persona card, written by Chris Marmo)
Another card was for an independent filmmaker Mollie, who uses the site to get a sense of what is being produced in the social media space. She may not be interested in posting work, but could provide opportunities to young filmmakers:

Mollie is a 32 year old film producer. She is a sole trader, but shares studio space with some friends who work in the same industry. She tends to work autonomously, but she can usually rely on her studio-mates to pull together when she needs it. She is a member of Screenhub, an industry website that posts jobs, industry news and has a comprehensive directory of practitioners. She is a bit tired of having to go through a producer to find contacts, and thinks places like Screenhub are great (excerpt from Mollie persona card, written by Chris Marmo).

The personas are fictional profiles, compiling like data from the people we spoke to and putting it into a knowable form. The personas become useful when trying to test an idea or design solution. To take this further scenarios are developed and explored: Does Astrid know how to get her work viewed by an ABC staff producer, what role do comments play in developing her ideas and media work, and is she familiar with social media conventions such as privacy and licensing settings? Or, how would Mollie want the site to operate, what does she need to find, and how easy is it for her to get to the media she is looking for?

Each of these questions has a response that can direct a potential technology solution. For example, the new site is designed to allow ABC staff to follow people in their Project, enabling Astrid’s work to come to the fore and possibly being featured on the frontpage; or Mollie’s need to easily find media is improved by the new search facilities.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

As a result of the users community and stakeholder responses we developed a set of guiding principles, fashioned to direct the redesign process. The principles are used as reference points. When a solution is posed it can be checked against the guidelines to ensure that it complies with the principle. Note: further description is added in square brackets in the listing on the opposite page.

SYDNEY WORKSHOP

Before beginning the task of redesigning the site we felt it important to take the research findings back to the stakeholders. This produced a cyclical communication process, bringing them back into the conversation. It also helped to refine the ideas to ensure they were optimal.

In other words, could we communicate the ideas effectively and gain support, and had we covered the aspects that the stakeholders thought were essential to Pool working to its maximum potential?

Reporting back to the ABC stakeholders was done in a workshop format, engaging the participants to use the persona cards and work through a variety of scenarios. In effect we were reproducing some of the process that we used to arrive at the ideas, thereby opening the process up to others. It had two effects: firstly, to invite others to contribute to the project in a structured way (the response was valuable to refining ideas); secondly, it meant the participants understood the intention of the research and redesign (thereby making the final proposal sensible and comprehensible).

At the workshop we presented an overview of what we found in the research stage; images of the wall to explicate the process we had been through, the persona cards, diagrams of relationships, motivations and behaviours of the current community that we observed, and a mental model of the information and how motivations and behaviours related to technology functions.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**Make Pool legible:**
To know where you are, who you are with and what you can do, immediately and at all times
Clarity of voice and movement through the site [voice here refers to how Pool ‘sounds’ to its users. Each social media site projects itself differently, and so can be read as a distinct text, within a network of texts]

**Lower the barriers to entry:**
Minimise any unnecessary restrictions to becoming a member of Pool, simplify processes and build in opportunities to participate regularly throughout the site

**Set defaults to public and transparent:**
The default state is public/open unless the owner opts to make a work, contribution or project closed [Default refers to the state that is set as the automatic option in the application; a user is required to deliberately choose an alternative option]
All behaviours and interactions on Pool default to transparent [e.g. an ABC staff member is identified by the ABC lissijous ( ) attached to their comment, making their position apparent; or, if a member opts to follow another person on the site, an email notification is sent to the person concerned]

**Make Pool sustainable**
Optimise the site for current users:
Redesign the site to enhance the experience and facilitate the activities of current members [to both reward the community for the effort they have made, as well as prompting word-of-mouth promotion of the ease of experience]
Promote member’s ‘reputation’ [make the site a valuable place to contribute to]
Clarity of pathways for communication, connections and personal and professional outcomes [to assist in making the site legible], and

Lay the groundwork to attract new audiences/new practices:
Utilise the conventions of social media to create a personal experience of the site [using features developed elsewhere in social media operations to emphasise the personality of Pool]
Create an intelligent space: develop ease of entry, ease of use, and clarity of opportunity [to take away awkward functionality and make it satisfying, thus more attractive to new users].
Jeremy Yuille created a ‘mental model’. A mental model brings together the things that people do (green in the image above), in whatever way they can on the site, and looks for the functions that support that activity (blue in the image). This highlights the functions that must be kept and enhanced, it also shows where the gaps are.

For example, communication on the site is essential to satisfy the desire to ‘have someone think about a work’ and then to communicate those thoughts to the creator. The mental model uses a clustering process that draws together ‘like’ activities and functions. The final stage was to condense this into simple and knowledgeable areas (black blocks). In this case we came up with four key motivations within the community, namely to: produce something; gather interesting stuff; belong to a media community and be part of the ABC.

Following the workshop we processed the responses we gained from the participants and moved to the final stage, namely to redesign the site structure and interface.

INTERIM REPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS

A report was produced and presented back to the ABC (see Key Recommendations on following page). The report contained our key findings to date as well as several recommendations, which I will discuss here. The key recommendation was to redesign the site, whilst optimising it for the current users, with the intention of laying groundwork for future development. We found that confusion about what Pool was, came about because of a plethora of functions and disparate spaces, which did not appear to connect with each other.

To make the site legible we determined to simplify the way the site operates, collapsing like functions into fewer and more consistent options, building a comprehensible experience using the site. Further, we aimed to define spaces on the site that highlighted People, Media, Projects and the ABC.
Along with this, we felt it important to point to the fact that the community represented media makers, rather than artists, hence defining Pool as a media site.

In addition we noted that Pool offered opportunities to the ABC, as a research and development space that could inform other ABC social media productions.

Finally, we put forward the notion that Pool holds a unique position in the international media landscape. It sits at the intersection between conventional media and social media in a way that we did not find elsewhere. This point is significant to this study. It locates a space (the intersection) as a research site in itself, worthy of investigation.
REDESIGNING THE SITE INTERFACE AND INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

The research phase produced an insight into Pool from many and disparate perspectives. The challenge was to provide a solution that would go some way to satisfying the hopes of the respondents, while at the same time keeping a close eye on the whole picture.

We decided to limit the redesign proposal by setting the priority as optimising the site for its current community. That meant that some advanced improvements were held off until this first priority was reached. The decision was contentious and in a way contradicted the culture of making improvements on a regular basis that had developed in Pool till then. Nevertheless, as the core commission was to make Pool legible, it was essential to return to the guiding principles regarding legibility:

To know where you are, who you are with and what you can do, immediately and at all times, and

Clarity of voice and movement through the site

Each of the principles, above, implies that Pool should present itself and what a user can do on the site clearly and explicitly. Indeed, Pool becomes a ‘text’ that can be read. This could be compared to a magazine cover, which makes it clear to the potential buyer what is inside the publication, who publishes it, and in some way gives a reason to purchase the publication. Except that in this case the site aims to engage the viewer to participate at some level. As with the magazine, these notions can be expressed visually and in the design structure as well as the words used on the cover.

