

***Profound change for the media landscape***  
**Anthony Lilley OBE, Chief Curative Officer and CEO of  
Magic Lantern**

[Anthony Lilley](#) is an interactive media producer who has worked extensively in media policy and is on the Content Board of Ofcom. He advises Arts Council England as their Digital Media Associate and is on the Board of the English National Opera.

Anthony's described himself as 'half lovey, half geek', with his background being a combination of the arts world and the new media world. His first love was the arts but with a hobby of messing around with new technologies in the creative industries. But these stereotypes are almost meaningless now, as we are all geeks these days in a way that would have been unimaginable a few years ago. A show of hands showed that most people tweeted, just about everyone had a Facebook page, and just about all organisations represented had Twitter and Facebook pages. Not so many people played PlayStation games, Nintendo Wii or Xbox. Anthony has just finished a project with Sony PlayStation and would come back to how these new technologies can work in practice for the arts. If ten years ago someone had said 'you're going to be able to handle live data feeds, patch multiple data sources into a live CMS controlled website', we wouldn't have believed them, but that is what we all do. We are all in the geek space. Anthony doesn't profess to be an expert in crowd-sourcing and some other areas, but will stay at a higher and more generic level, discussing his experiences.

Among his projects, he is currently writing for Arts Council England a potted guide to twelve of the books about new media that everyone should have read or has been told they should have read. That'll be on the ACE website soon.

One day 'new media' will no longer be described as 'new'. It is a mainstream part of what we're all doing. It's important to be pragmatic and realistic: it is easy to follow the leading edge trend and concentrate on that instead of the mainstream stuff that we are all doing. Just a couple of years ago, nobody or hardly anyone would have put their hand up about using Twitter and few people for Facebook: these things change fast, and now they have become mass outlets. So for him, it is not about focussing on the cutting edge. For arts organisations, there are important strategic questions about how to respond to new media and all the changes rather than just using the latest technologies for the sake of it.

### **The Five Cs**

He introduced his way of thinking about all the changes in our daily lives, summarised into five Cs:

- **Choice** – an explosion of choice in media channels: television, websites, but also there were more books and magazines published last year worldwide than ever before.

- **Context** – a change in the contexts in which we consume and create media. It isn't odd to be reading newspapers on the phone, downloading video in all sorts of places.
- **Control** – control of what we choose to do with these media. And the web is all about our choices and what we want to do next – and that applies to games too. It is a massive shift but we do take it for granted. This is worth bearing in mind in our work place. What does control mean for the project you are briefing or creating? How much control have you given to the 'people formerly known as the audience'?
- **Communication** – we routinely take advantage of communication technologies that five or ten years ago were the domain of professionals, whether it's an HD camera on the back of an iPad or the capability to blog and publish. We use what were formerly known as professional media in ways we wouldn't have believed just a few years ago to communicate with each other and with specialist groups. This is one of the ideas at the heart of today, the break down in the boundaries between 'professional' and 'amateur'.
- **Communities** – we are all members of shifting groups. These are no longer necessarily about place, but about our history, our interests, where we are in any one moment for instance on FourSquare. There are three types of networks:
  - Sarnoff network: a broadcast network, where essentially one person holds up a megaphone and shouts. These are mass media such as television, and they are very powerful and not dead yet, and some areas are more powerful than ever.
  - Metcalfe network: communicating amongst ourselves, for example the telephone is a Metcalfe network, where you can communicate with anyone else in that network.
  - Reed network: not only can we communicate with another person but with another group of people, and that group can communicate with another group, and so on. Facebook and Twitter are Reed networks – a vast explosion of communications. A great statistic: if there are fifty people in a Facebook network, the number of connections that could exist between them is greater than the number of atoms in the known universe.

*Report writer's note: here is a video I found with more explanation on the maths behind the theory of these networks, for those who are interested:*

