



## THE DIGITAL CREATIVE PORTFOLIO AS A NEW SPACE FOR PROFESSIONAL INTERACTION

VERÓNICA MELÉNDEZ VALORIA <sup>1</sup>,

<sup>1</sup> U Universidad de Diseño, Innovación y Tecnología (UDIT), Madrid, Spain

---

### KEYWORDS

*Portfolio*  
*Creativity*  
*Talent*  
*Digitalization*  
*Interaction*  
*Networks*  
*Creative Economy*

### ABSTRACT

*The advent of digital platforms that allow creatives to showcase their portfolios in public has resulted in the transformation of these platforms into communication spaces that transcend the original model. There has been a shift in approach from mere exposure to a more commodified, but also more interactive, model that allows any creative to sell their brand and establish diverse links, just as they would on any other social network. The objective of this article is to identify the key elements and causes of this transformation, to explain their position in relation to other fields, and to draw out the implications or pending questions on which reflection is required in light of their rapid evolution.*

---

Received: 01/ 10 / 2024

Accepted: 20/ 10 / 2024

## 1. Introduction

Digital platforms provide creative professionals with a vast array of exhibition opportunities that have evolved beyond their initial function of merely showcasing their work. They have become new ecosystems of interaction and commercial transactions, giving rise to concerns about the commodification of creativity. The evolution of this phenomenon has left several unresolved questions, which this reflection and inductive process aims to address. The objective of this article is to examine the genesis and evolution of the digital creative portfolio format within its contextual framework and to contextualise it in relation to other fields and concepts. This will facilitate a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon and the changes it has introduced and enable an assessment of whether there are other associations or more profound reflections behind what may appear to be simply a new social network or a technological solution.

A review of the literature reveals a paucity of scientific publications on digital creative portfolios, particularly in the context of specific digital platforms. Nevertheless, there are references to related matters, including the evolution of digital platforms, digital marketing, the cultural and creative industries (CCI), and the creative economy in general terms. Furthermore, there are other references that can be linked, such as those dealing with networks. It is notable that there is a substantial body of literature on the use of portfolios as a methodology in education. This approach allows for a differentiated assessment of students' skills, which can inform decisions about their transition into professional fields.

The paucity of reflection on digital creative portfolios leaves us with a scenario of applications that have not been subjected to critical analysis. It is possible that insufficient time has elapsed for a comprehensive analysis to be conducted, given the rapid evolution and proliferation of these formats. Despite their pervasive use, these formats merely represent the surface of the presence of creative disciplines in the economy. Consequently, studying their use is of paramount importance. These alternative platforms, which attract a significant user base, exhibit similarities to the most prominent social networks. However, they offer additional features that are not present in the latter, either because they are primarily focused on social interaction, as is the case with Instagram, or because they are more oriented towards professional networking, as exemplified by LinkedIn. Therefore, we are dealing with a type of network with highly distinctive characteristics pertaining to its sector. Furthermore, it plays host to millions of professionals in what is set to become one of the most significant economies of the forthcoming decades: the creative economy. It is for this reason that it is important to understand the reasons behind the creation of these platforms, as well as the factors that drive their evolution. Furthermore, it is essential to consider how this relates to other concepts in order to gain a deeper understanding of their potential impact within the sector, as well as their potential to influence other industries.

To further justify the relevance of this analysis, it is first necessary to assume that the evolution of platforms that allow the creation of digital portfolios has given rise to a new offer of spaces for interaction. These platforms are new, intentionally highlighted, insofar as, despite their existence for almost two decades, they have not yet been associated with the category of social network. Such platforms are not typically included in lists of popular networks, unless the search is conducted in terms of creativity. From the perspective of the present, these platforms bear resemblance to those oriented towards professional connections, as they facilitate increased opportunities to build networks and market work in various ways. Alternatively, they may be seen as analogous to the first virtual spaces that offered a certain structure for non-experts in web design, such as Fotolog, Tumblr, Pinterest and Instagram in the present.