These key motivations were distilled into nodes, which provide visual and information architecture solutions. A definition of a node is an active electronic device that is attached to a network, and is capable of sending, receiving, or forwarding information over a communications channel.
INTERIM REPORT TO STAKEHOLDERS

Pool has a vibrant community but is being held back by the current website design

Recommendations:
1. Optimise the site for the current community, addressing existing design and usability issues, and communicating the Pool purpose clearly
2. Re-design the site to visually and structurally emphasise people, communications, and community

Pool is a media site populated by people who are passionate about what they create and want to engage with and belong to a diverse media community

Recommendations:
1. The role of Community Manager be designated and resourced to generate community identity, interaction, collaboration and connection to the ABC.
2. Pool community members be invited to become community managers of their own interest groups. Training resources to be developed and provided to interested members
3. ABC Producers to be resourced to continue their involvement in Pool to build their expertise in community engagement

Pool is a key to building other audiences

Recommendations:
1. The Executive Producer and others continue to develop contacts with tertiary and other educational institutions, festivals and other events that attract new audiences
2. An appropriate marketing campaign be developed for the launch of the re-designed site to build awareness of Pool to new target audiences

Pool is a method that could be used as the basis for participatory media in the ABC

Recommendations:
1. Pool be considered by the Regional Media Hub program as an exemplar project for participatory media. Pool has significant intelligence on how to build and stimulate media communities
2. The ABC brand and values be evident on the site to depict the ABC as a significant partner in the community

Pool is situated at the intersection of conventional broadcasting media and participatory media

Recommendations:
1. Pool continue to engage with media researchers to observe and understand the significance of these developments
2. Opportunities for continued partnerships between Pool and tertiary institutions be developed
Translating a human motivation into an electronic and visual device concerns both interaction design (the conversion of a human interaction into an electronic function) and communication design (the visual text that communicates the intention).

We proposed four nodes to represent the motivations and to use as electronic devices (navigation buttons) in the site redesign. The first iteration was to define the nodes as: People; Works; Projects; and the ABC (to be represented by the ABC brand liissijous). This was further refined and rearranged as Media; Projects; People and the ABC. In the later case the ABC was also to be represented by global header and footer navigation bars, common to all ABC sites.

Media represented the media works that people upload to the site (produce something). These were text, image, video, and sound files. As Pool’s intention is for people to share works, and progress their own work in response to comments from others, this space is designed to be easy to use, with a number of functions that promote sharing,
favouriting and notifications about activity around the media.

Projects (gather interesting stuff) is the space that defines Pool most clearly. It is what happens on Pool compared to Media and People, which come onto Pool as external influences. The Project space aggregates several operations that are separate on the existing site: call-outs, discussions, groups, forums and news. I discuss this space as a sample of a publication in the Analysis below.

People was a way to bring the personal side of pool to the surface (belong to a media community)

ABC (be part of the ABC) acknowledges that the ABC attracts people to the site. While not all members are enticed by the proximity to the ABC, many are drawn to the brand principles that the ABC contributes, namely trust and security (where there is a policy that protects media production and distribution); collegiality, which proposes a sharing and discursive space for members to work in; and critical intellectuality that supports ideas and critique around them.
COMPLETION OF THE POOL PROJECT

The design proposal was accepted by the ABC, under the new Multiplatform Division (Radio) and implemented in 2010. The site went live in February 2011.

I have been involved in the final stages of meeting with the ABC project manager and the web developers commissioned to complete the work. This entailed translating the design intentions and specifications we put forward. This again was a communication issue, requiring detailed discussion (two meetings over 5 hours) on what a specific design instruction means. That is, both what is the intention behind the specification as well as what technology function could be used to achieve the desired result. Each technology function then needs to be referred back to the guiding principles to ensure it does not contradict the underlying aims of creating a default position that privileges openness and transparency.

The web developers converted the Design Specification Document into Functional Specification and Process Flows documents. Each of these articulates the plan that the developers use to implement the site design. It is essential that agreement be reached at this point to ensure confident progress through the final design stage.

SUMMARY OF THE POOL RESEARCH PROJECT

The full research project involved working through the brief, which specified making Pool legible to its users, the stakeholders within and outside the ABC and to the media research community in general. To achieve this we fashioned a process of inquiry, prototyping, testing and communication.

This was based on principles of interaction, web and communication design. Interaction design principles ensured that the design solution was based on the experiences of members of the Pool community, and in-conjunction with the community. It was essential
that the redesign should reflect the motivations, behaviours and aspirations of those involved directly.

Converting these dimensions of human interactions to a web design involved working closely with the web developers to translate the guiding principles that we established into a comprehensive set of internet functions that would encourage rather than impede on-site collaboration and communication.

Communication design, and in particular the design of communicative spaces underpinned the research approach. This included not only the web interface and structure as a design artefact, but significantly the design of the communication that led to the project outcome. In other words, the data collection via the conversations with stakeholders; processing that data via the wall and inquiring materials; re-presenting the interim findings back to stakeholders in a workshop, which in turn acted as a communication channel; and working with the developers to interpret the ideals that emerged in the research all relied heavily on communication design.

I regard the full Pool research and redesign project as a ‘publication’. That is, that not only is Pool a publication of participatory contributions; but importantly that the research project was an ‘act of making public’, which is inherent to publication design.
THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA PRODUCER

In the Pool research I noticed a new hybrid role had emerged out of the intersection of conventional and social media space mentioned above. The role of the social media producer (SMP) is a fusion of professional practitioner and a ‘prosumer’ (producer-consumer) or ‘pro-am’ (professional-amateur).

Initially, I didn’t realise the depth of the innovation that the Pool team fashioned out of the now conventional role of (social media) community manager. In discussions with Kyla Brettle, a colleague from radio journalism who had initiated participatory projects on Pool, I began to see the dimensions of the role.

Kyla Brettle had come to a similar conclusion in the research she was doing into online music features. Since then, she and I have developed a taxonomy of the role. This was taken into an educational research project: Future Makers, Future Markets, which further describes the position and its implications.

MEDIATION

The title ‘social media producer’ appears contradictory. The role fuses the open-ended, participatory and messy, free-for-all in social media, with the direction and mediation offered by a producer in a conventional or industrial broadcast situation.

At a closer look, however, this title points to an advantage of providing professional mediation within a co-creative situation. The fusion has the potential to create something new.
The mediated outcome produced by the SMP, could be to develop the production values in a media piece to produce a radio segment, played on one of the associated radio programs; or an online feature on Pool itself. Alternatively, the work could be part of a collaboration and generate a new work.

It is this role that alerted me to the potential of combining audience contribution with the direction and/or production expertise of a professional to co-create an outcome.

In the research into the Pool community, we found many contributors were motivated to join Pool in order to be in proximity to the ABC and its professional staff.

The role of the producer is reciprocally reconfigured in this hybrid relationship. Some new attributes are required by someone working across the spaces; while others, normally needed for broadcast production, are not useful in the participatory media space. The communication designer could have a similar experience in the same situation.

The SMP role has several expressions on Pool. The first is the ABC staff member who runs Pool as the community manager. She oversees all the interactions on Pool and makes connections; puts people in touch with each other; and organizes the project schedule. Her role is a management one, setting the conditions in which other things can happen.

The second is a radio producer who sets up a callout and then manages the callout community. A radio producer synchronizes the theme of the callout with the theme of his or her radio program.

Pool members and people in the radio audience are invited to respond to the theme with text, audio, image or video works. It is the producer’s job to find things within that community which can reformed for the radio program or used for another outcome.

The radio producer will work with the media maker who submits the
piece to improve the work and its production values. Commenting on specific works and negotiating with the creator or creators, achieves this improvement.

