

# Editorial: Underlining technologies in research practice utilising digital entrepreneurship in creating visual narratives/storytelling

Eleanor Gates-Stuart<sup>1</sup>

This 016 issue of *Fusion Journal* marks a successful seventh year of the journal since its first issue in February 2013. As the new Managing Editor of *Fusion Journal*, I would like to acknowledge the founding editors, Jane Mills<sup>2</sup> and Craig Bremner,<sup>3</sup> as being inspirational in steering the aspiration of the original journal. In her article in Issue 01, Jane set the background to *Fusion Journal*, outlining the rhetorical context to its history within a merger of two schools, to form the current School of Communication and Creative Industries at Charles Sturt University, thus creating a positive move of collegiality and innovation for research and establishing the online *Fusion Journal*. The journal's name evolved, explained:

*In all, the term 'fusion' not only fitted the aspirations of the journal but opened up new ideas and provoked exciting collisions and creative frictions in preliminary discussions among the founding editors and all others involved in the early days of developing fusion. (Mills)*

*Fusion Journal's* mission and aims remain strong, fostering the interdisciplinary and creative practice in its scholarly critical awareness and openness of dialogue, flourishing mentorship and collaboration.<sup>4</sup> As we welcome our new Editorial Board, representative of interdisciplinary expertise and diverse research fields, Jane continues the journey with *Fusion Journal*, as does Kim Woodland (our Production Editor) and Patrick McKenzie (web maintenance). Given this brief introduction and moving forward, reminiscent of the beginnings of *Fusion Journal*, the reimagining process and visioning for future issues is an exciting development of our next stages. Although we have some journal issues committed for next year (2020), *Fusion Journal* Issue 16 provides us with a momentary space to pause, reflect on good practice, absorb our contributed wealth of knowledge and set the pace for publishing new ideas and, as always, remaining true to our aims as a scholarly journal for the communication, creative industries and media arts disciplines.

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<sup>4</sup> *Fusion Journal* [Mission Statement, Aims and Scope](#). Faculty of Arts & Education, Charles Sturt University

This 016 issue of *Fusion Journal* focuses on how researchers engage with technologies in their practices, utilising digital entrepreneurship, technology transfer and data information in shifting ways, redefining traditional creative perspectives, visualisation and activities in creating visual narratives/storytelling. The call for content was driven from a question asked in relation to the wider visibility of the creative industries, particularly in and amongst a range of university disciplines as far reaching as science, engineering and agriculture – an interesting question given that collaborative research practices exist in many cross-disciplinary areas and much of our practice is an intersection of cross-references. However, it is a timely question, as engaging technologies fuse creative innovation, and its visibility can be extremely effective but can also seem hidden.

The use of technologies in research is not necessarily a new direction; however, as these technologies widen our capabilities in the communication and understanding of models of practice, the complexities are enriched, increasing our knowledge and impact, connectivity and conceptual development. This special issue of *Fusion Journal* aims to increase our understanding of these new practices from differing perspectives and to support interdisciplinary research; for instance, this issue brings together four very different articles, addressing the creative application of technology in cross-disciplinary practice as well as being embedded, processed and enriched as an artistic outcome. The authors may seem similar, addressing personal perspectives in their unique systems of artistic knowledge that is the integrity and the challenge of visualising and communicating complex information – yet the underlining technologies in their practice present monumental perspectives and achievement evident through these works.

Andrew Hagan's article, *Painting with Pixels: The Art of Communication Using Animation and Visual Effects*, takes us on a personal journey and explains his experience of the early introduction of computers in days when applying creativity to a formalistic system was a calculated vista of imagination, certainly in achieving a vision by any means successfully. Mindful of his enterprise and the challenge of new technology, in this editorial overview I am reminded of these means, arguably, as a process of production, ideally summarised in 'Reframing Art': *the artist shapes the end product according to imaginative constructs that are realised through the possibilities provided by the computer software* (Carter and Geczy). It is through the reframing of *Painting with Pixels* that Andrew begins his personal perspective from manipulating code in applying technology for making art, sharing his influences and creative perspectives that shape his imagination, being experimental in approach to establishing new ground and expertise. His experience and track of transcending knowledge for effective communication via new modes of storytelling challenge the limitations of technology, pushing the boundaries beyond *Painting with Pixels* to actively manipulating the technology for best practice and use of visual effects.

