

FCForum Declaration: Sustainable Models for Creativity



<http://fcforum.net>

Free/Libre Culture Forum Declaration

[For details, see [the extended version](#)]

We can no longer put off re-thinking the economic structures that have been producing, financing, and funding culture up until now. Many of the old models have become anachronistic and detrimental to civil society. The aim of this document is to promote innovative strategies capable of defending and extending the sphere in which human creativity and knowledge can prosper freely and sustainably.

This document is addressed to [policy reformers, citizens and free/libre culture activists](#) and aims to provide practical tools to actively bring about this change.

1. Who Generates Culture?

In order to develop and grow, the human capacity for creativity requires access to existing culture, knowledge and information. Everyone can contribute to the production of culture, values and wealth on different scales, ranging from very basic to very complex creative contributions. The resources and time required for creative activities also vary in scale. We want to promote ways of liberating this time and these resources so that the distributed potential can be deployed in a sustainable way.

2. Basic Principles for Sustainable Creativity

1. The restructuring of the cultural industries is not only necessary but inevitable.
2. More culture is created and circulates in the digital era than ever before: in this context sharing has proved to be essential to the disseminate culture.
3. The profits that the cultural lobbies are fighting to defend are based on the artificial production of scarcity.
4. The cultural sphere needs to recognise the skills and contributions of all of its agents, not only producers.
5. The digital context benefits creators as well as entrepreneurs and civil society. Appropriate models make it easier for users, consumers and producers to gain access to each other. The role of middle-men has to be revised in light of an approach based on collaboration.
6. The Internet is an essential tool for establishing contact between creators and their audiences. This is one of the reasons why everybody must be guaranteed non-discriminatory access to it.
7. Governments that don't promote the new forms of creation and diffusion of culture are generating lost profits for society and destroying its cultural diversity.
8. As Free/Libre Software has shown, peer production and distribution are not incompatible with market strategies and commercial distribution.

Economic Models for Sustainable Creativity

The following list starts with the models that are most similar to those traditionally accepted by the cultural industries, and moves towards those that are closer to the idea of sharing that pertains to our age. Many of these models are currently actively implemented and are already working. We need to expand these conditions by removing barriers that limit their growth.

1. Pay for what you get

Or some advice for the restructuring of the cultural industries: the public is prepared to pay for cultural products or goods as long as they deem the price to be reasonable and paying does not restrict their freedom. Make it easy and accessible; make it affordable; don't make it compulsory, static and criminalised, make it optional and offer choice. Pay fair wages when you contract professional work.

2. Advertising

Between bombarding users with ads and the total absence of ads, there are intermediate, ethical options: Selective ads (accepting advertisements only from projects with affinities); giving users control over the consumption of ads; allowing users to request ads related to the article they are reading, for instance, ...

3. Pay for a Plus

Sharing copies helps creators to build up a reputation, which then becomes the base for charging for services and other things that cannot be copied, such as live performances, works-for-hire, specially designed gadgets, attractive physical copies...

4. Freemium

Freemium is a business model that works by offering basic services, or a basic downloadable digital product, for free, while charging a premium for advanced or special features.

5. Contributions

A contribution-based model enables users to donate sums of money in order to help sustain a given project or enterprise. The more involved and respected users feel, the better this system works.

6. Crowdfunding

Enabling individual citizens or entities to contribute to a cultural enterprise by becoming stakeholders. This contribution can take the form of an investment before the work has been created, or via micro or macro credits or donations towards existing works.

7. Commons-based strategies and distributed value creation

The providers of commercial platforms for cooperation share their revenues with the creators who produce the material that makes their services valuable, while commoners are able to freely share and exploit the commons.

8. Collective Financing System

A flat-rate on internet connections can be considered only if it implies an equitable and democratic resource- pooling system and recognizes citizens rights to share and re-use works freely.

9. Basic income

When connecting the issue of free culture to visions of large-scale social transformations in capitalistic economies, the basic income idea propose to sustain the society as a productive body. A guaranteed basic income is a way to avoid precarity and redistribute economic wealth.

10. Public funding/policy making

We believe that in the context of a society of tax payers, culture must receive a share of public investment due to its undeniable social value. Social funding should not be seen as a substitute for public responsibilities in relation to the funding of culture and Free/Libre culture should not constitute an anomaly.

1. Publicly funded works should be released, after a reasonable commercial life span, for circulation on digital networks so that the public who paid for them can access and re-use them.
2. Tax deductions should promote micro-funding and the release of works without restrictive licences.
3. The public should have the option to contribute to deciding how this public investment in culture is shared out.
4. Alternative distribution channels should be encouraged. Cultural policies must work towards achieving greater cultural diversity and sustainable collaboration platforms.
5. Networks of independent producers, distributors and authors should be supported, and they should be represented on public broadcasting.
6. Impact statements should be a prerequisite for the introduction of any new cultural policy. We must analyze the effects that proposed regulations would have on on the cultural and knowledge commons before they are implemented.