Over time, a number of them have succeeded in establishing an enhanced communication environment that facilitates the formation of multiple relationships. However, this has also been accompanied by the incorporation of services, fees, subscriptions, and other commercial actions, both to generate income for content creators and to enable them to ensure better visibility and certain benefits. In conclusion, these platforms, which are now essentially regarded as social networks, have unquestionably altered their original concept and, as a result, the business model that supports them.

Conversely, this transformation should prompt reflection on the significance of narrative creation and the storytelling that underpins it. This encompasses a range of platforms, from those that facilitate the arrangement of elements with or without pre-designed templates, to those that afford greater

freedom in narrative construction. The objective of these platforms is to provide a synthesis of the characteristics that define each creator. This same question gives rise to further queries regarding the extent to which the content reflects the full potential of the creator's identity when it is included in sets and subjected to formats. This is why tools such as the creation of collections or filters have been incorporated into some of these platforms.

It can be hypothesised that this evolution has occurred as a result of a natural process, as well as being related to the development of the digital economy. However, this does not address the full range of issues that arise from this process, nor does it provide a comprehensive solution to the questions that remain unanswered. The mutation in question offers us a new scenario, in which creativity is separated from the idea of artistic – or perhaps more accurately, inspirational – creation and moves closer to commercialisation. This is evidenced by the fact that, in general, this movement consolidates several of these platforms as branding spaces and sales channels. This functionality has already been integrated into the majority of social networks that were also initially based on simple interactions. It is now complemented by others that are oriented towards brands and sales. In other words, applications have been designed for the purposes of promotion, public relations, and e-commerce. It is therefore pertinent to adopt a critical stance and identify potential risks, such as the possibility of bias in trend creation or the perception of creative portfolios as a source of resources. Excessive exposure to these and other networks may result in a reduction in the generation of genuinely original ideas among consumers.

## 2. Methodology and Objectives

The article will adopt a descriptive framework to examine the context and the evolution of the use of digital platforms dedicated to the exhibition of creative portfolios. It will also consider the notions and areas related to this practice, particularly in its initial form. The following represents a synthesis of ideas derived from the aforementioned analysis. It offers a representation of the dynamics that this practice gives rise to, which extend beyond the mere visualisation of works and ideas. This will be achieved by examining the transformation or new situation that this implies for the creative industries. In conclusion, the findings derived from the aforementioned methodology will be presented, along with any unresolved questions that may arise. This is with the intention of encouraging critical reflection on these new trends and their ongoing, yet incomplete, transformation.

In order to gain a broader understanding of the evolution of these platforms towards more relational formats, it is necessary to consider the different perspectives mentioned above in relation to one another. The aim of this article is twofold: firstly, to evaluate the implications of this phenomenon; and secondly, to identify the outstanding questions that remain unresolved due to the rapid pace of development. Furthermore, it is important to comprehend the implications of the introduction of marketing-oriented functionalities at various levels for both the creative professionals themselves and the broader creative industries sector. In other words, the aim is to identify the deeper dynamics that emerge from the current use of these platforms in socio-economic and cultural fields, and to deduce other possible developments from them.

## 3. Analysis and Results

### 3.1. *The Context of the Emergence of Digital Creative Portfolios*

Digital platforms have undergone a remarkable development since the beginning of the 21st century. The advent of blogging and, subsequently, Facebook has led to the creation of online spaces where users can share information with one another. In some cases, the creation of content was designed for individuals who would be readers or visitors, while in others, greater interaction was encouraged, facilitating meetings for a variety of purposes, including the establishment of professional relationships or transactions.