The third is someone in the community who takes it on themselves to stimulate interactions, move between projects and develop a sense of place. This is the community member who now performs a guidance role on the site. He or she might crossover several projects and look for synergies, or provide resources, information, tips or comments to move a project forward, or alternatively find a project that had started to peter out and re-invigorate it.

RADIO PRODUCER > SOCIAL MEDIA PRODUCER

The radio producer in their conventional position commissions people to provide the necessary expertise: sound engineers, recording specialists, writers and so on, to realize a project. The producer also arranges interviews with people who can contribute to the program content. There is a professional level of collaboration in the role, and each participant is expected to know how and when to contribute.

As the radio producer moves into the social media space, the conventional scene of radio practice changes. Here the collaborators necessitate a different type of interaction.

The media that is produced in response to a ‘callout’ may not be what the producer expected, and the working habits of the community member do not necessarily align with those of the production unit.

Unlike a radio program, social media is not constrained by a timeline, there is not a fixed schedule in which the work appears. Nor do the media works have a definable end point.

The life of a media work can extend past the date it is uploaded and viewed. The interactions, such as comments, remixes and so on, around a piece of media become a part of that media, and the idea of extracting an artefact out of that situation is less easily achieved.
A HYBRID MEDIA SPACE

Pollyanna Ruiz, in her article Walking the Net: Smooth Space and Alternative Media Forms (Ruiz 2008), employs the concept of striated and smooth spaces, as proposed by Giles Deluze and Felix Guatarri to distinguish different media spaces.

The model is useful here to understand where Pool is located on the media spectrum. Conventional media operates in a striated space, which can be represented by parallel lines arranged vertically to depict managerial hierarchy, as well as production and communication-flows. Social media, on the other hand, can be seen as rhizomatic, flatter and horizontal, with a less hierarchical structure. The intensity of activity rather than a pre-determined form shapes the smooth space.

Pool represents the intersection of striated and smooth spaces, creating a hybrid site, influenced by both spaces, yet with its own characteristics and modality.

In this study I have used the research into the Pool site, and in particular this hybrid space, as a means to investigate and consider what could be learnt for publication design.

Ruiz uses Deluze and Guatarri’s concept of the striated and smooth space to analyse two left-wing political news outlets: The Socialist Worker newspaper and the Greenham Common newsletter, Greenham Factor (Ruiz 2008: 178).

Her example is instructive for this review of Pool’s place in the media. It highlights that the difference between the level of participation in each instance, and how participation is structured determines the nature of the publication. This is instructive as a way to analyse the effect of participation on the form and character of a publication.

The Socialist Worker takes a conventional (if counter-political) position, modelling its approach on traditional newspaper production. It has a strong editorial imperative (the Party line) and offers little room for contribution from people outside the editorial team.
The layout mimics a standard newspaper format. The information is divided into sections such as news and opinion. The imagery is conventionally applied rather than being used as a means to enhance the communication of ideas and information. In this case participation is controlled and restricted by the editorial structure.

The Greenham Factor newsletter on the other hand is based on a feminist, non-hierarchical and inclusive paradigm. A group of women who blockaded an American nuclear missile base in Greenham Common, Berkshire, England from 1982-2000 produced the Greenham newsletter (Hipperson 1982).

The design was deliberately and assertively unmediated with the contributions directly laid out on the page without ‘sections’, dictated styles or other publication layout devices. The design decision, put simply, was to remove, as much as possible, the imposition of a design structure that would limit participation.

These two examples depict publications that are essentially different in the way they are designed and operated that extends well beyond how they look. While they are clearly not the radio and internet media that Pool represents, they do, I think, highlight the influences and tensions between striated and smooth spaces in a hybrid site.

THE ABC CONVENTIONAL MEDIA AND ABC POOL SOCIAL MEDIA

The ABC differs from both open-ended, participatory media as well as other mainstream media organisations, such as commercial television and newspaper companies. The ABC as the national broadcaster operates to a charter that, in part, states its aims as:

(a) to provide within Australia innovative and comprehensive broadcasting services of a high standard as part of the Australian broadcasting system consisting of national, commercial and community sectors and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, to provide:
(i) broadcasting programs that contribute to a sense of national identity and inform and entertain, and reflect the cultural diversity of, the Australian community; and

(ii) broadcasting programs of an educational nature (ABC 1983).

In other words, the ABC responds to a non-market demand to provide a broad ‘voice’ to a culturally diverse society. Notwithstanding this, it does share a conventional production and distribution model with commercial media producers.

Information is gathered by its employees, processed into news, current affairs or entertainment and then broadcast to the audience. Some level of audience interaction is included in the model (e.g. talkback radio and comments online), and conventional measurements such as ratings and focus groups are used to ascertain audience response to individual radio or television programs.

The structure is conventionally structured into production schedules (dailies and weeklies production clusters) and line-of-command communication channels.

Pool, on the other hand, follows many of the newly minted social media conventions, namely: open participation by the audience/makers; a flatter organisational structure; less mediation of content; and minimal direction of the production and communication flow. Pool is therefore closer to the collective principles of smooth space structures. Yet Pool sits within the broadcaster as a production unit, subject to the same editorial and legal policies as the radio, television and online divisions within the ABC. As I’ve mentioned, initially Pool was housed within ABC Radio National. More recently it has come under the auspice of the newly formed Multiplatform Division, Radio. Pool is staffed by employees of the ABC, and is a recurrent item in the Division’s budget. In other words, Pool sits between the internal accountability of the ABC and the open and comparatively
unmediated interaction of external social media conventions. Some accommodation has been made within the ABC to allow Pool to perform within both.

For example a Creative Commons schedule was developed for Pool users to nominate how their creative works are to be used by others. The Pool team, Creative Commons Australia and the ABC Legal Division, negotiated the schedule to recognise the dual needs of protecting intellectual property rights while at the same time allowing media to be shared for collaborative outcomes.

Other policies such as editorial moderation and the use of archival material, for example, were developed to take account of the needs of the broadcaster and the Pool community. These policies incidentally feed back as practices into the broadcaster, as well as the broader social media, environment. The hybridity of the Pool site is born out by the finer details of the relationship between the two spaces. It also points to some of the tensions between conventional and emergent practices.

SOCIAL MEDIA AS A DISRUPTION TO CONVENTIONAL PRACTICE

In the case of the Pool site, the tensions, such as legal and editorial policies, can be worked through and compromise solutions found. It is still the case, however, that there are fundamental differences between the way conventional or industrial broadcasting, and social media relate to their respective audiences.

Social media, the online facility that allows people to interact with each other directly poses a threat to conventional media, which is built on highly mediated meaning-making. Social media alters the information and communication flow in essential ways. Communication (information, news and so on) flows more directly through individuals who produce and share source material with each other and the broader audience.

As a many-to-many distribution system it counters the one-to-many
broadcast model of conventional media. For example the Indymedia movement mentioned earlier, allows participants to upload news stories, videos and audio to the site (http://www.indymedia.org/en/index.shtml). The site acts as a repository of these stories from citizen journalists, and as a distributor that moves the information to members and other media outlets. The audience in social media has the opportunity to participate in making the media as well as contributing to the media channel, the social media website. Conventional or industrial media on the other hand limits audience participation to relatively controlled instances such as talkback, reality television programs and more recently, web forums and chat rooms attached to a particular television or radio program.

While this distinction begins to blur as media organisations attempt to integrate social and conventional media platforms, Pool still remains an example of a genuine hybrid site. The venture benefits from depth of practice in both conventional media, represented by the radio producer and program maker; as well as the social media activist, represented by active community members.