As for many artists, the use of technology is as much part of a toolkit as are the concepts, whilst complex ideas unfold and creative play entwines with intelligent decision making and experimental investigation; these factors are often understated as the result, the artwork, evolves as an entity in its own right, to invite curiosity, and be

experiential and enjoyed by an audience. These creative assets, the thinking process and application of spatial awareness, sense of materials (physical and digitally constructed), spoken and unspoken words, ability to convey meaning and message, perform and express emotions are of crucial influence and expertise when multidisciplinary research is applied. Science and art collaborations enable people to think in ways that they have not always entertained (Gates-Stuart et al.); therefore, the opportunity to form a multidisciplinary team and develop a proof of concept project as outlined in the article, *Evoking Memories: Displacing the Fear of Technology*, provides an overview of the concept and challenges involved in determining and displacing the fear of technology for a person with dementia. The article describes the development involved in addressing the complexities for the person with dementia, when technology provides a means to enable virtual reality (VR) experiences – and yet the technology itself (the VR headset) is also an obstacle when the wearing of the device creates emotional uncertainty for the user. How other people can play a part in supporting this experience is a key element, as well as constructing the story in asking the person with dementia, “*Where would you like to visit?*”. The article addresses the problems that can be encountered for people unfamiliar with technology, yet finding a way to explore solutions for Health and Arts research as end users of technology, whilst being creative in the application of arts and technology within the multidisciplinary team.

Continuing on the theme of health and innovative technologies, it is exciting to see the benefit of long-term research commitment and personal development result in advanced educational research for VR immersive learning. In Zeynep Taçgın’s article, *From Storyboard to Practice: My Virtual Operating Room*, she shares her journey of approximately 10 years in streamlining her practical experience, gaining medical knowledge learned as a non-medical specialist, building technological tools and developing augmented and virtual reality environments. Her ambitious research project eventuates as *My Virtual Operating Room (VOR)* with Zeynep sharing her research story with details relating to production, operation systems and co-design, particularly for immersive environments for instructional educational needs. She certainly defines the integrity and the challenge of visualising and communicating complex information as in 016 *Fusion Journal’s* call for papers invitation; her article will interest instructional designers posed with improving learning outcomes whilst successfully implementing innovative design and VR immersive environments as an education model.

The complexity of landscape and its many dimensions is a fascinating article, *Night and Day – 7 Months*, by Bärbel Ullrich, as our attention is drawn to her time-lapsed photography as visual moments in time, focused on one site revealing multiple layers of the ecosystem and its density, spectacular and exposed. Given the infrastructure of technical planning and the creative compositional framework of the site, her collaboration with the environment is a partnership of story, the landscape giving its unspoilt natural honesty shared with animal and insect alike, revealed and experienced to us through lens and image capture. Her article includes photographs taken *night and day*, and what might appear on first view in the images as a construct of simple elements, is in fact worthy of lengthy gaze as intricate details are poetic and

memorising, the technology to assist is forgotten and the aesthetic of a natural habitat is pure. Bärbel answers *Fusion Journal's* call, showing underlining technologies in her practice as presented in her own monumental perspectives.

This 016 issue of *Fusion Journal* is timely, as not only are we addressing how researchers engage with technologies in their practices within our School of Communication and Creative Industries but as a wider debate and conversations within our Charles Sturt University Faculties, other universities, local government and the related cultural arts and creative industries. As mentioned, the call for content related to the wider visibility of engaging technologies and creative innovation is reflected within the following articles in this journal – they are certainly diverse, distinctive and equitably innovative of technology. The expertise and strengths of multidisciplinary practice and value of research collaboration are noted as being highly prominent and instrumental, especially for engaging new research perspectives, knowledge and creative innovation. I would also like to reflect on one of the *Fusion Journal* aims, to encourage early career researchers by offering the opportunity to work alongside established researchers, and I congratulate the authors published in this issue. Finally, I would like to thank our journal reviewers for their considerable efforts and valued contribution, helping to bring this 016 issue to publication.

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## About the author

Professor Eleanor Gates-Stuart is an international artist, specialising in interdisciplinary research, whose focus is primarily on scientific exploration and technology. She has held a number of educational leadership roles, internationally and nationally, particularly in research relating to the sciences, technology and art, working with major research organisations, museums, education, business and government. She is the Research and Post-Graduate Convenor for the School of Communication and Creative Industries, Managing Editor of [Fusion Journal](#), affiliate member of the [Graham Centre for Agricultural Innovation](#), and leads the development of the [eXtended Reality Centre \(XRC\)](#). Her research includes numerous professional associations, collaborating, publishing and presenting papers: in the UK, USA, Taiwan and Australia.