The 2019 Digital Economy report, published by UNCTAD, serves to remind us that digital platforms have a relatively short lifespan. It refers to them as "mechanisms that bring together a set of parties so that they can interact". However, other authors have interpreted platforms as a business tool, providing "an open, participatory infrastructure for these interactions and sets governance conditions for them" (Parker et al., 2016, p. 5). Another significant aspect is the extensive range of possibilities they offer,

which the same report synthesises into two categories: "serving as intermediaries and as infrastructures" (UNCTAD, 2019). In other words, they present a vision of them as an element that favours relations, both in terms of the support they provide and the dynamics that they make possible.

From this perspective, there is a qualitative leap in social networks such as Facebook with respect to communication channels based on instant messaging such as MSN Messenger at the end of the 1990s. This is based on the increase in possibilities for producing certain exchanges and other ways of visualising the information that remains available. Additionally, this category encompasses blogs and later Fotologs, which were formats designed to facilitate the sharing of written or visual information. They offered a more agile alternative to the web page at the time, in terms of both creation and consumption. This was made possible primarily due to the advent of platforms that enabled the deposition of information on pre-existing structures. WordPress, created in 2003, is a notable example of such a platform, offering a robust content management system (CMS) that has become a key component in the evolution of digital communication.

In any case, in those initial forays into alternative forms of communication, the level of interaction was not fully bidirectional. Consequently, in the subsequent years, the most significant advancements were observed in the capacity to enhance exchange and relations, which entailed a considerable expansion of possibilities.

In this context, professionals from creative disciplines were able to identify new avenues for showcasing their work. As Stavriani and Constantelou (2021) elucidate, digital platforms facilitate the mediation of work and business opportunities for "creative micro-entrepreneurs", although their initial applications were oriented towards exhibition. To comprehend this, it is necessary to discuss Behance, the inaugural platform designed with the specific needs of creative professionals and designers in mind. It addressed fundamental requirements, such as enabling creators to showcase their work without the necessity for extensive technical expertise and in a visually appealing manner.

### ***3.2. Creation and Evolution of Behance Digital Platform and its Position in Relation to Other Services***

Belsky states that "the impetus behind the inception of Behance was the lack of transparency that pervades the creative industry". "There is a lack of transparency regarding the identity of the creators. Consequently, it is not possible to obtain an opportunity based on one's creative output if there is no awareness of the creator. The one thing that creative careers require above all else is greater attribution and opportunity. Consequently, we proposed a radical rethink of the very nature of the portfolio, one that would be shared among people and provide genuine attribution". (Kosner, 2013)

In 2005, Matías Corea and Scott Belsky established Behance. At the time, networks such as LinkedIn already existed. However, as Belsky himself discusses in an interview conducted in 2023 (Fu, Belsky, 2023), the most revealing moment came when conducting a focus group with other creatives, who stated that they already had personal digital portfolios and resources. They proceeded to delineate the primary challenges they perceived, namely the lack of authentic attribution for their work, the obsolescence of the content in these portfolios, and the general unawareness of their work due to the absence of dissemination.

Belsky (2023) states that the initial action taken was the creation of notebooks, designated as Action Books, and conferences, designated as 99U. The objective of these initiatives was to prioritize the execution of creative projects over the conceptualization of ideas. Consequently, from its inception, the objective of Behance has been to facilitate the efficient organisation and management of the creative processes of its users. The coexistence of formats could not be prolonged for long due to the unsustainability of the business diversification. It was at this point that the entrepreneurs realised that the most profitable avenue for them would be to build a professional social network that would meet the needs of users that they had not yet identified (Fu, Belsky, 2023). This would lead to conclusions about business models based on C2C or C2B.

The network had a significant impact, particularly following its acquisition by Adobe in 2012. The company identified an opportunity to establish a connection with a community, not merely through the utilisation of tools (Kosner, 2013). In contrast, Kosner presents two key findings from Belsky's intervention in this context. The first issue is the tendency to create unconnected bubbles, which

Behance addresses by favouring overlaps based on cross searches. The second issue is the loss of opportunity in the absence of clear references of authorship in networks such as Pinterest or Tumblr, which are governed by a principle of accumulation and a kind of visual collecting. Behance addresses this through indexed repositories, in which the work is always linked to the author (Kosner, 2013).

