

# Chapter 15

## Exposing Core Competencies for Future Creative Technologists

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### ABSTRACT

*This chapter suggests that in terms of preparing creative technologies graduates it is better to define what skill sets will be in the future rather than attempting to define either what creative technologies is now or what a current creative technologist should be capable of. The chapter is a collaborative attempt to explore the future definition of a creative technologist through a form of creative expression. The chapter utilizes a combination of self-reflective narrative and performative writing to develop position descriptions for jobs that may exist in the future, where each job is an extension of an author's life trajectory. A cluster analysis is undertaken to identify common themes that define the possible characteristics and attributes of future graduates that can be used to design the curricula for creative technologies programmes to meet the needs of the changing world.*

### INTRODUCTION

It seems a simple question to ask, “What is Creative Technologies?” However, simple questions often lead to complex answers and as yet there is no clear definition of creative technologies that is universally held. Different degree programmes exist under this banner, yet each maintains its own flavor of the field. Individuals tend to project their own experiences and requirements into definitions that suit them, for

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example many occurrences of the job title creative technologist are found in creative agencies who are moving forward from their previous incarnations in advertising, but the use of creative technologies still maintains this heritage of advertising by emphasizing the importance of understanding brands and business. Such uncertainty and diversity is expressed by Avnet (2010) who states:

*Back in the 90s, the first time “convergence” was brought up as an important idea, I was asked as a “new media expert” to write an article on its importance – and found just about as many definitions for the term as places I looked. When I was part of a panel of psychologists defining “media psychology,” again, we found that just about everyone using the term defined it differently. Same with “engagement.” These still remain relatively loosely described constructs, words or phrases that, to quote Carroll’s Humpty Dumpty, “mean exactly what [we] choose it to mean – neither more nor less.”*

*We’re at a similar point with the term creative technology. What exactly IS a creative technologist? What makes her different from a programmer or a flash animator? What makes him different from a copywriter, brand manager, or strategist who can use Dreamweaver? What’s the role of a creative technologist at an agency or in our industry? (Avnet, 2010)*

The objective of this chapter is not to ask the question of what creative technologies is, but instead to ask the question of what a creative technologist might be in the future. The chapter brings together a varied collection of individuals with different experiences of creative technologies and utilizes a performative writing approach to develop a self-reflective narrative of a future creative technologist. These individual narratives are analyzed and common themes extracted that can be used to reframe current creative technologies degree programmes to ensure that they are preparing graduates for the future.

The remainder of the chapter is structured as follows. The next section provides a brief overview of the relevant literature related to creative technologies, graduate employability and methods of developing graduate outcomes. This is followed by an overview of the methodology used in this paper, which involves the specifying of job adverts for jobs that do not yet exist. The job adverts provide the basis for a reflective and reflexive analysis of common attributes and knowledge that are clustered into a number of high level groupings. The chapter concludes with a mapping of this cluster analysis to the current graduate profile of an established degree in Creative Technologies as a validation of the aims of the programme.

## **BACKGROUND**

The following sections provide a brief overview of the related literature related to creative technologies, graduate employability and methods for producing graduate outcomes. It is argued that a perceived gap between graduate capabilities and the competencies required for employment in industry may be due to the use of too short a projected timescale when developing graduate outcomes for academic programmes.

### **Creative Technologies**

This chapter does not aim to provide a single definition of creative technologies, however it is placed in the context of many existing definitions. Creative technology, or creative technologies, seems to be

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