<http://blip.tv/file/1823777>

### **Scarcity**

These networks are mostly ignoring everything we do, even when we are of talking about things the network members have shown themselves to be interested in. Most of the people are ignoring us most of the time. What's shifted is what is scarce – what is valuable has changed. In the old physical world, there was a law of supply and demand: for instance, air time was scarce, or column inches were scarce. Distribution was the power. Now we have an explosion of stuff, online and everywhere, and numerous distribution channels. What is scarce now is attention – the attention of the people formerly known as the audience. Finding stuff and pointing people to stuff is now incredibly powerful. The companies that can direct attention are the most successful: this can be shown because the most successful

company on the internet – Google – is the company that can help direct your attention best: counter-intuitively it sends you away from its page. All traditional web design says don't do that – keep people on your website. There is constant antagonism between keeping people on your website and allowing people to behave as they naturally do online – jumping from one site to the next. Try to be a valuable part of the journey for people, not just the destination. This is counter-intuitive but it is the way big online businesses work: when you can achieve being part of the journey, you have massive value. The context we live in now is more like the Edinburgh Fringe than BBC One – it's not a case of broadcasting a programme at a set time that will have a guaranteed big audience: it's more like a fringe show that hardly anybody will see!

Try to create a silver thread between you and the people you are trying to communicate with, and you need to use that thread to reach them. The issue is who is on the length of the thread helping you to reach those people at the far end, or hindering you from doing so. In the PR world, that is editors, journalists, and so on – people who traditionally have the power to put your material out there, and there is massive power in that still. This traditional media is not dying – for instance television. People have long been predicting the demise of television. Two recent examples show how untrue this is.

1. This year, more television has been watched than has ever been watched before. (People don't watch in the same way of course – they multi-task.)
2. Television is being watched from a wider range of sources than ever before, with more programme categories.

So television advertising has bounced back, partly because there are even more targeted niche markets than ever before, and also because the big shows (*The X Factor* etc.) are just getting bigger. Of course, in 1977, 27 million people watched *Morecambe and Wise* on Christmas Day [around half the population of the UK at the time], but that was because it was (almost) the only thing on. That will never be repeated in this country again, with the odd exception of possibly the royal wedding or a major national sporting final (e.g. England being in the world cup final). Routinely the *The X Factor* attracts 15 or 16 million viewers [peaked at 19.4 million]: it's a massive number given the competition, and also because it lights up large parts of other media, like Twitter and the blogosphere. There is some Massachusetts Institute of Technology research that observed when Obama's state of the union address went out, showing 3 billion people tweeting and using other social networks, and mapping what the subjects were. Of course, we've always been doing this, but in the past we've been communicating the same things on the old fashioned platform called a sofa, so it couldn't be seen. Paradoxically, 'old' media are not necessarily dead, and are doing better than many predicted.

The area that is doing best and is really exploding is the gaming world. It's doing incredibly creative things, and gamers are no longer geeks in basements: the use of them on phones and the popularity of Wii and so on is evening up the sexes and ages using it. This is massive commercial business: World of Warcraft is the biggest media brand in the world.

There are communities at one end of the spectrum, mediators in the middle and us at the other end, with whatever it is we want to communicate. The easy notion that

this is happening 'out there' and is slightly exceptional is not true – as Mubarak knows. Twitter and Facebook didn't cause the Egyptian revolution – that was the behaviour of the government and the reaction of the citizenry – but they did facilitate it.

So how do we relate to all of this? How do we relate as arts organisations to all the bloggers out there – are they journalists, are they not journalists? How do we react to all the tweeters? Journalists are creating video, uploading to websites, tweeting themselves. There is in one way less structure, in another way more structure. Some things still apply: if you have access to a major journalist who is going to write a major piece, that is still very powerful. But there are more ways to get messages out than those traditional ways now. This affects the relationship between the traditional media and those of us seeking coverage. How do you get beyond the critics to the feature writers? Having some kind of attention attractors helps: a person involved in your art that is not traditionally involved in that genre helps. The example given was Terry Gilliam directing an opera at ENO: this makes it interesting not just to the traditional opera press and public, but also to Terry Gilliam fans, so it intercepts with another community. Of course, it's important not to fall into the trap of not communicating with the traditional community (in this case, opera) as well.

The arts is well-placed to take advantage of cross-over opportunities. Because of computerised box office/CRM systems, we have a lot more information about our customers than most businesses do: we also have a lot more good will – people feel differently and more positive when they hear from us than when they receive a flier about car insurance or credit cards. So we can bring some of the skills we used with traditional media to managing our relationship with communities. Where are the overlaps between PR, marketing, new media, participation? Of course, ultimately we are just trying to talk to one big group of people, and trying to open up dialogue, whether it's the 'press' or the 'public' and whatever medium we are using to facilitate communication.