Adobe developed its own format within the same family, called Adobe Portfolio, which is more akin to websites, offering greater flexibility in design. In contrast, Behance is based on established schemes and structures, which may contribute to a certain degree of homogenisation. However, it permits greater interaction than Adobe Portfolio, due to the aforementioned methodology and the utilisation of common languages and codes that all users recognise through similarity. Nevertheless, this same advantage also gives rise to considerations regarding the potential for bias in the definition of an identity within these spaces for interaction and personal branding. Both applications coexist with the general Adobe brand, although only Behance represents a social network and a meeting place for professionals with this particular profile, thereby distinguishing itself from other models that have taken a path towards tools, such as Adobe with its deployment of tools, or portals such as Wix or Weebly.

Given its dominant position, it can be argued that Behance was the most foundational integral model within this category. From its inception, it has demonstrated a scope that extends beyond mere exhibition, evolving towards a model that prioritises efficiency and optimisation, as evidenced by its functionalities. The generic sections located at the top of the page provide an overview of the available actions, offering a general description of each. The four main sections of the website are as follows: Discover, Hire, Archives and Vacancies. Additionally, there is a section designated as "For You," which comprises the user's inspiration board. This board is shaped according to the user's indicated preferences and desired occupations. At the lowermost point of the interface, two distinct methods of content categorization are presented: one for creative professionals and another for third-party talent scouts. These are outlined in Tables 1 and 2, respectively, below.

**Table 1.** Behance. *Built for Creatives* section

Built for Creatives	Actions available
<p><b>"Find Inspiration"</b>                      "Best of Behance. Projects featured today by our curators".</p>	<p>Save, view, rate, and when accessing: follow, hire (shows availability), share, move to Adobe tools or save to trends dashboard.                      It includes a search engine that allows you to filter by projects, files, people or images initially, although there are also other drop-downs that refer to the creative sector, type of availability between full-time and freelance, location, tools and even predominant colour of the image.</p>
<p><b>"Get Hired"</b>                      "How to Get Hired on Behance. Take advantage of Behance features to land your next creative job or freelance project".</p>	<p>It is possible to register, get paid through Behance, add services that are accessible by possible interested parties, or from there access the "Job Board" to search for professional and internship opportunities, with the possibility of using filters.</p>
<p><b>"Sell Creative Assets"</b>                      "Sell Your Assets on Behance. Buy and sell digital assets on the world's largest creative community".</p>	<p>You can choose category, file format, and price range between free and premium. Paid items are marked with a price indication and a purchase icon. It is interlinked with the inspiration bank, where the actions listed above can be executed.</p>
<p><b>"Sell Freelance Services"</b>                      "Get Hired on Behance With Services. Add a Freelance Service to your Behance profile to let visitors know the specific types of projects you're available for".</p>	<p>These jobs will be part of a similar section that allows you to list services, and also to search for them. The filters in this case allow you to choose categories with various design or training options, as well as minimum and maximum price.</p>

Source: Own elaboration, February 2024. Based on information published in February 2024 on *behance.net*.

**Table 2.** Behance. *Find Talent* section

<b>Find Talent</b>	<b>Actions available</b>
<b>"Post a Job"</b> "Creative Jobs: Discover your next career move, freelance gig, or internship".	The categories offered are: freelancers, creatives for hire, or full-time professionals. It also includes a search engine, and it is possible to filter by creative fields. It is not free of charge.
<b>"All Freelance Designers"</b> "Hire Freelance Designers. Find the perfect freelance for your next project".	This leads to the same section as above on selling, as it is of interest to creators and potential stakeholders,
<b>[others]</b> This is followed by specific areas suggested at the foot of the page	Graphic designers; Photographers; Video editors; Web designers; Illustrators; Illustrators

Source: Own elaboration, February 2024. Based on information published in February 2024 on behance.net.