Results

The Commons, Public Domain and Business

The new business models that consider collective production as a context that needs to be nurtured and safeguarded, and not simply as a context to exploit, are based on the premise that cooperation is compatible with market dynamics. The most evocative practical examples stem from free software communities. The “output” is shared under non-restrictive licences, allowing third parties to use and modify it as long as the same freedoms are obligatorily applied to derived works. This creates a commons that is constantly improved by successive contributions, while not preventing the commercial exploitation of the knowledge and skills arising from them and of the works themselves.

Users become generators of value, and join a virtuous circle of production and consumption that they benefit from.

Meanwhile, in this new context, it is necessary to defend, promote and implement the conditions that enable online collaboration.

Embroiled in a different logic, the traditional cultural industries want to keep feeding off collective production, without responding to the collaborative logic that is now current thanks to the Internet. These industries try to keep imposing appropriation frameworks onto the commons, becoming entrenched in a predatory idea of culture (the economy of scarcity), which is totally at odds with the philosophy of free culture (the economy of abundance).

LICENSES

This document is published under a dual license; you can republish under either one or both of these licenses:

- [Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported](#)
- [GNU Free Documentation License 1.3](#)

* See the [long version](#) and [bibliography](#)

ENDORSEMENTS

Alphabetical order:

1. ALT1040/Eduardo Arcos
2. Johanna Blakley/Norman Lear Centre
3. David Bollier/Commons Strategy Group
4. Bufet Almeida Abogados
5. Florencio Cabello, Facultad de Comunicación, Universidad de Málaga
6. Centre for Internet and Society
7. CERSA/CNRS, Centre d'Études et de Recherches de Science Administrative
8. Creative Commons France
9. Abg.do Javier de la Cueva
10. Enrique Dans
11. Derechos Digitales
12. Digitale Allmend
13. EFF, Electronic Frontier Foundation
14. David Evan Harris, Institute for the Future
15. Expansió de la Xarxa Oberta
16. FMA, Foundation for Media Alternatives
17. FriBit
18. Fundació Guifi.net
19. Fundación Karisma
20. Mayo Fuster Morell
21. Ricardo Galli
22. Global Lives Project
23. Gpapai, Grupo de Pesquisa em Políticas Públicas para o Acesso à Informação da Universidade de São Paulo
24. Hacktivistas
25. John Hendrik Weitzmann/CC Germany
26. Brain Holmes
27. Icelandic Digital Freedoms Society/Smári McCarthy
28. Institute for New Culture Technologies/Konrad Becker
29. IGOP, Institut de Govern i Polítiques Públiques de l'Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
30. Dmytri Kleiner
31. Eric Kluitenberg/De Balie
32. Kunterbunt Cultura Independiente
33. La-EX.net (exEXGAE)
34. La Quadrature du Net
35. Ignasi Labastida/CC Espanya i Catalunya
36. Lab for Culture
37. Simona Levi
38. David K. Levine
39. Geert Lovink
40. Jeremy Malcolm/Consumers International
41. Mangas Verdes/Manuel Almeida
42. Yann Moulrier Boutang, Professor of economics, University of technology of Compiègne, Superior School of Art and Design of Saint Etienne and National Superior School of Architecture of Paris-Malaquais
43. Multitudes
44. Nagarjuna G.
45. Ningunterra.com/Mario Pena
46. Open Data Network
47. The Open Standards Alliance/Stefan Marsiske

48. Openwear.org
49. P2P Foundation
50. Pangea
51. Panoptikon
52. Platoniq
53. Red SOStenible
54. Roberto Santos
55. Scambio Etico
56. SerpicaNaro.org
57. Spiralia/Mariángela Petrizzo
58. Felix Stalder
59. Richard Stallman
60. Alan Toner
61. Transform! Italia
62. Telematics Freedom Foundation
63. Telenoika
64. Universidad Nómada
65. Vecam
66. Verkami
67. José Luis de Vicente/ZZZINC
68. Viquipèdia
69. Vrijschrift.org Foundation
70. Hilary Wainwright/Red Pepper/Transnational Institute
71. Wikihow
72. WIO, World-Information Institute
73. YProduction

If you would like to help disseminate this document, just make it yours and spread it through the Internet, to your own networks, send it to policy makers, to NGOs, to the cultural industries, to artists and producers...

** If you want to participate in the discussion for the subsequent amendments to this document: fforum_discussion@list.fforum.net*

** If you want to send us a mail: info@fforum.net*