

DIY FESTIVAL MAKING KIT

The main outcomes of the Open Sourcing Festivals project are the co-production by the partners of the Do It Anyway festival 2015 in Sheffield (UK), as well as the creation of an online database of resources and documentation (www.opensourcingfestivals.org). The test implementation that happened through the organising of Do It Anyway helped refine a DIY Festival Making kit, which one of the key element in our projet platform, released for others to use and build-upon.

The first part of the kit tells the story of Do It Anyway 2015. The second part, the manual kit, identifies all the components involved in organising a festival, abstracting things from the particular, for future festival organisers to use. We have now an open-source festival kit, which we hope will be adopted in various contexts, beyond the cultural field.

The kit also available in the etherpad where it was originally written. Please feel free to go to the pad, modify and augment the kit it as you please!

<http://pad.pixelache.ac/p/olsof-kit>

PART 1 THE CASE-EXAMPLE OF DO IT ANYWAY 2014

1. Brief narrative on the Festival Road Map created at Learning Step 2 in Sheffield 2-5.4.2014:

While mobilities to Helsinki and Reykjavik took place, nothing was organised for the festival in 2014. The project leader for OLSOF at Access Space left the organisation at the end of November that year. In December 2014 it was uncertain whether the organisation would continue in the same way due to its financial situation. In January 2015 the Grundtvig project was taken over by a new project leader. The road map created in April 2014 was rejected as unrealistic. The festival would need to be financed by new fund raising in Spring 2015 or it would have to be run on almost no budget.

Skype meetings with Pixel Network partners helped us gain the confidence to organise the festival as it emerged we would need to do it in a particular way. Visiting a diversity of places, orgaisations and festival set-ups during the project helped us understand that there is no "right way" of doing something like this, and local considerations are vital to the shape of it and to create the particular festival atmosphere.

Staff working hours had been cut to a minimum which was only enough to keep the organisation ticking over and to fund raise for priorities like a core arts programme andcharitable activity which would bring in grant revenue. As there was little time to find funding for a festival it was decided that the business model in Sheffield had to be one of boot strapping, relying on Pixel Network partners to travel to Sheffield using their remaining mobilities (therefore zero cost to Access Space) and to raise money to pay for the festival from donations and sales during the festival itself. The festival would need to be run by volunteers and staff members in their own time.

A few hundred pounds was borrowed from board members to cover costs like flyers, posters and sundries. A Temporary Events License from the council was obtained for part of the festival in order to be able to sell beer, hoping to make money which with donations would be sufficient to pay back the money borrowed. This was successful and the festival broke even.

As festival organiser, one needs to make decisions which will facilitate the events actually taking place. The whole situation at Access Space was by no means ideal for running a festival, and a financial model for it had to be created very quickly with little means of testing it. In a way it was leap of faith, but with enthusiastic staff and volunteers, the energy levels of everyone was quite high. For it to work we needed audiences to come to events and much effort was spent attempting to attract them. To keep costs down, everything needed to be very highly organised, and in a way we managed to substitute organisation for costs in a number of ways. As the festival was going to be small, it was possible to map out exactly what might happen when and where, thus conserving resources, and maximising the possibility that people might donate toward the costs of running the festival.

It appears that all the staff and volunteers very much enjoyed the festival experience.

See original ROAD MAP below

2014

April: announcing the festival is happening - first press release to the press + festival network

April: Drafting preliminary budget + human resources + in-kind resources

May: Gathering / unconference to invite other local organizations / people to join the planning of the festival

Spring: starting fundraising + starting reserving venues + European volunteer program?

Spring: Starting developing festival visual ID

Autumn: inviting keynotes and other key people + sending invitation letters to people from abroad who might apply for funding themselves.

Autumn: starting to build webpages for the festival

Other regular planning meetings during 2014...+ celebrating small things in the process, like the first logo etc, so people appropriate the process in a social way

2015

January: Content of the festival is nailed down!

February: Flyers + posters up -engaging with street artists to design the visual ID

February: Open call for thematic walks leaders + open call for 20 x 20 painting exhibition + other open calls!