The functions currently available on Behance are not the original ones. The platform has undergone significant growth, and while it is challenging to locate comprehensive information about its original sections, it is possible to ascertain the favourable reception of the adaptations by considering their user base, the initial motivations of their users, and the objectives they pursue today, as well as those of other platforms that have also undergone a transformation.

A review of the historical record reveals that the year of its creation was 2005, while the year of its acquisition by Adobe was 2012. In comparison, the origin of other networks that adopt a similar orientation can be dated to the same period (see Table 3). In particular, Carbonmade was established in 2005, Cargo Collective in 2002, Tumblr in 2007, and Dribbler in 2009. Furthermore, Instagram, created in 2010, is a social network that must be considered in this context, as it also allows results to be shared. Additionally, in 2022, it incorporated the "portfolio creator" function. This fact is worthy of consideration, as it serves to reinforce the portfolio as a key value proposition for this social network, which is already a market leader within its category. Additionally, there are other specialized platforms, such as The Rookies, which was created in 2009. The platform is focused on digital artists in areas such as animation or visual effects. It incorporates innovative components such as a ranking system and several competitions per year.

**Table 3.** Comparison of the descriptive between *site* platforms or digital creative portfolios

<b>Platform</b>	<b>Descriptive</b>
<b>BEHANCE</b>	The world's largest creative network. Share your work. Boost your career. Earn money.
<b>CARBONMADE</b>	Your online portfolio. The easiest and fastest way to Show Off Your Work®. Building portfolio tools for creatives since 2005* we're a small team at the heart of the creative community dedicated to help you show off your work.
<b>POSITION</b>	Site Builder for Designers and Artists. CARGO is a site builder designed to meet the various needs of creative professionals. There is (of course) single portfolio type use - but you can also design and publish a whole group of sites, each with its own purpose. Simultaneously publish a portfolio, client presentations, idea boards, a profile site, a shop - basically any kind of site you need - all with a single account. We have developed it this way with the budgets of artists and designers in mind.
<b>TUMBLR</b>	Tumblr is pure internet culture. An effervescent and energetic place. A haven for absurd and utterly serious content. Sometimes at the same time. A diverse and colourful space. An endless source of goodness and badness. Tumblr is whatever you want it to be.

Platform	Descriptive
<b>DRIBBLER</b>	The world's destination for design. Get inspired by the work of millions of top-rated designers & agencies around the world. We're on a mission to build the world's best community for creatives to share, grow, and get hired.
<b>INSTAGRAM</b>	Give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together. We're committed to fostering a safe and supportive community for everyone.
<b>THE ROOKIES</b>	The first step to your future creative career. Nothing feels better than working in creative industries for that first year, just like Rookies do in major league sports. Experience this feeling by joining the largest community of next-gen creatives and start building your digital artist career today.

Source: Own elaboration, February 2024. Based on information published in February 2024 on the platforms mentioned above.

The data presented in this table (Table 3) allows for the identification of patterns. It is evident that the distinctive features of each platform are brought to the fore, yet it is also apparent that there are shared elements. The messages "make money" (Behance) and "get hired" (Dribbler) define a space created for professional projection. These are combined with other messages that are more motivational in nature. For example, the platform Carbonmade emphasises that it is a space for users to proudly "show off their work". Indeed, this phrase was registered by the creators of the network. Furthermore, some platforms demonstrate a capacity for empathy and closeness by symbolically putting themselves in the position of their users, as evidenced by their development of products with consideration for the budgets of both artists and designers (Cargo). The majority of these platforms, particularly those that concentrate on the presentation of creative portfolios, serve as technological resources. However, they also aim to convey that they have been designed with input from and for creative professionals, taking into account their primary requirements and distinctive characteristics.

