Conference abstract

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Title: The Hub Organization: Using Fluid Boundaries to Manage Innovation Networks.

~~Personal Networks, Collective Creativity: Researching Digital Entrepreneurs in London’s Hubscape~~

In an era where complex social problems meet networked individualism (Rainie & Wellman 2012), how does collective creativity figure in the search for sustainable digital business models? How do agentic digital entrepreneurs tap distributed knowledge to design new solutions? And, can we identify better ways to facilitate the underlying creative process? To seek answers, this paper sets out an inventive research design that focuses on crucial moments of collectiv creativity—the ‘creative sparks’ that leave their mark on evolving business ideas and models. Where prior studies have shed light on network structures and city characteristics (inspired, in part, by Richard Florida’s writings on the creative class as well as by ‘ecosystem’ and ‘cluster’ concepts), this organizational investigation will shed light on the actual interactions through which they produce transformative value. London’s hubscape—a distinctive scene anchored in innovation hubs such as the Google Campus, Level39, the Digital Catapult and the four Impact Hubs—serves as the cultural and geographic context to this study. In addition to setting out a novel research design this paper presents findings from a pilot follow-up study of a handful of London-based early-stage entrepreneurs.