March: Moss Graffiti workshop - so the stuff has time to grow in time and can help communicate the festival -there could be 'Do it Anyway' graffiti.

March: starting publishing who is coming list

March: call for volunteers

April-May

Pre-festival walks + emotional maps workshops

April-May: 2015 Festival!

Maybe organized in connection with Future Everything?

April May: Short notices for open participation options

2. Local Components of Do It Anyway

*** Organisers' motivations, tasks and references**

Motivations: to successfully complete the project with knowledge gained from visiting partner organisations/festivals.

Organise venues, volunteers and equipment, and attract an audience

*** Contacts to gain access to venues, equipment, funding, partners**

While normally one would need a long list of contacts to run such activities, the way that we had to organise the festival minimised the need for outside agencies because the budget did not allow for it.

*** Budget & economical models**

There was little time to find funding for a festival and the financial situation of the organisation was not good, so it was decided that the business model had to be one of boot strapping, relying on Pixel Network partners to travel to Sheffield using their remaining mobilities (therefore zero cost to Access Space) and to raise money to pay for the festival from donations and sales during the festival itself. The festival would need to be run by volunteers and staff members in their own time.

A few hundred pounds was borrowed from board members to cover costs like flyers, posters and sundries. A Temporary Events License was obtained for part of the festival in order to be able to sell beer, hoping to make money which with donations would be sufficient to pay back the money borrowed.

This was successful and the festival broke even.

The festival cost £460 to put on in Sheffield in cash terms. A budget estimate is below. However, for a more accurate costing one needs to factor in all the in kind value of Grundtvig partners' mobilities as well.

Please note that *italics* denote "in kind" value, not actual cash value.

Staff and volunteer time:

Project management- one person x 1 month full-time at £12 p/h =£2100

Technical staff:

3 x 12 hr days at 12 p/h = £432

Cost of Access Space as a venue x 3 days =£1200

Design £400

Publicity & Design coordination

2 days p/w for 4 weeks =£768

Venue facilitation by staff and volunteers at UK minimum wage:
7 people working a total of 96 hrs at £6.50 over 3 days
Total= £640

Video & photography:
film makers 2 full days and 2 evenings = **£700**
photographer 1 afternoon = **£100**

Curtain manufacture **£170**

Artists (Sheffield)
UK artist travel and accommodation & p.a. hire **£880**

Total estimated in kind value= £7390

Print, posters/flyers: **£200**

Consumables (paper plates, cups, plastic cutlery, coffee, tea, water, beer etc): **£230**

Curtain material **£30**

Estimated total cost of festival in Sheffield= £7650

Visiting Pixel Network partners:
Iceland - 2 people
Norway – 4 people
Finland - 3 people
France – 2 people

*** Funding applications and schedule of application deadlines usually applied for**
We did not have time to apply for funding this time, however were we to do another festival next year we would look at bids to at least the Arts Council England and PRS for Music.

*** Organisational process, how a certain way of doing the event came to be, or evolved**

Due to the circumstances of the organisation, a particular way of organising the festival emerged. No organising, fund raising or publicity had been done in 2014 - the road map created in April of that year had not been adhered to. The project coordinator had left the organisation in November and a new one was appointed in January 2015.

In 2015, Skype conversations with Grundtvig partners happened on a regular basis to answer practical questions and discuss the on-going plans. In Sheffield it was only in March that a final decision how to go ahead was made. Almost all the festival organising and decision making was done by one staff member, with some of the publicity being coordinated by a volunteer. This was not ideal, but given the sort amount of time and the lack of budget it seemed the only practical way.

*** What are/were the key communication channels and methods?**

Communicating with Pixel Network partners was done via email and Skype.

To publicise the festival we used Twitter, Facebook, our mailing list and international media artists. Local community television and radio, and local magazines also gave it publicity.

*** Accommodation, catering or travel tips**

We created a list of artists willing to put up visiting artists for around £20 per night. However we were happy that many Pixel Network partners organised their own accommodation (Airb&b, hotels) as this reduced our work load.