Social media has the potential to put pressure on the dominant media by undercutting the way information and communication circulates through society. Clayton M. Christensen in The Innovator’s Dilemma: when new technologies cause great firms to fail poses an analogy to this situation (Christensen 1997). In his book he characterizes the disruption that can occur when an inferior technology overwhelms an existing one, by offering a more compelling alternative to a public. For example, the mobile phone lacked many of the capabilities of fixed line telephony when it was introduced. Yet the attraction of mobility rather than fixed location telecommunication drove its development to a point where it is now starting to dominate the field.

If we apply this to social media, we see it does not have the same resource structure, infrastructure or reach of mainstream media.
Whereas mainstream media employs many professionally trained staff (designers, journalists, producers, photographers, directors, actors and so on), social media currently relies largely on an amateur and pro-amateur base.

Mainstream media has, for example, foreign correspondent desks in many parts of the world. Social media depends on people who happen to be on the ground at the time of an event, who can report and upload stories to the Internet.

While these conditions are changing as social media begins to become a dominant force, the attraction of social media lies elsewhere. It has the appeal of participation and sociability. It provides alternative ways for people to collectively create meaning, less fettered by external mediation; and it currently has a strong ethos of free use (financially free as well as free to participate).

Social media conflates the way a media object and its meaning are created: it can be both produced and consumed by the same person (thus inference and interpretation are commonly produced by maker and audience). In addition a site like Facebook becomes the primary context for the opinions and information expressed on the site. Social media then fits within the broader context of the public sphere, which is reciprocally influenced and extended by it.

Thus, social media on the one hand unsettles the status quo in mainstream media, while on the other hand, it can be subject to control and influence by existing, dominant economic and political forces. The disruptive agency that social media brings to the situation is pervasive and sudden.

Evidence of the surge of social media can be seen in the efforts made by mainstream media, corporations and governments to engage with their publics via social platforms. Mainstream media is recalibrating its relationship with its publics as a response. However, it is clear as well that mainstream media maintains the dominant position as media provider.
It is unclear at this nascent stage of social media, of how extensive and long lasting the changes brought about by social media will be. This is one reason why a hybrid site such as Pool is interesting.

Clearly Pool will not seriously threaten its host, the ABC, as the demand for social networking does not challenge the demand for professionally produced broadcast material. Yet Pool, and its location at the intersection between the conventional and social media, highlights the tensions and opportunities that exist at this juncture of the two spaces.
ANALYSIS OF THE POOL RESEARCH

In this next section I analyse the discoveries from the Pool project against the framework outlined in Chapter Two. This final project provided me with the opportunity to explore a live co-creative situation. I extrapolate what the discoveries mean for a publication designer working in a co-creative context.

THE DESIGN CONVERSATION

DISSONANCE AND THE PROCESS OF LISTENING THROUGH INTERACTION

Conversations were used as the method to collect the bulk of the data in the project. Interviews were conducted with several people in the Pool team and the Pool community, key strategic stakeholders from the ABC, and people from outside who used the site for research and education purposes.

Following this, back in the studio, extensive conversations were engaged in to process the information into something we could know about Pool. These discussions formed a sense of the design conversation I outline in this study. The design conversation encapsulates the visual and textual language in a design situation. My research into the design conversation gave me a way to read the situation. I characterize the design conversation as dissonant and dialogic. Each of these characteristics was evident in Pool, and valuable to the research and design process.
The Pool site is dissonant, full of disparate voices, expressing different motivations and speaking about a variety of behaviours. We spoke to twenty-three people initially, twelve at a subsequent workshop at ABC Sydney; received 74 online survey responses; and observed eight user trials. The full set of consultations came from people in the following groupings:

The Pool team are employed in the ABC to produce Pool. They include the Executive Producer, whose role is similar to an executive producer on radio. He or she has oversight of the space and manages interaction with the parent organisation, the ABC. The team includes several social media producers, whose role is part community manager, part producer. Other members provide technical and content input into the site, and interns regularly work on Pool.

One aim of the Pool team, during this research phase, was to make sense of the venture and to communicate it coherently to their partner ABC stakeholders. This occurred during the research process, specifically through the workshop and interim report. In these we highlighted the innovations made in Pool, such as creative commons licenses produced jointly by Creative Commons Australia and the ABC legal department; and the social media producer role.

ABC stakeholders comprise ABC managers, who allocate budget and resources to the site and who have a vested interest in the knowledge that is produced through Pool. They also include radio producers who participate as ‘callout coordinators’ acting as social media producers for co-productions, which they develop between their radio programs and Pool.

External stakeholders include educators and researchers who use Pool within their own domains, such as university courses and archival research projects. This group, because of its diversity, did not express one essential aim. Instead it held the potential to explore the learning
potential of Pool as educators gained experience in social media and education in the public space.

The Pool community is comprised of the group of people who participate directly on the site by uploading media, holding discussions, commenting on each other’s works and joining in callouts and other projects. They range across regular, active users through to occasional users. For example, some people join Pool as part of their media course at University, others join to contribute to a callout by one of the radio producers. Still others come onto the site for a specific collaboration with his or her contacts. The expressions of this group varied widely and took the most work to establish common motivations and behaviours. This group was central to the design response. As stated earlier, our ambition was to design the site to enhance the experience of existing users on the site.

A common aim of all the project stakeholders was to optimise the learning potential that could be gained from the Pool research. ABC management could learn how to deal with an ‘insurgent’ audience and the issues of risk to editorial policy and production processes. The callout coordinators learnt how social media could enhance their conventional radio presence and the implications for their workload and professional practice. External educators and researchers were keen to have a site that had the capacity to perform well in situations that required some level of certainty. For example, an educator with a duty of care for his or her students requires a robust site with clear privacy and intellectual property procedures and a welcoming and interactive community.

ACTIVE LISTENING THROUGH INTERACTION

The dissonant voices needed to be bought together into patterns so we could see where ideas were clustered together, and where surprises had occurred. To achieve this, we adopted a process of listening through
interaction., This entailed posing questions to those involved and eliciting responses, by employing interactive devices such as visual and tactile artefacts. We paid close attention to the responses, which we posted on the ‘wall’ (Fig. 4).

The collected conversations started to form into an artefact, which was physically represented by the wall. This ‘artefact’ could then be approached from different points of view. We would listen to the backtalk that Schön (1991: 78) describes. That is, the materials on the wall suggested some directions to follow. This occurred particularly when we saw the connections between like motivations and behaviours.

By moving material around on the wall we could see alternative connections between ideas, start to cluster together. These in turn, suggested a range of design solutions. This fluid, visual approach allowed ideas to emerge and be tested against a set of guiding principles as well as the evidence in front of us. We could look at what was coming through from the stakeholders, for example, and then overlay that with the motivations of the community members.

One issue that came to the surface was the presence of the ABC in the Pool space. Some of the ABC staff were uncertain about how obvious the ABC professional should be. However, to counter that view we found that many community members were often motivated to be a part of Pool because of its proximity to the ABC. They noted that the values espoused by the ABC were consistent with the Pool community ethos.

As the national public broadcaster, the ABC sets out to represent many voices and is moving away from an authoritative position towards one where public contributions become valued. The ABC’s own ‘brand values’ are Editorial Excellence, Innovation and Creativity, Universal Access, and Courage. Our finding was that the ABC presence was something to highlight rather than play down.