In light of Behance's trajectory, original mission, and current offering, as well as a comparative analysis of the descriptions of a diverse range of similar platforms – providers of spaces or solutions for showcasing the work of creative professionals – it can be concluded that two phenomena have occurred. Firstly, networks of this nature have undergone a transition from an exhibitionary to a commercialised model, with a multitude of nuances. Conversely, all of these platforms have endeavoured to cultivate a community based on the interactivity they provide, thereby establishing themselves as social networks.

What are the distinctive features of this particular type of social network, and what changes can be observed in terms of the new approach to business generation? We will then examine the implications of these two resulting states in order to identify the unifying characteristics of this new typology of network-platform for interaction between creatives and their consumers. Furthermore, the aim is to arrive at general conclusions inductively, thus enabling a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of digital creative portfolios as a whole, including the associated business.

### ***3.3. Transition from Exhibition to Commercialisation***

As has been previously established, these and other platforms – and not solely those that were initially created for creative professionals – originated as a technological conduit through which to showcase the work of designers and artists. Over time, they have undergone a transformation in their operational dynamics, evolving into a distinct type of environment and business model. This shift raises questions about how to enhance their attractiveness (Kim, 2017). The initial consequence of this transformation is that they have been able to support creatives in navigating the transition from entrepreneurship to business leadership.

In a previous study, the 2019 UNCTAD report provided a taxonomy methodology carried out from a business perspective, with the aim of enabling comparison of generic digital platforms. A classification or comparative study of this kind did not previously exist at a scientific level for platforms specific to creative industries. Consequently, the authors Stavrianidi and Constantelou, when replicating the classification methodology for those specific to these sectors, followed the model based on the blocks of

the BMC (Business Model Canvas) (Stavrianidi and Constantelou, 2021). The rationale behind this decision is based on the diversity of agents or stakeholders involved in these platforms, which is analogous to the structure of a business model. Similarly, other authors (Staub et al., 2021) have proposed a similar approach, citing the recurrent lack of business knowledge among creative professionals as a key factor. In light of the above, it can be seen that the proposals for taxonomies reflect a growing recognition of the impact of these networks on the business models of the associated disciplines. They are no longer regarded as mere spaces for exhibition or connection.

Furthermore, it can be observed that the action originates from the user, who elects to disseminate his content on the platform for the purpose of enabling other users to access it. This is done with the intention of either directly or indirectly selling his work. This evident C2C (Consumer to Consumer) model is analogous to that observed in prevalent examples such as Wallapop, wherein the platforms serve merely as intermediaries. However, with the evolution in terms of the participants that can be accessed, combinations of C2C (Consumer to Consumer) and C2B (Consumer to Business) dynamics can be observed. This is because companies are able to utilise these networks to contract services from their consumers, when they share their work. It can be argued that the network, due to its interconnectivity and communication channel, is an unequivocal marketing tool designed to offer greater operability with a return that goes beyond the initial objective of merely reorganising creatives.

By situating this phenomenon within a temporal framework, it becomes possible to identify and examine certain relationships. This phenomenon coincides with a significant transformation in the domain of digital marketing. In particular, from 2010 onwards, there has been a shift in focus from social networks and networking to content marketing. These networks are not, in fact, networks in the traditional sense; however, they do share an emphasis on content and the manner in which it is accessed and presented. There is a notable emphasis on the presentation of content, with a focus on creating harmonious visuals that drive traffic and interest. However, this approach often results in a lack of coherent visual narrative due to the use of predetermined templates, which will be discussed in further detail later on. Concurrently, a novel approach to advertising has emerged in the BTL (Below The Line) modality, characterised by a more intimate, targeted and selective methodology. In this regard, digital portfolio platforms, which may be regarded as a form of focused advertising, offer the additional benefit of facilitating direct contact and simpler interactions, in addition to their status as social networks. Similarly, the utilisation of filters and categories, as exemplified by Behance, enables the generation of a distinctive experience when accessing such networks, as each path is unique and personal. It can be seen that there is a relationship between this parallel evolution, which progresses from social networking to a focus on content, and the aforementioned relationship. In light of these considerations, it can be argued that creative portfolio platforms would have been well-positioned to adapt to emerging trends.