The most convenient airport is Manchester Airport and it is usually fairly quick to navigate on arrival. However, at certain times there can be bottle necks at passport control, especially for non-EU citizens. Perhaps it is worth noting that two hours may be needed to get from disembarkation to the airport train station.

*** Staff, members, participants, stakeholders or volunteers involved are listed with their roles, but what were their motivations for being involved?**

There was enthusiasm for the idea of the festival from staff, volunteers and some board members. It was thought it would be a great opportunity to help redefine the organisation as the UK hub of an international digital arts network. Apart from that, I think people genuinely wanted to meet the participants and engage with the art experiences on offer.

*** How did you get people participating?**

There was a feeling among staff and volunteers that the festival would be a way of re-defining Access Space, both locally and internationally. This has proved to be true. It was hoped it would help to develop new audiences and show us if the newly developed spaces we had created from the old rooms would work in a flexible and efficient way, and importantly how we couldn't learn from other organisations and artists to create a new international context for itself in Sheffield. Overall this festival has shown the organisation important aspects of how it ought to continue into the future, how it can modify its communication locally, that there are new audiences to develop, and that it has a solid and capable team of staff and volunteers as a resource. Maybe the festival was a bit of a baptism of fire, but it has moved the organisation a good distance along the road to re-defining itself both locally and internationally. Staff and volunteers have expressed an interest in running another festival next year.

*** How was the programme put together (curation, collective curations, open formats for participants contributions...)?**

The festival was curated by the network like this: some partners curated artists for the festival (Pixel, Lorna Lab, Mal au Pixel), while Pixelache suggested a number of possibilities to help shape the event from which Access Space then made a selection; commissioned by Access Space were two multi-performance events curated by artists in Sheffield (OpenPlatform by Susanne Palzer, Algorave by Alex McLean).

*** Tools used for specific purposes (communications, PR, website, streaming,) and instruction guide where appropriate**

We used a local print magazine (NowThen), Sheffield Live TV and Sheffield Live Radio to get publicity to local people, as well as the Sheffield Star newspaper listings. We used the ArtSheffield.org website and their monthly email newsletter to get local arts audiences interested. International and national audiences were alerted via Spectre, Netbehaviour

and Microsoundlists, while our participant base and supporters were communicated to via our mailing list, Facebook page, Twitter and personal email.. The website was used for detailed information about artists and scheduling, while an outline of the schedule was available via a Facebook event. Some streaming was done via Google Hangouts.

*** Other practical matters: skills, environments, circumstances?**

The organisation's financial situation was one of the big considerations throughout planning, organising and running the festival. It had an impact on space (we couldn't hire other spaces or extra equipment) so we had the entire festival in our building, with a couple of small events in a room above the local pub (no cost to hire). We had sufficient technical and organisational skills and equipment to make the festival work, although we think we need to learn a lot more about how to successfully publicise such an event locally and get the locality to take notice.

*** Documentation of festival content(images, video, streaming, texts)**

The entire festival was documented with time-lapse photography, photo stills and video by volunteers. There are also short video clips of participant feedback.

We missed the opportunity for an international audience online this time by not streaming most of the events. The Algorave on Sunday evening was streamed via Google Hangouts, however problems with sound quality were discovered. We think we need to do more research into how to achieve the quality we require, including assessing the consistency of the network, and this was one of the factors which persuaded us not to stream all of the events. We also think camera positioning is important for different activities, so the streaming issue is something we need to develop for the future.

The streaming video of the Algorave is available on Youtube and some of the stills are on our Facebook page, but most of the video has yet to be edited.

*** Participant's feedback**

Generally comments were positive, particularly about how welcoming, supportive and friendly the staff were, the relaxed atmosphere, how well the technical aspect worked and the diversity of the sessions offered.

Rating for the overall experience at Dolt Anyway averaged around 4/5, as did professional benefit from attending. Performances, workshops and presentations averaged around 4/5 as well (some people rated them as 5/5 and others as low as 2/5). Discussions and informal activities were also rated highly, averaging at 4/5, as was the venue.