The research team felt that the ABC staff presence should be used
to stand for the organisation. This was achieved by attaching the ABC lissijous: (affectionately known as the ‘worm’) to staff when they made a comment or initiated a project. In other words, the ABC is represented by the qualities of the ABC professional media-makers who were actively interacting with the Pool community. This in turn drew us to the notion that each person on the site, ABC professionals included, could be considered as part of the information architecture. The people who populate the site and who are prepared to share their ‘local knowledge’ can make a website comprehensible, in the same way that coherent information architecture does.

Members of the Pool community could be used as guides and let others know how the site worked, thereby increasing movement through the site by newcomers. This is similar to the way one would ask directions to a location in a physical space, or for advice on how to use a tool. In addition, the active community member would be able to stimulate activity among members by being promoted to the role of social media producer. We proposed that active members be invited to perform this role to formalize their position as a guide and contact on the site.

Another issue we noticed was that the ABC stakeholders saw Pool as an Arts site: experimental, notional and erratic. The arts label seemed to denote the site as a place to house otherwise hard-to-categorise ventures.

However, the Pool members tended to view themselves as media makers, albeit with a storytelling emphasis. The Pool team also felt that media better represented the content that was emerging on the site and therefore, the term media became important to way the site expressed itself.
TENSIONS

Some of the most difficult and dissonant conversations were those between our research team and the Pool team. At times the Pool team felt that we were missing crucial information and ignoring their suggestions. They had been working with the beta site and critically assessing what worked and what didn’t, and had built a comprehensive list of what they considered to be desirable enhancements to the future site.

However, we stated at the outset that our objective was to represent all views and consolidate the operations of the site with particular reference to the current user community. Implicit in this is the imperative to stay objective and follow what the research was uncovering. This meant, for example, that we did not recommend new features, however desirable they might seem, unless we found evidence that the existing members required them to satisfy their onsite behaviours.

This locates a particular tension to do with emergence. Pool had, as one of its founding tenets, a desire to let the actual activities of the community direct the shape of the site over time, rather than impose a shape on it.

We found that in some cases the Pool team suggestions reflected user activity, while in other cases they did not. We did not set out to reconcile this tension; rather we put it forward for discussions and into the design proposal.

This conflict represents the larger tension of emergence namely that when design is focused away from the client and towards the audience, it will produce a different outcome. This point encapsulates my notion that those who participate in a design conversation will influence the design artefact that results from the conversation.

The dissonant voices that we had been listening to were providing information for the design response. They also acted as a motivating force to move the project forward. Dissonance has a disturbing quality that seeks consonance to resolve the disturbance.
While it is not possible to fully resolve a design outcome, as design is iterative and generative, dissonance can be seen as an impetus towards a conclusion.

DIALOGIC RELATIONS BETWEEN LIKE SITUATIONS

In this discussion I use dialogic in the way that Bakhtin does, to show how one creative work determines how we read another:

... the dialogue extends in both directions, and the previous work of literature is as altered by the dialogue as the present one is (Bakhtin 1981).

Seeing Pool in terms of other works of social media represents the dialogic here. To make the site legible we looked at social media as a genre. This puts Pool in dialogue with other social media sites, especially those sites that are doing something similar in terms of the media and the community that surrounds it.

The research team concluded however, that there is no one site that does exactly what Pool sets out to do, and replicates its situation. We therefore looked at sites that performed aspects of the Pool venture, and then for other situations that might be similar.

A site like Vimeo (http://www.vimeo.com) for instance, represents the social media functions of Pool. Vimeo notes its aim as ‘video sharing for you’. It is focused on a specific outcome in a way that Pool is not. It has a professional focus, supported by a critical, but supportive, community of people producing and displaying video works.

Whereas Pool has an open brief, accepts multiple media forms and is concerned more with storytelling than the resolution of the media, Vimeo provides an example of a site that defines itself clearly through its structure and content, reinforced by a set of community guidelines. For example, it states:
We insist that while you are on Vimeo you respect the people you encounter and their videos. You are free to disagree, but you are not free to attack people simply for your amusement, and the more you interact with the community, the more interest in your work there will be. Get involved and you will enjoy the rewarding experience that Vimeo can provide (http://vimeo.com/guidelines, accessed 06/10/10).

The tone of voice is established as welcoming, but definite, with a view to protecting its community values. This site demonstrates a clear orientation towards expert amateurs as well as professional membership. People discuss technologies, techniques and issues relevant to making videos on Vimeo.

The site depicts the growing diversity opening up in social media. Pool can learn from the Vimeo experience on how to work with its members to enhance the quality of what is displayed on the site.

Looking at sites like Vimeo we saw that developing a legible presence for Pool became a writing exercise as much as it was a design process. That is, the language used and structure of the site as a text was a significant consideration to develop a solution to the commission to make the site legible. If the new site design works it should also influence how people then view other social media.

While there is a degree of the dialogic relationship between Pool and a site such as Vimeo, it does not fully explain the concept of the dialogic that I intend here. Pool and Vimeo share a technical and structural dialogue around how to present themselves. However, more valuable for this study is the dialogue about issues of hybridity and transformation.

Pool represents the hybrid space that sits between conventional media and social media. It is a new space and not directly replicated in other sites that we came across. The dialogue then is not necessarily with
another website, but could occur, with other cultural institutions, such as museums or galleries that are responding to similar conditions.

The emergence of new roles in Pool can be used to understand those in the cultural institution and vice versa. The dialogic disrupts currently held perceptions, forcing us to see each of these situations from another point of view. The ABC, for example, shifts its own perception of its place in media from the authoritative voice, to being the voice of the people.

AUDIENCE AS PUBLICS AND NETWORKED PUBLICS

Pool has a small, but apparently active community, indicated by the strong response we had to our request for participation in the research. Our initial design objective was to improve the experience of Pool for the existing members (users).

The research team was able to ascertain the motivations and online behaviours of what we felt was a representative sample of the community, through the data collection phase.

Having gained a picture of the Pool community, we could then consider the people who did not identify as members of this community. These are people who are nevertheless participating by viewing the site and potentially engaging in conversations about it on and off line.

In the design proposal we aimed to satisfy what is known as a ‘sit forward’ experience, or interacting experience on Pool, which would suit the community. We can assume, however, that a larger public for Pool will be people who want a ‘sit back’ experience, similar to the one conventional media offers. In fact it is likely, as media researcher Kate Crawford suggests, that this larger group moves between interaction and listening (Crawford 2009), that is, of both ‘sit forward’ and ‘sit back’ experiences.
LINK FROM POOL TO ENGAGED PUBLICATION DESIGN

As the research evolved I realised that by being able to define this less distinct group of non-traceable listeners or participants I would have the key to understanding the type of audience that I am concerned with in this study. Consequently, I turned to the work of Michael Warner (2002) and Dimitra Milioni (2009) on publics and networked publics to develop the definition. Considering publics in the context of the Pool project helped me to conceptualise this audience. I will return to this in regard to the entire PhD in the conclusion of this text.

While a community strives to know its members and form a sense of commonality, a public does not. It remains a set of people who do not connect directly to each other, but are linked through what they pay attention to, or what they are addressed by. For example, a person who views Pool but who is not a member of the Pool community forms a public around Pool. They may make some contribution, or could leave without a trace of their visit. We are left to speculate who they are and why they visited.

This speculation raises an interesting question around Pool, namely how do we design for this group? Online technologies provide numerical and geographic information about them. But we do not know what their experience has been.

