

## **Mayo Fuster Morell**

Short text (summarizing the article *Fuster Morell, M. (2014). Governance of online creation communities for the building of digital commons: Viewed through the framework of the institutional analysis and development. Madison, M. J., Strandburg, K., & Frischmann, B. Convening Cultural Commons. Oxford University Press. (Forthcoming) (available at [onlinecreation.info](http://onlinecreation.info))* for the debate **27 May 2014 Round Table "Interface Dictatorship"** 18:30 pm. Hangar.

### **Digital interaction: Online creation communities**

With the adoption of information and communication technologies (ICTs), diverse types of communities of individuals following common goals through technologically mediated communication have emerged (Benkler 2006). Online creation communities (OCCs) are a particular type of online community whose goal is knowledge making and knowledge sharing. OCCs are communities of individuals that mainly interact via a platform for online participation, with the goal of building and sharing a common-pool resource (or common pool of resources) resulting from collaboratively systematizing and integrating dispersed information and knowledge resources and cognitive capacities.

### **Governance**

Research on community governance is limited and their range of topics remains also limited. Previous research on community governance has mostly focused on analyzing the policy-making processes developed by the participants to govern their interaction. However, there was a gap in the literature, **lacking a comprehensive and holistic view of what governance** means in collective action online.

The chapter *Fuster Morell, M. (2014). Governance of online creation communities for the building of digital commons: Viewed through the framework of the institutional analysis and development. Madison, M. J., Strandburg, K., & Frischmann, B. Convening Cultural Commons.*

*Oxford University Press. (Forthcoming) (available at [onlinecreation.info](http://onlinecreation.info))* aims to move beyond the analysis of specific aspects of the governance of OCCs, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the diverse aspects that drive governance of OCCs. It provides a set of dimensions that define the governance of OCCs. In particular, most previous work did not consider infrastructure provision (including interface design) in their analysis. In this regard, the chapter challenges previous literature by questioning the neutrality of infrastructure for collective action.

The governance, or the direction, control, and coordination of a process, is embedded or operates through aspects or points/sources of power. According to the analysis reported here, there are eight main aspects that are in a complex juxtaposition or interaction which determine and drive governance in OCCs. The eight dimensions that give OCCs direction, control, and coordination are:

- (1) Collective mission or goal of the process.
- (2) Cultural principles and social norms.
- (3) Design of the platform of participation (where regulation is embedded in the code).
- (4) Self-management of contributions: autonomous condition of participants in allocating their contribution to the building process.
- (5) Formal rules or policies applied to community interaction.
- (6) License.
- (7i) Decision-making and conflict resolution systems with regard to community interaction.
- (8) Infrastructure provision.

The eight dimensions are interrelated rather than narrowly discrete. Additionally, governance is not “static” but dynamic and might evolve over time. It might not be linear in its evolution, with “incoherent” moves in the diverse aspects on occasion.

Governance is very much shaped on the basis of how and who decides and manages these dimensions. Each of the dimensions might be managed in a more open to participation or inclusive way or not. They may encourage involvement or consideration of the views and interests of the participants

as individuals and/or community as a whole. Or they may be contrasted by the infrastructure provider. Another important dimension is whether it is more decentralized/fragmented/ad hoc or more centralized and established.

Some of these aspects are similarly present in other forms of collective action, while others are specific to the OCCs. This might be connected to the background environment within which OCCs operate, particularly the functioning of the digital environment. OCCs take place in an environment that shapes them in terms of technical and legal constraints. The emerging governance of OCCs in this environment cannot be qualified as simple. Indeed it is a highly complex system.

The analysis of the juxtaposition or interaction between the eight dimensions reveals that infrastructure provision is central. Infrastructure provision also determines some of the other eight aspects linked to the governance of OCCs. Infrastructure provision involves the provision of the platform of participation and the control over its design (code), the license, formal policies (such as terms of use), and, on some occasions, initiates the process and establishes the mission, and controls decision making on conflicts around community interaction. Still some other dimensions, like self-management of contributors in self-directing their action, are not controlled by the infrastructure provider. There is any way in which to force contributors to do something.

In this regard, the modality of governance of the infrastructure also contributes to shaping other dimensions of governance.

## **References**

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