In terms of what could be improved, we had predicted some, but other feedback could only be discovered by doing the festival.

Firstly, the programme schedule was quite tight, with some commenting on its intensity. It was thought that meal times were not scheduled in very well – there was little time to find food and eat between sessions. There were comments on the difficulty of finding a variety of “healthy” food options close to Access Space - the kind of food available, while being good, isn't the kind you'd necessarily want to eat twice a day, every day. While this is down to personal taste obviously, we could address this in future years with perhaps a venue for people to eat together (with catering) and to socialise in.

Better communication about the programme while at the festival was also mentioned – there were no handouts available (although we had planned and written one, for some reason it had not been printed).

So, while the technical and logistical side seemed to work well, we could make the festival more “human shaped” in future.

*** Achievements**

Well, we have successfully run a small international digital arts festival which financially broke even and had very few technical problems. We were pleased that we were able to host such a diversity of arts activity during the weekend!

The Grundtvig mobilities meant we were able to see a real diversity of approaches to both curating and running festivals in very different locations. This I think helped us a lot in being able to decide we could host Do It Anyway the way circumstances dictated we do it - that is, we learned a great deal about flexibility and potential, and that, we think, is a worthwhile achievement!

*** Is it self-sustaining now or will it be in the future?**

The business model we used for Do It Anyway is not in itself financially self-sustaining. However, certain aspects of the model could contribute to the budget of future festivals, for instance, selling consumables (food and drink) and selling tickets for an event.

Volunteering is also an important contribution and constituted a large part of any in kind budget, but we think that running the next festival would be dependent on a successful grant application.

PART 2 DIY FESTIVAL MAKING - HOW TO?

"The source-code of software usually includes the procedural code that runs the program, designed functions, recognition of dependencies, etc.

The source-code of a cultural festival could be interpreted as blue-prints and designs which allow it to take the form and manifest as it does, but also sharing the ability to accessing resources.

Many of these aspects of knowledge about how a festival is made are particular and specific. Not all of them are regular as part of festival documentation. They may be re-usable without modification if one lives in the same place (town, city, country) or working in the same language. The replicability of a cultural festival is related to the universality of its components. However, it is the differences shared which make it worthwhile. " (Andrew Paterson)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS TO START FROM

"Think about why would the scene and the world need that kind of event. If you can not answer this question, don't do it. If you can, do it, but learn to take moderate risks so that if something goes wrong it doesn't 'end you'. You always have to take a risk to do something interesting." (Matti Nives)

What is your festival?

- > What, for whom and why
- > What happens if we do it?
- > What happens if we don't do it?
- > What doesn't happen if we don't do it?
- > What doesn't happen if we do it?

What are the objectives?

- > For the main organisers / staff?
- > For the local community?
- > For the international community?
- > For the people who are not in your community?
- > Do you see your festival as a place to present ready projects or as a laboratory for projects?
- > What do you value more, process or outcome?

Pre-evaluation

- > What would you consider to be a success?
- > What would you consider to be a failure?
- > What are your best and worst-case scenarios?

What scale should the festival be?

- > Financial scale
- >> What financial sizes are "good sizes" for festivals?
- >>> Largest Pixelache Festival = €70K-€80K, seven venues
- >>> Smallest Festivals: €1.5K, people bring their own resources
- >>> Super-DIY festival: 0€ or -500€
- > Number of staff (organisers, curators, volunteers, producers)
- > Size of audience
- > What level of hospitality will you provide your international visitors?

What resources do you already have? What new resources will you need to look for?

- > People
- > Networks & collaborations
- > Communication channels
- > Spaces
- > Equipment
- > Funding

Mapping of other activities in the region around the time of your possible festival

- > Are there other festivals taking place near by around the same time
- > Are there holidays / non-cultural events / other distractions take place around the time of your imagined event?