The readership of a book is calculated by the sum of the sales, plus the library loans, with an assumption around the number of people who borrowed the book to read. The only way to gauge the experience (good or bad) is by making a supposition based on these figures combined with the reviews of the book and public comments. The same applies to Pool.

We can suppose that many visitors come via an announcement or review on associated radio programs; via the use of Pool as an educational or research space; or a broader notice made in the general media. From this information we can determine some demographic descriptions. We can also imagine that this public is connected...
through Pool and other artefacts, forming the networked public that Milloni describes. But a full picture remains elusive.

In the future better ways may be found to trace the experience of people who participate as a public rather than as a community. These ways could include the type of conversational strategies and probes that I put forward in this exegesis: interactive online workshops around a theme; the use of visual and audio artefacts to stimulate discussion; and a cyclical process where ideas are seen to grow as they are tended by a variety of people.

In this way, as a public becomes familiar with social media it also becomes prepared to engage with it. Not through the currently prescribed method of joining a community, but by participating in the conversation, while retaining the sense of independence that a public affords.

This concept of ‘a public’, the type I found in Pool, helps to shape my ideas around the relationship between a publication designer and his or her audience. It is a group who is more distant than a community but shares some of the motivation towards engaging with a publication.

**THE DESIGNER IN CO-CREATIVE SITUATION**

As an outcome of undertaking this research I identified two ways in which a designer can perform in a co-creative relationship; both are to do with engaging a public. The first is where the designer creates the space for stories to emerge. I think of this as a spatial designer role: designing the space for interaction, as we did for Pool.

The second is where the designer engages fully in what I call discursive co-reative publication. In this situation a designer works with a co-creative public at the discourse level of a design project: framing the discourse, stimulating, editing and re-presenting it in various forms and
connecting one instance of the discourse to other instances. Artefacts are produced in the course of the discourse to prompt discussion, interrogate the issue, and as documentation of the discussion.

I address these two instances of the designer in a co-creative situation in greater depth in the Conclusion under Co-creative publication design practice.
CONCLUSION

“a social media space, a community to share/encourage collaboration/exploration of ugc on the public broadcaster”

G radio is: student offering with participatory features and personalities wrapped around...
RESOLVING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Through a critique of practices from the past, and new ones for the future, this study has explored the relationship between a publication designer and their audience. I have argued that both designer and audience are reciprocally changing their behaviour as a result of the development of participatory, specifically co-creative, design and communication contexts. As a consequence of the change in this relationship, the practice of publication design is itself transforming.

I substantiate the claim I make by drawing a connection between the practices and behaviours evident in the print and publishing collectives in Backyard Press and Champion Books (Case Study 2) with the practices and behaviours in ABC Pool (Case Study 3). Both of these case studies depict collaborative publication situations, which share similarities and, as highlighted through the critique, have important differences.

In the following synthesis of the various discoveries and insights gleaned throughout this doctoral study, I develop the core argument and consider the implications for design practitioners.

The research questions outlined in the Introduction to this text framed the investigation. I now resolve these questions, based on the practice-based research I have conducted in this study.
In the first research question—*What is the place of the designer in an altered relationship between a public and design*—I explored the impact of a change in the relationship between a designer and their audience on the practice of design and the consequent effect on the designer.

In the second—*How can a public become conversant with the language of design (the design conversation)*—I considered the same situation from the audience perspective.

In this concluding chapter, I use the key discoveries I came to in each of the research projects to frame the argument that I make. The first stage of the research is represented below by the section on The design conversation; and the second stage represented by Co-creative situations.

Finally, through specific reference to the Projects Space that was designed for the Pool site, I reveal the co-creative nature of the design process and realization of the site. I use this example to exemplify one way that a professional publication designer can engage in co-creative publication design. I then extend the concept of a co-creative design to describe a discursive co-creative practice, performed in the public domain.

In doing so I resolve the research questions.
I have framed this investigation through the lens of the ‘design conversation’. This is a conversation which represents the internal focus of the design process. I have also used the term ‘co-creative situations’ to represent an external orientation and the designer’s place in relationship to the audience. It is from these two views as discussed in Chapter 2, that I form and restate the argument and propose two scenarios to describe the potential practice of the publication designer.

THE DESIGN CONVERSATION

The Design Audio Cloud project was an opportunity to sketch out what I came to term the ‘design conversation’. In the study I use the term to encapsulate the multiple conversations that facilitate the design making process, from inception through to completion of the artefact. The Design Audio Cloud was a simulation of conversations within the design process. The simulated conversations were recorded and designed as a sound publication that was played in a public context (the gallery).

In this project, the design conversation manifests as a sound artefact. By taking the abstract concept of a conversation into a material form I was able to conceptualise and understand the notion of a conversation more readily. I realised that as a designer I needed to objectify the conversation, in the same way that I might turn text and image into an object such as a publication. This is a form of knowing through design, or what Henrik Gedenryd (1998) calls ‘interaction cognition’.

Once I had the shape of the design conversation I could then deconstruct it into its component characteristics and view how each
of these fit together, and the relationships between them. I was specifically looking for the rudiments of communication that flow through the design process; into the design artefact; and potentially through to the audience.

I concluded that the conversation that occurs in the practice of publication design is essentially a cyclical process of inquiry and listening, which is facilitated through artefacts or inquiring materials and process points. This conversation is multi-vocal and driven by the dissonance of multiple stakeholder voices, which propels the conversation to a resolution in the form of an artefact.

Each instance of the conversation is connected to other instances via a dialogic chain of similar experiences. As a consequence of this realization, dissonance and dialogic became the central concepts that I used to describe this specific conversation, which is situated in the design process.

The design conversation that I defined in the early stage of the doctoral study became a lens through which I could view the reciprocal evolution of designer and audience. Through the study, I mapped how a designer in a co-creative situation could use the design conversation to enable a public to become conversant with the language of design. By opening their design conversation to this public, the designer removes a number of impediments that hinder the flow of communication between the various parties.

In turn, the participants in a project may bring novel design solutions to bear. This exchange results in a discursive situation, which is generated through the vehicle of the design conversation. It is this discourse between the various entities in a project, that I contend enables large-scale participation in publication design. I return to this in the next section in forming the argument.
CO-CREATIVE SITUATIONS

My reflection on working in a collective print and publishing environment at Backyard Press and Champion Books allowed me to connect that experience to contemporary participatory media and design. In particular, I considered two aspects of the experience that were relevant to the investigation: the practice of self-managed autonomy in a collective situation; and audience participation around publication design.

I compared the similarities between the practice of self-management within the Backyard Press collective and the type of co-creation that derives from the Open Source movement. In addition I used the type of audience engagement that occurred in that situation as a way to understand the co-creative public I come to describe in this study.

The case study into Pool gave me a behind-the-scenes look at social and participatory media as co-creative publication forms. The research was conducted as a designerly investigation through communication and interaction design methods.

Through the Pool research project I made three discoveries via the role of the Social Media Producer, which enabled my understanding of the re-conceptualised role of the publication designer in a co-creative situation. I identified a specific instance of this role on Pool where a professional employee (the radio producer) engaged with the co-creative community to produce broadcast quality outcomes. This led me to propose that this role was comparable to a publication designer who works with various publics to create an outcome derived from the contributions.

As with the conventional designer, the radio producer in this scenario brings their broadcast practice to the co-creative situation. This is valued by members of the community who aim to improve the production values or the quality of storytelling in their work. Nevertheless, the radio producer adjusts their practice as they engage
with these community participants. They accept, for example, that
the specific ideas were generated by the participant and remain their
property, or that the final decisions on the form of the work lies with
the participant, regardless of the level of collaboration entered into.

