

Cultural Research Network (CRN)

Overview Document – 2013

I. Overview

The Cultural Research Network is an open resource-sharing community of practice for anyone involved in culture-related research.

Our network emphasizes the practice and process of current research, and opportunities to inform that active work among peers, academics, and professionals. Our collaborative platform provides opportunities to explore project or professional connections, methodological challenges, technological innovations, standards and practices, and shared infrastructure.

The forum is open to any self-identified cultural researcher from emerging scholars, to private consultants, to seasoned academics, to researchers or analysts or evaluation staff embedded within nonprofit, governmental, or commercial organizations.

II. Key success factors and supporting activities:

We strive for a self-sustaining resource that enhances participants' research skills, connections, and resources, and facilitates collaborations and cooperation. Ultimately, we hope the network will encourage more robust research generation, distribution, understanding, and discussion in the larger cultural community. Some indicators that might suggest our success in this goal include:

1. Participants view the Network as valuable and relevant.
In the short-term, the steering committee will:
 - Develop guidelines for participation and governance
 - Scan other successful communities of practice
 - Survey participants to identify priority topics
2. Participants use the Network as a resource-sharing forum.
For example they might:
 - Offer practical advice and perspectives on methodological challenges
 - Share background information and technical documents developed as part of larger projects
 - Work collaboratively to develop field-wide standards
 - Share research and/or evaluation syntheses or literature reviews
3. The Network is sustained without the continual participation of any one person or organization. To support this goal, new members will have the opportunity to join the steering committee on a regular basis.

III. Initial Constituencies:



By “emerging researchers,” we mean not only graduate students at academic institutions, but also unaffiliated researchers who are looking to increase their skill set and use their talents productively. Across all categories, we welcome participants from the United States and beyond, as well as non-arts researchers whose interests are strongly aligned with those of the CRN.

IV. Discussion (setting a high bar)

To work towards the goal of fostering a forum valued by participants, rotating steering committee members should seed relevant discussion topics and lead by example by making substantive and thoughtful contributions. Current participants may be periodically surveyed for relevant topics, in addition to threads organically rising to the surface.

The steering committee will be charged with identifying a tool and/or process that will enable it to survey the field for new topics.

We envision that the discussion will be guided by the following values:

- **Openness:** Participants recognize that no one is an expert in everything, including (especially) themselves. Questions are welcome regardless of the identity of the asker.
- **Transparency:** Participants assume by default that there is more to be gained than lost by sharing information. Dialogue is straightforward, candid, and informed by full context.
- **Generosity:** Empowering people to help one another is a core purpose of the Network. Participants do not hesitate to give freely of their time and expertise to move the field forward.

V. Community management

Steering committee members share responsibility for moderating content for the duration of their term. These duties are expected to be light, since the Google Group does not require pre-approval to post messages. However, if a participant doesn't understand the group's purpose or makes unhelpful contributions (continually posts off-topic, engages in excessive self-promotion, abuses other community members, etc.), one of the steering committee members should write a group-wide message to politely educate the participant about the group's purpose and expectation for participation. If he/she continues to pose a problem, the steering committee may opt to remove him/her from the group.

VI. Initial steering committee

- Kiley Arroyo
- Jean Cook
- Anne Gadwa Nicodemus
- Ian David Moss
- Andrew Taylor
- Two additional volunteers from the at-large membership