Strategies for local collaborations:

- > Pick 6-7 local organizations to have a drink with and have a conversation with them about your festival idea. Be open! Don't see others as competitors, look for synergies and how your collaboration can strengthen both.
- > Evaluate and re-evaluate your histories and past interactions
- >> Positive experiences
- >> Negative experiences

Compromise and letting go

- > How much are you willing to compromise to make something still happen?

STARTING WITH A SMALL SCALE EVENT

- > As a warm-up to the bigger festival, with participatory activities that can help create synergies for the future festival
 - > As a way to start gathering a team around the idea
 - > As a planning tool, using it to start putting a few things in place (networks, collaborations, testing ideas etc).
 - > As an 'active advertisement' for the forthcoming festival
 - > As an opportunity to invite organisations you would like to work with for the festival
 - > As an opportunity to invite a few special guests that could help with local networking.
- Letters of Invitation are KEY: People can apply for travel support on their own

FROM BRAINSTORMING TO ROAD MAP

(see Do It Anyway road map example)

Brainstorming

- > Brainstorming theme and name for the festival
- > Think of different formats/levels of participation in your festival
- > Brainstorming programme ideas, collaborators, spaces
- > Write a convincing and compact pitch. It's important to simplify communication: how would you describe your festival to your grandmother?

Road Map

- > Make a simple and realistic budget (participants fee, flights, hotel + organisation team salary + communication). Include what you already have (even if it is in-kind it will engage other venues to participate).
- > Make a fundraising plan (what is the minimum of money you need to get to make it happen?)
- > Make a plan of how the different tasks are shared between the organisers / volunteers, 'who does what and when'
- > Make a communications plan for the festival:
 - >> Visual identity: think of graphics, logos, colours, design, posters and print advertising
 - >> Press, radio, tv, Internet - marketing
- > Make a schedule for liaising with participants & collaborators
 - >> Confirming projects & equipment & spaces
 - >> Getting projects descriptions for publicity
 - >> Booking flights/accommodation (remember that you could use a network of local hosts to save on accommodation costs)
- > All these elements are part of your road map. Set milestones but be flexible about meeting your internal deadlines

FUNDING STRATEGY

Arguments to support the festival: It's a matter of audience quality, strong and lasting networks, mouth to ear, brand creation for the city, the company, the country, etc, related to innovation, cutting edge, sustainability, renewable values.

Public funding

- > Local/National grants from local arts council, cities, state - need to apply more than a year in advance.
- > International - if you look for a EU partnership project- you need to start planning almost 2 years in advance
- > Travel grants for international participants - to be applied by them directly in most cases, with an invitation letter from organisers
- > Embassy for international guests

Private funding

- > Foundations / Cultural centers
- > Private companies / Sponsors
- > Ticket selling / Merchandising

Experimental funding strategies

- > Crowdfunding
- > Alternative Currencies
- > ...

THINGS LEARNED FROM ORGANISERS INTERVIEWS

<http://opensourcingfestivals.eu/publications>

From questions which raise and make visible the motivations and inspirations of festival organisers

- > One thing that came forward several times is inspiration gained from visiting other events. It's important to go see other festivals. No organisation is an island.
- > Other sparks: the will to do something that would otherwise remain undone, the need to create a context for presenting projects/ideas that otherwise don't have a forum, a collective desire...

From questions related to failures and vulnerabilities

- > Difficulties to manage the financial risk (personnal and organisational)
- > Tendency to take on too many responsibilities, not delegate enough
- > Lack of communication and/or trust within team
- > Some things will go wrong, what matters is the style of doing things 'wrong'

From question related to what makes a festival successful

- > Creating a festival that is artistically interesting, challenging and rewarding. Also one that is financially functional.
- > Participants feel different when they come out of it, they feel happy. They have more energy after than before the festival. They have fun.
- > Participants feel engaged with the festival. Not just spectators or audience, but they feel like they are contributing.
- > When something remains on the local level, that inspired new projects to be started and at the same time locals and international guests keep connected on the long term.
- > One that makes your organisation more sustainable

Documentation / Archiving

- > It is very important to document what happens, because it will never happen again, through photographs, audio, text, video etc.
- > It is also important to document to be able to share some of the results of the event.
- > One needs to plan documentation timely and financially, allocate the right resources.

