

Unit 5: Resource outline



UNIT TITLE: It's Free?

TARGET AUDIENCE: 14 – 15 year olds

AIMS: to encourage students to think about creative industries within their own country and from an international perspective. To consider the ways in which they use the internet and their attitudes towards their own rights whilst also stressing their responsibilities towards artists and the creative industries.

CURRICULUM AREAS: Citizenship, Information Communication Technology, Religious and Moral Education, Social Studies and cross-curriculum dimensions such as Identity and Cultural Diversity and Technology and the Media

INTRODUCTION

Creativity and originality seem to be gaining economic, social and cultural significance; at the same time, digital technologies continue to develop in both influence and availability. Advancing technologies have had a real impact on the creative industries: digital photography; Computer Aided Design; MP3 technology and even simple film editing packages have all made a big difference to the ways creative outputs are produced and consumed. Yet we still see technology and creativity presented in opposition. So where does this idea come from – and is it a false dichotomy?

According to the media there is a growing disparity between the rights and responsibilities of creative producers and digital consumers. Questions of ownership and privacy, and of individual freedoms and content control, are increasingly reported in the news. Political, industrial and consumer bodies debate these issues in the context of their own interests: users expect to access any and all content quickly, easily and often for free, whereas rights owners may want to control the ways in which their content is viewed and used. As these issues increasingly come to the fore, an understanding of the debate and its origins becomes essential.

The resource is divided into six sections with each section comprising information, discussion points, questions and research tasks:

SECTION 1: CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

What are they? How have they developed historically? Why do they matter today?

This section asks students to consider what we actually mean by industries and economies, what types of industries exist and then how these relate to their own country – what are the key industries in their own countries. They then move on to consider creative industries and the contributions that they make to the economies of their own country. They are encouraged to look across a wide range of industries, ranging from film to computer software, design and fashion. Students are also asked to research number of employees, target markets, and structural organization of creative industries so that they are aware of their scope and importance.



For the activity whereby students place particular industries into specific categories, the correct answers are as follows:

primary (extracting raw materials),

Coal mining
Farming
Water

secondary (processing materials or making products),

Oil refining
Clothing
Car
Food processing

tertiary (providing services)

Insurance
Banking
Transportation
Tourism
Communications

quaternary (concerned with research and development).

Computer games (although this could also be placed in secondary!)
Consultancy

SECTION 2: VALUING CREATIVITY

How do you put a price on creativity? What's the value of creative products and services – economically? Socially? Culturally?

This section develops the idea of industry and considers the concept of value of creative artifacts as well as the audience for such products. Teachers may well want to introduce ideas about aesthetic values as well and try to link these to economic values. The main focus here is on paintings and the issue of scarcity. Also implied in this section is the idea of reproduction and the ways in which this can affect value. As well as artifacts this section also raises issues regarding performance and live events. Students are then asked to consider designer clothing labels and consider who such products are aimed at and how they can command high prices. Finally, following on from the idea of performance, students are asked to think about the different ways in which they can consume films and to think about their own preferences.



SECTION 3: PROTECTING CREATIVITY

What is intellectual property, and what's it got to do with creativity? What is significant about intellectual property in the digital age?

Having considered both economic and cultural value, students now look at the ways in which creative works can be protected from exploitation by those who do not own the intellectual property to such productions. In particular this section looks at the ways in which the digital age and digital reproduction has raised problems for the protection of copyright. A wider range of creative industries and their products are examined, ranging from fashion to books. It also offers some initial definitions of copyright and intellectual property and asks students to consider the implications of these.

SECTION 4: DIGITAL CONSUMERS

How is consumer choice changing in the digital age? Are traditional areas of the creative industries under threat from these changes? What rights should digital users expect?

Many of the activities in this section are based upon students' own possible experiences, ranging from buying tickets to events to their own usage of social networks. The section begins to raise issues about not only digital rights but also what their and others' responsibilities might be in relation to copyright and intellectual property. Linking back to the title of the unit itself, it raises the question "is it free?", relating this to students' own expectations of what they should be able to access on the internet. It also asks them to consider what the possibilities of the Internet and also digital technology in general might be for giving access to cultural and creative artifacts.

SECTION 5: INDUSTRY RESPONSES

How have different sectors of the creative industries responded to changes in technology and consumer habits? What problems, and what opportunities, have these changes brought about?

Given the impact of digital technologies and the Internet on creative industries, this section asks students to consider some of the ways in which creative industries have responded to these technological changes and the effects that have been seen by industry on their development and profitability. Students are asked to think about how illegal downloading of, for example, music and films might impact on the industries that produce them as well as the artists who create them. It asks them to evaluate the ways in which creative industries have responded to this challenge and whether that response has been effective. Again, issues of responsibility, both personal and corporate, are raised regarding access to cultural products via the internet.

SECTION 6: FUTURE PERFECT?

How can a balance be achieved between consumer and business concerns and between rights and responsibilities? How can creative producers protect their interests as technology changes and adapts?



In the final section students bring together all that they have learned as well as the opinions formed from the previous five sections. They study the different approaches and possibilities implied by the Internet and digital technologies. Digital rights and digital responsibilities are evaluated, based on students' own experiences of the Internet. Students are asked to consider ways in which industries can continue to develop new products – films, music etc - and make them available through the internet and via other digital formats, whilst at the same time protecting their intellectual property rights. As some of the users of these materials will be the artists of the future they are encouraged to consider their own future works within the digital environment. Whilst there are no “correct” answers to these questions, the issues raised are those which will affect both students' own future access to cultural artifacts in the future and their opportunities for employment in the creative industries.