The second discovery involved the identification of the nature of the
co-creative space that Pool occupied. The process of inquiry that was
used by the research team (employing interaction and communication
design strategies) led to an understanding of the type of co-creative
public in the Pool environment.

The Pool project reinforced my emerging realisation that in order
to design co-creative publication spaces and experiences effectively, a
designer is required to understand how participation and co-creation
work. This can be achieved by employing similar inquiry methods.
However I argue that it is also necessary to experience working
collaboratively in order to fully know the experience. I used my own
working knowledge of collective behaviours in the Backyard Press and
Champion Books collectives to inform the design process in Pool. As
an example, my role in the Backyard Press collective was to manage the
communication between the various production units. As there was
not a hierarchy or chain of command in the process, this role required
representing each unit openly and frankly, and a level of negotiation
to achieve agreement on the production flow. I took a similar role
in the Pool project, where I developed the lines of communication
between the Pool team, our research team, other technical advisors,
the ABC stakeholders and finally the web development team. Each of
these stakeholder groups had their own motivations and behaviours,
which I was required to ‘read’ as a collective, in order to optimize the
communication between them.
Based on the inquiry into Pool and informed by the literature the third discovery of the project was the formation of a definition of the audience as a co-creative public, The definition of a co-creative public draws together two ideas that emerged in the first case studies and which culminated in the Pool research.

To articulate this emerging social arrangement of people as a co-creative public, I conflate Michael Warner’s (2002) description of a public as a self-organised relation of strangers, formed by attention with the definition of co-creation that emerged out of the Open Source movement in the early 2000s (Bollier 2008), this is expanded on in the next section.
FORMING THE ARGUMENT

In forming the argument of the research findings I began by describing the co-creative design relationship and its constituents: a public that forms around the design process and artefact; and a design practitioner who is in the design process. This gave me the context in which these constituents (audience and designer) interact. I then address the impact of a co-creative public on the practice of publication design.

A CO-CREATIVE PUBLIC

A co-creative public, as I describe it, shares several characteristics with ‘a public’ as enumerated by Michael Warner (2002). A public is, in his words, self-organising, formed from attention and as a relation among strangers. A public distinguishes itself from the non-specific, general public in several ways.

Most notably a member of a public engages in some form of direct interaction with the object that it pays attention to. This applies whether the object of attention is a person (a designer, for example), artefact or the conversation surrounding it.

A co-creative public, as I define it in this study, hones the characteristics of a public (as described by Warner) with the addition of three distinguishing features of the Open Source co-creator, drawn in part from David Bollier’s description of co-creation in *Viral spiral: how the commoners built a digital republic of their own* (2008):

First, the co-creator is autonomous. They engage according to their own motivations, not necessarily because of a shared belief
Second, the co-creator is motivated to develop co-creative practices and literacies

Third, the discourse in a co-creative public is deliberate and an essential act and artefact of co-creation. The discourse may also be multi-modal, using visual and other materials as communicative agents.

If we adopt and apply Stan Anson’s Sequence of Motives (from his analysis of Backyard Press on P. 102) it becomes possible to establish the following schema as a means to understand how and why a co-creative public forms. This rationale is taken from the perspective of an individual who becomes a member of a public.

The sequence of motives for a co-creative public are:
1. exercise of media in the production of discourse and self-expression
2. autonomous and self-elected participation in a public (rather than through a community)
3. formed from paying and receiving attention
4. develop literacies in co-creation and co-creative design

The primary point that I construct here (the exercise of media in the production of discourse and self-expression) defines the motivation behind a co-creative public most precisely. Discourse acts as the link between disparate and autonomous individuals. Without it, even the loose entity of a public could not exist. Importantly, this point raises the discourse, or the exchange of ideas, thoughts, opinions or stories to becoming the principal outcome, rather than a consequence of the formation of a co-creative public.

Implicit in the notion of a co-creative public is the fact that this type of public creates something in concert with others. A co-creative
public in the practice of publication design is not an audience that consumes, but one that makes an artefact whilst engaging at some level with the experience of the design process; and, as mentioned above, it is an audience which generates discourse around the artefact and experience.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ARTEFACT AND DISCOURSE

The artefact that is created as a result of the discourse and practices that are generated by networked, co-creative publics also evolves in the above scenario. A number of features can be discerned that portray the change in the artefact.

In conventional publication design there is a distance between the designer and the audience, which is seldom breached. A print publication for example does not enable discourse to directly flow back to the designer, other than the limited form of letter to the editor for example.

In social media, however, the conversation can be situated within the artefact, taking the form of comments, or responses (made in various media), which become embedded in the artefact and extend it beyond a publication date or program schedule. These embedded conversations act like the marginalia written in books as extensions of the published text and grow the artefact depending on the response it attracts.
I now turn to the two scenarios of co-creative publication design practice that I put forward in this study. The first is the design of co-creative spaces; the second is discourse-based co-creative publication design.

1. DESIGNING CO-CREATIVE PUBLICATIONS

In this discussion I make use of one part of the Pool redesign project to demonstrate the first practice of designing co-creative spaces in this project. During the research phase we found that Pool was a site for co-creative activities. However on the beta site it was not clear how those activities took place and who could be involved. The research team concluded that a specific space be designed into the site to highlight co-creation activities and the discussions that make co-creation possible.

The new space was titled Projects. It was here that a participant could initiate or join a project and contribute comments and media objects (text, audio or vision). Projects was to be where most discussion and negotiation occurred. The space was designed to comprise a display area, a comment section and a discussion thread. It also utilized the cross-site communication facilities designed to allow people to talk directly with each other.

Projects was constructed as a negotiating space, where participants collaboratively managed their own interactions, developed guidelines for the project and produced outcomes. For example, a participant could develop their work to be broadcast on a radio program, or engage in collaboration with another participant. Alternatively, they might shape a new project with others and write a call out to recruit members to the project. When this was used in the project, discussions were, on the whole, public and comments
tended to be appreciative, encouraging, provide advice on technique or query the contributor about the work or intention.

To design the site’s architecture it was necessary to map the specific moves that a person makes in a co-creative activity and to then translate these human interactions (such as communication or initiative) into a basic technical function. The function was then implemented on the site and as a single binary function, it is then linked to other functions, which when activated caused a chain of events to occur.

The process of converting human behaviour to technical function, which in turn enables interactive behaviours online, provokes a designer to consider interactions between people in a mechanical way. Subsequently the conversion back to a technical function that enables interaction, permits the designer to consider human interactions such as communication or collaboration, in a material sense.

Consequently, the practitioner who designs a co-creative space has both a new set of mechanical as well as material elements to work with. I contend, that to effectively design with these it is essential to have a working knowledge of co-creation. I have used this doctoral study to develop a typology of characteristics that pertain to co-creation. I referred to my background in the collectives of Backyard Press and Champion Books to draw on collective practices to substantiate this endeavour.

In the case where a designer creates a publication space for co-creative activities, the designer (or design team) works with the user group and stakeholders. The design artefact is the publication space, which can be either on- or off-line; or it could be a combination of both. However, as with the Pool research and redesign project, the publication space may not be the only outcome.