Considering round-the-year impacts

Round-the-year activities keep people together and remind people of the fact that you exist. If you want people to collaborate with you, it ties them together to have an ongoing activity. It is also easier for new people to keep in touch if they know they can come to open workshops. It can also feed into the subsequent festival (content, people, energy). But it can be difficult to sustain them if you do not have a fixed location, and it also makes it more difficult for newcomers to find you.

Evolution of future editions of your festival

- > Need for flexible development -- this isn't a perfect world, so things won't end up exactly as you expect.
- > Development doesn't necessarily mean growing in scale
- > Know your limitations. It's ok to say 'no'.
- > Methods, approaches, locations, programme formats, themes, and audiences,...all these are parameters that can evolve with time.
- > People, ideas, and methodologies come and go. You can drop something one time, and bring it back. There are no rules.
- > Festivals sometimes die, they don't need to continue forever. If they exist they need to make sense and be sustainable for organisers, organisations and audience.

What to have in an organiser's survival kit

Money, headache pills, the team that is doing this (because it is impossible to do it alone), patience, resilience, a dash of unrealistic optimism, tolerance of compromise, a pocket leatherman knife, several A/V adaptors and regular cables, instant people powder (just add-water type of thing, cause people are the key both inside & outside), a phone that always gets answered, some weather-control device, a handbook of festivals (in terms of how they are made), Club-mate, food, an instrument to produce beers, lots of coffee, a notebook, a mobile phone with the important numbers inside, friends; kindness; a small box with 300€ (the emergency fund), one extra day per week that nobody else has,

OPEN SOURCING YOUR OWN FESTIVAL!

Sharing knowledge about all along:

- > Organisers' motivations, tasks and references
- > Contacts to gain access to venues, equipment, funding, partners
- > Budget & economical models --> sharing your budget and your budget template
- > Funding applications and schedule of application deadlines --> sharing application documents
- > Organisational process, how a certain way of doing the event came to be, or evolved
- > What are/were the key communication channels and methods?
- > Accommodation, catering or travel tips
- > Staff, members, participants, stakeholders or volunteers involved are listed with their roles, but what were their motivations for being involved?
- > How did you get people participating?
- > How was the programme put together (curation, collective curations, open formats for participants contributions...) -> sharing these documents / pads
- > Open sourcing workshops (see comments below)
- > Tools used for specific purposes (communications, PR, website, streaming,) and instruction guide where appropriate -> can some of those tools be open-sourced for others to use?
- > Other practical matters: skills, environments, circumstances?
- > Documentation of festival content (images, video, streaming, texts)
- > Participant's feedback --> open sourcing feedback form and feedback itself
- > Achievements
- > Is it self-sustaining now or will it be in the future?
- > What platform/technology do you use to share this information?

OPEN SOURCING BUDGETS

What does sharing the budget for a festival event reveal?

- > It indicates an economic model, where the participants and the organisers are in relation to each other
- > How the money was spent
- > But importantly the proportions of expenditures spent, how much certain parts of the programme cost, what was the proportion of the budget spent on salaries and fees?
- > It indicates the proportions of incomes, how much was awarded by public funds, how much was raised from tickets or participation fees, how much was given in-kind as voluntary donations of time, labour, equipment, costs outside one's own budget

How much information and detail can you tell about costs?

- > At what point does it compromise the festival or the funders or the participants?

How do you lay out the budget in a spreadsheet to look professional?

Vulnerabilities

- > Disparity of funding & incomes available for festivals in different places
- > Detailed information of fees may set a standard for future expectations that is hard to maintain, or reveal inequalities

OPEN SOURCING WORKSHOPS

Materials

- > Information about facilitator
- > What are the resources needed (skills, technologies, space, finances....)
- > Sharing workshop source code / protocol
- > Documentation (photos, videos, text)

Vulnerabilities

- > Keeping in mind that the context which inspired the workshop does not always travel easy
- > The instructions and materials/ingredients/components list for the workshop are not shared beyond the participants