

Getting more mileage from your artistic ideas (without travelling an inch)

If you own a creative work (for example, a script, devised performance or participation model) you might be able to achieve more with the idea by reimagining it in a different form; for example, as a podcast, online event or by licensing the work to someone else to produce. While this is not a new concept, it feels particularly relevant in the current context.

This resource is not intended to be a definitive 'how to' guide. Rather we hope it will spark new ideas and confidence by offering some things to consider, case studies and further reading.

Why reimagine an artistic idea?

There are many reasons why artists and producers might want to reimagine an existing artistic idea into a new form. Here are some common reasons, but remember to firstly consider your personal or company objectives and ambitions:

Income generation

Creating a new 'product' means you could distribute it in new ways and earn income from new sources. While podcasts, films or books have set-up costs, they can be reproduced and distributed at relatively low-cost.

When licensing, the creator usually receives a fee from the local producer to use their work for a limited period. If the original creatives are needed as part of the new creative team (e.g. to direct, choreograph or light the production) then the local producer would pay additional fees for that work. All production costs (e.g. paying actors, building set, etc.) would be covered by the local producer.

Environment impact

There is an ongoing ambition within the arts industry to reduce, and take more responsibility for, environmental impact. Reimagining work in forms that do not require physical travel could make a positive contribution to this.

Audience development

Some forms of work have the potential to reach wider audiences in the UK and internationally, as well as raise the profile of the company.

Who is your target audience?

Thinking about who you want to reach is a big part of deciding the form for your idea. You could start by asking yourself these questions:

- Is the work intended for your existing audience or a different audience?
- What forms would best suit their needs and resources?
- Are there any barriers to them accessing the work? (e.g. cost, technology, resources)
- Are you partnering with the best people to reach your target audience?

Case studies

The following examples illustrate how artists and companies have reimaged or adapted their work in different ways. Remember, you might not be the only creative with ownership of the work, so it is important to be clear about copyright before you start. This can be a tricky area so make sure you do your research or seek professional advice. We have included some links for further reading at the end of this document.

Translation to other media

- Francesca Millican Slater's *Stories to Tell at Home*, started life as an Edinburgh show in 2017 and then became a podcast, a series of BSL videos and a book.
www.francescamillicanslater.co.uk/stories-to-tell
- SK Shlomo adapted his *Beatbox Adventures for Kids* into an online event called *Homeskool Beatbox Adventures with Schlomo*. Each episode mixed entertainment and education, including vocal techniques, interactive polls, challenges and performances from Shlomo and special guests.
www.beatboxadventures.com
- In 2011, Canadian playwright and director Robert Lepage worked with an artist to reimagine his show *Blue Dragon* as a graphic novel.
www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2011/dec/12/plays-graphic-novels-robert-lepage
- In 2020, playwright, artist and director Javid Allipor adapted his award-winning play *The Believers Are But Brothers* for BBC 4, commissioned by The Space.
www.thespace.org/artwork/believers-are-brothers

Licensing

Here are some examples of licensing an idea to another company.

- Chris Thorpe and Hannah Jane Walker licensed their 2011 Edinburgh hit ***The Oh Fuck Moment*** to Bios Festival in Greece to be produced with a local cast and director.
www.culturenow.gr/the-oh-fuck-moment-twn-hannah-jane-walker-kai-chris-thorpe-sto-bios
- Devised hip-hop theatre production ***Fhip Fhlop***, co-created and performed by Joey D & DJ Baila, was a personal show as the production drew upon the individual skills of both performers. The piece was franchised to a German theatre production company and the creators re-produced the show with two German hip-hop performers. The show then toured extensively throughout Germany. Joey and DJ Baila received fees for casting and directing, plus an ongoing royalty for the tour.
www.makinprojects.co.uk/tours/rannel
- German-based theatre company Rimini Protokoll's show ***100% City - A Statistical Chain Reaction*** is participation-based performance that has been transformed into a model that can be replicated in any city. The show is created using a set method, from the way the participants are recruited, to the way the show is staged, and even how the printed programme is designed. This made it simple to license to local producers while maintaining artistic consistency across all performances. Rimini offered two options.
www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/projects/100-stadt-7-1

Examples of work that began on the stage

The below examples started as live stage performances and have been remade for digital distribution:

- Unicorn's *Anansi Respun*
www.unicorntheatre.com/anansi-respun
- Creation Theatre's *The Tempest*
www.creationtheatre.co.uk/whats-on/the-virtual-tempest
- Francesca Millican Slater's *Stories to Tell at Home* started life as an Edinburgh show in 2017 and then became a podcast pre-COVID-19 and expanded in the recent crisis.
www.francescamillicanslater.co.uk/stories-to-tell
- Oliver Zahn's *In Praise of Forgetting: Part 2*
www.giftfestival.co.uk/in-praise-of-forgetting

Participatory works made in lockdown

The below examples were created during lockdown and involve audience participation:

- *Palm Reading* by Daniel Bye
www.northern-broadsides.co.uk/digital-squad/palm-reading
- *Fly High Stories @ Home* by Fly High Stories
www.flyhighstories.co.uk/at-home
- *Homeskool Beatbox Academy* by SK Shlomo was reworked from a stage show to be a six-part interactive, participation project
www.beatboxadventures.com

Other examples of work and commissions in lockdown

You can find examples of multiple commissions offered during lockdown through the links below.

- *Stories from Home* by The Spark Arts for Children
thesparkarts.co.uk/stories-home
- Corn Exchange Newbury have awarded five digital commissions during lockdown
cornexchangenew.com/news/article/artists-announced-for-corn-exchange-newburys-digital-commissions
- Create Gloucestershire and Strike a Light commissioned eight new works
www.creategloucestershire.co.uk/blog/2020/5/4/creative-ways-to-connect-during-lockdown

Other examples

- *Everyday Moments* podcast series from Fuel, 12 artists and The Guardian in 2011
www.theguardian.com/stage/series/everyday-moments

Further reading

You can find resources about using digital platforms and translating work to digital spaces, including rights and contracts, on The Space website.

www.thespace.org/resources

Independent Theatre Council (ITC) have written an introduction to copyright.

www.itc-arts.org/resources/copyright/copyright-an-introduction