In the Pool project I was alerted to what became a more compelling outcome for my purposes in this study. I realised that the communication that occurred in and around this project could be seen as an artefact of the project.
2. DISCURSIVE, CO-CREATIVE PUBLICATION DESIGN

In the previous scenario the designer adjusts their practice to be able to design a relatively new type of co-creative publication, with a changed set of materials to work with (such as a knowledge of the behaviours and motivations that people have in a collaborative engagement). That scenario is akin to various types of Participatory or Co-Design approaches, where the designer works closely with the end user, or alternatively designs with the user in mind.

In this second scenario I put forward a radically different proposition that repositions the publication designer and the practice. In this proposition the designer becomes responsible for generating the discourse within a co-creative public, as well as more broadly in the public sphere.

This proposition encapsulates the key themes that run through this study, namely the designer re-orients their practice to interface with a new type of mainstream audience; the work is public; and publication design takes place within a co-creative relationship.

The practice for this designer centres on the act of bringing thoughts, opinions, information and stories into the public discourse. In addition, this act of publication is done in the public domain.

This practice de-centres the artefact from being the core objective of the project, notwithstanding the fact that design artefacts are used in this practice to produce knowledge whilst also being the outcome. In other words, the designer’s contribution is not categorised by the medium in which they work, such as a ‘book-designer’ or a ‘web-designer’, but by the discourse they produce.

It could be argued that this is the manifestation of the shift in contemporary design education and practice from naming publication design as a specialization within graphic design to being within the domain of communication design.

By de-coupling the design artefact from the design practice it is
possible to consider, as I have done in this study, a practice that can be genuinely identified as communication design. The designer in this scenario does not design communication, which would imply a higher level of manipulation of communication than desired. Instead this designer designs the channels through which communication is exchanged; curates discourse and works to form and then work within a co-creative public.

The design practitioner does not cede their professional role. Yet the role and practice change in several ways. As a curator of a co-creative public’s discourse, the practitioner becomes responsible for the act of bringing the discourse into the public realm. This could be in familiar publication forms such print and web. It might also be through public debate, criticism or an event.

This role shifts the designer from being a service provider to someone engaged at a public interface. In this position the designer initiates as well as responds to a debate. In effect this requires the designer to design the conditions for a discourse to emerge; the channels through which communication flows; and the maintenance of the two-way communication as a component of the publication artefact.

**SUMMARY**

Throughout the study I have used the design conversation to locate the communicative imperative within publication design. From there I proposed opening the design conversation to a co-creative public as a means to engage the public in a relatively equal relationship.

This development traces a genealogy in communication design, which can be represented by the same changes in publication design that I describe in this study. In this shift graphic design, which emerged from a trade-based activity ensconced in the print industry, became a profession. This movement was led by practitioners such as Jan Tschichold (1928) who de-connected the practice of design from
the technology and production method. Overtime publication design developed a parallel place in the academy and repositioned itself as a discipline as well as a profession.

In the argument put in this study I assert that publication design now places itself as an interlocutor in the discourse that occurs in the public sphere. The argument is used to represent the shift in practice from graphic design to communication design. It alludes as well to an evolution in communication design towards a co-creative practice.
In this section I review the transformation of my own practice as a way to demonstrate the shift from conventional graphic and print-based publication design practice to discourse-based, co-creative, publication design.

I noted that by studying the design conversation I became aware of the way communication works in contemporary publication design. As the study progressed I became conscious that the way I now design is situated in conversations with others, utilizing artefacts within the conversation.

In reflecting on my own practice I could trace a path from my experience working in a collective situation through to my current practice as a design educator, researcher and practitioner. I became aware that the way I collaborate became co-creative (as described here) with the people I work with.

As this study progressed I thought about the change in how I collaborate in terms of how I communicate through design. I concluded that I was relating differently to both the artefact (a publication) as well as the audience. Initially, despite producing work collectively I was nevertheless working in a conventional way, making statements to the audience. These design works may have been appealing and well targeted. The works were intentionally designed to ‘talk’ in a visual language that suited the expectations of the audience (which in many cases I knew well). However the audience was largely a subject of the communication rather than an interlocutor. The graphic
design tradition I was working in had developed to speak to, rather than with, the audience.

As a design educator I became critical of the concentration on the artefact in design to the detriment of its communicative qualities. The quality of the finish of the work superceded the primary task, as I saw it, of engaging in a dialogue with others.

I was attracted by the intention in emerging fields such as interaction design, user-centred and participatory design to re-focus the attention away from the artefact and towards the end-user. However, my own interest remained in communication design as it privileges a co-created agreement on meaning. In other words, that an audience member could become involved in the discourse.

This set up a challenge for me personally as well as professionally. I needed to transform my own communication and design process, as well as articulate how I proposed to alter these processes. It is this challenge that drove the doctoral study and its inquiry.

The first stage of this study concentrated on the nature of communication, which I framed as the design conversation. It was internally focused onto the design process, yet was intended to provide a way of seeing clearly the challenge of communicating effectively.

From this I developed a sense of what a conversation was and proceeded to deconstruct the conversation in order to find what I considered its key features. I arrived at dissonance and dialogic as features that defined a design conversation. This gave me the motivating force (dissonance and how it strives for resolution) and a linking mechanism (the dialogic), which creates a network of discourse.

In the second stage of the study I orientated my attention towards what I came to know as a public. The definition of a co-creative public that I arrived at resolved two problems in the inquiry. Firstly it gave definition to a new type of autonomous yet engaged audience, and
secondly it allowed me to envisage the concept of publication design as a public discourse.

By defining publication design as a discourse I am now able to appreciate my own activities as a collaborator and communicator differently. Central to collaboration and communication are the intent to negotiate an agreement to work together and to communicate on agreed terms.

However, this study has convinced me that such an agreement is more effectively formed where all parties are accorded their own position. Hence the emphasis that is given in this study to autonomy and self-organised relationships, such as a public and in particular a co-creative public.

Therefore I now consider the publication design process as one where equitable participants engage in a negotiation to co-create meaning through communication. The agreement sought, is, as Ranulph Glanville (1996) proposes, to strive for a common understanding, yet to accept misunderstanding as a positive outcome.

My practice now reflects that position, namely that seeking agreement includes its own contradiction (misunderstanding), and that this is a benefit. I am conscious of foregoing the conventional authority vested in a design professional in order to obtain this benefit. Nevertheless, ceding authority does not imply ceding influence or expertise in the process. As I have shown in the description of the social media producer in the Pool research, a professional is valued in a co-creative public for these qualities.

Further I am now aware that my practice of publication design is to produce public discourse. This does not imply that all discourse is conducted in the general public. Rather that this type of discourse includes creating the conditions for a public to form and to actively engage in the discourse.
A public, as proposed here is dynamic and evolving. It enhances its literacies as it engages, and in turn, creates new expectations of the experience in which it engages. The discourse it produces is the ultimate publication artefact, regardless of what was created to generate that discourse.

By coming to this realisation in my own practice, I have been able to transition from a conventional graphic design approach, which I found limited the potential for discourse, towards a communication design approach, as described in this study. This practice is co-creative, generative and based in discourse.

I noticed the change in my own practice most clearly in design education, where I engage in conversation around the artefact and what it aims to communicate, rather than how it looks or how well it is finished. I also see the transformation in how I conduct participatory research projects, again largely based in discursive explorations.

As I conclude this doctoral study I continue to actively investigate participation, collaboration, co-creation and discourse. These activities inform all my current research projects in some way.
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CO-CREATIVE PUBLICS AND PUBLICATION DESIGN PRACTICE