

The spaces between: Challenges and opportunities in interdisciplinary, multi-stakeholder community media research

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Filmed stories associated with the work of six Unitec researchers from Social Practice, Design, and Communication are the subjects of a series of programmes to be broadcast before the end of 2014 on Sky channel 83. Each half-hour programme reflects on an aspect of existing Unitec research projects¹ that can be loosely characterised as having community-building or community engagement aims. Each programme has been created with the involvement of staff and students in Communication and Performing/Screen Arts programmes, and in this way learning / teaching and curriculum goals are embedded in the larger project. At a more abstract level, I'm researching the value of a partnership approach to digital content creation for community communication goals.

Multiple stakeholder interests need to be held in balance in order to achieve the complex set of outcomes committed to in this research piece. Stakeholders include six communities, each the subject of a programme for broadcast, and each with their own series of members, networks, priorities, strategies and values; Unitec staff responsible for content production, with students, who want to learn by engaging in real-world production-related activities; Unitec researchers at each site; Unitec as a strategic entity; and Face TV, a niche community-oriented station contracted to Sky. Huge challenges are inherent in this range of stakeholders.

This paper will further reflect on the purposes - with some of the stories - of the meta-project, considered on several levels, and bound together by a theme of communicative spaces (gaps) in urban communities eroded by alienation. Alienation can be ameliorated by the efforts of multiple

¹ The six projects are: Violence-Free Waitakere's "Banishing Bullying" initiative; Studio MPHS (McLaren Park Henderson South), a youth-oriented digital/ makerspace facility; The Avondale Community Action Project; the Rosebank Artwalk; Cue Haven; and "More than a War": Remembering 1914-1918.

community resilience projects "chipping away at the bigger problem", and, we think, somewhat restored by the use of storytelling networks that help in closing the spaces.