Importantly, you have to maintain authenticity: you have to stay authentically you in all communications. The example given is Jeremy Clarkson, who stays authentic whether surrounded by people who love him or hate him, and he does attract both extremes in a community. He is an 'attention tentpole'. That's real power. Mostly, the organisations we work for are authentic – there is a lot of authenticity in the arts. And the relationship with the people you are already communicating with and showing your work too is authentic too – this is different and more complex when you are working on audience development and attracting new people. The strategic challenge is how to use all the new methods of communicating and take your authenticity with you.

Development people are interesting to talk to about this, as they have a clearly enumerated 'ladder' of people to communicate with, based on how much money they have. They want to deepen the relationship with the person to move them up the ladder, using authenticity. There is a lot of thinking there that is useful to all communications professionals.

There is a challenge about where you stand as an organisation. Great art requires great confidence to take risks. But organisations also need to open up a lot, to feel

like they are part of the wider community. So organisations have both to focus inwards to create the great art and experiences, and become more porous. This is to do with finding hooks in people's networks, the things people care about. One example is Sheridan Smith in a Terrence Rattigan play: she is known from telly and the West End: she has 130,000 Twitter followers. Some of these are now going to see the Terrence Rattigan show, who would never otherwise have gone. We've always known star casting works – David Tennant doing *Hamlet* when he was Doctor Who was another example. But accessing their fans through Twitter is a new way of reaching their fans, the people for whom these actors are a beacon. This is a new form of PR with no intermediary, or arguably a different kind of intermediary. The question is, how can you use this? Those people and the use of digital media have to feel like part of what you're doing, not something grafted onto the side: this is where the people inside the organisations can work with them. From the PR side, it's about finding the amplifiers, be they the press or the stars or audience members who are talking/tweeting/blogging about your organisation.

What are the steps to making sure we get this right, keeping our authenticity and getting our message out there? Think of it like a party – how do you throw a good party?

### **Ten steps to social networking like it is 1999**

1. Work out who's going to come? Who do you need? Who would be fun, interesting and useful to come? Don't start with the date, start with the reason for the party and who's going to come.
2. If you go to a party, the first thing you do is work out where the interesting people are? So in doing research for your party, go to other parties and find out who the interesting people are, where they are and how to find them.
3. Go to them! What arts organisations think is that people should come to them – e.g. they build a Facebook page and think that's the end of it, but nobody comes. Not because the organisation and what it's got to say is not interesting but just because the organisation is not in fact the most important thing in people's lives, so we have to go to them. It's easy to tick the box 'have done social media' but you have to go to people to get them interested and find out about them. And don't put a mask on – be yourself, be your organisation. These people you are going to might be those who are already buying tickets for or attending your organisation, or they might be people who are talking about your organisation but in a negative way. An important thing is to engage with these people too: during the Obama campaign, Obama voted on one issue which many democrats disagreed with. Obama and his team let them disagree on his own website, so he could engage with them: some people came round, but at least all the people thought, oh well, at least he's discussing it and having a conversation about it and being honest.
4. Once you know how it works, throw your party. Then you'll get the party right, and it'll be one that people want to come to. Don't throw the party just because you've got some money to do it with.
5. Stop to chat: it sounds obvious, but when you're throwing your own party, you're too busy rushing around to stop and chat. And if you're too busy to do it, make sure

you've got other people doing it on your behalf – in organisational terms, your artistic director, your artists, your curators.

6. Be interested. Listen to your 'guests' and get involved in their groups and interests.

7. Be conscious of whether they're looking over your shoulder. If they are, if they're bored and looking for someone else they've got more in common with, probably let them go. Don't try to keep them by moving away from your genuine message.

8. Don't go home early. There are many websites and so on that are set up with a lot of enthusiasm and noise, and two weeks later they can't even get the artistic director to write a blog. Once something's started and launched don't give up on it early. If you leave your own party, people aren't going to think it's a good party and stay. This is where boards, directors and so on must be on board, must be committed.

9. Give out a goody bag. The arts are in a good position for this, and Groupon is an example of a way of doing it. This isn't just tickets, but an experience. But do not put Swarovski encrusted mobile phones in the goody bags – you'll never be able to sustain it. Give things that you can afford and that you'll be able to give to everyone not just a few people, and that you'll be able to give again at your next party.

10. Throw more parties! And invite people from different parties and get them to mingle.

So throw a party. Stay authentic. Don't get hijacked by the leading edge stuff, but stay with the mainstream stuff that people are really involved with, their every day behaviour. Get your organisation to rethink its focus about interacting with people through these new means.