In conclusion, this transition presents both favourable and controversial aspects. The ascendance of the digital economy bodes well for the creative industries' own evolution towards the creative economy and the integration of business elements is therefore accompanied by the favourable performance of these industries in the broader economy and in numerous countries (Deloitte, 2021). This is evidenced by the findings of the study "Green Paper - Unlocking the Potential of Cultural and Creative Industries" (European Commission, 2010). This study highlights that the growing power of the cultural and creative industries has resulted in a significant reduction in the distinction between creators and consumers, largely due to the use of new technological tools and the underlying logic of these industries. Furthermore, the proposal suggests considering how clusters might leverage technology to derive greater value from these networks and incorporate users in a more organic manner, a process that digital platforms are better equipped to facilitate. In essence, there is an appeal for a more productive collective.

### ***3.4. Transition from Exhibition to Interrelation***

The concept of community is a prominent theme. A commitment to promote a safe and supportive community for all is clearly stated in Instagram, while The Rookies highlights the cohesive and identity-based feeling of joining the largest community of next-generation creatives. These two examples demonstrate how the concept of community is expressed in different ways. Both cases exhibit a commonality in their portrayal of the network as a space of opportunities, a perception that is similarly evident in the others. The platforms originally functioned solely as content aggregators. However, their subsequent evolution towards facilitating interactions with prospective clients or employers, as well as



with peers or profiles that inspire, has highlighted the necessity to gain a deeper understanding of the concept of a "network" within these sectors.

This extension to networking has not been without its caveats. In this regard, Luckman and Andrew posit that there may be a misperception of security among users, who may assume that developing an online business identity is merely a matter of having a profile, obscuring the true complexities involved in establishing a brand (Luckman and Andrew, 2020). They maintain this position because it would result in a simplified interpretation of reality and because, in their view, digital presence is an inherent aspect of a designer's practice in the contemporary era. Consequently, they argue that it should be a fundamental and automatic aspect of the process of developing a distinctive brand. In conclusion, they highlight that being searchable is no longer a sufficient criterion; rather, engagement is a crucial element. From a sociological perspective, it is also relevant to cite Castells (2005), who asserted that the "network society" necessitates a multifaceted approach, extending beyond mere technological solutions. In other words, he emphasises that for them to be genuinely useful, they would need to be integrated with other areas, such as business, education, culture, organisational change and so on.

This vision, viewed from multiple perspectives and at the scale of the creative ecosystem, prompts us to consider that the mere existence of the platform may no longer be sufficient to foster a community in the present era. This may be indicative of a schism between those that resemble a website – site builders – and those like Behance, which transcend the original concept of a virtual exhibition space, and also occupy a niche within the creative domain. A further investigation into the connections could be conducted using SNA (Social Network Analysis) theories, which could provide conclusions about the nature of the platforms from their inception as a network. However, this is not the subject of this article.

Other positive views are presented in the report "Joining the Dots: Understanding the value generation of Creative Networks" (Komorowski et al., 2021), which gathers reflections from various authors in relation to networks in the creative sphere, or networks. Accordingly, an article published in 2010 (Felton et al., 2010) asserts that networks facilitate the transfer of knowledge and stimulate growth and creative output. Furthermore, it is asserted that such networks constitute a means of acquiring projects and opportunities. In another reference (Komorowski & Picone, 2020), the focus is on the advantages that these networks offer beyond the individual, including the industry as a whole and creative professionals as a collective. Furthermore, the report seeks to highlight alternative interpretations of meeting places, including creative clusters, cultural hubs, and creative places, with their inherent dynamics being replicated in the digital domain.

A comparable stance is espoused in the article "Insights on Creative Networks" (2022), which contemplates the significance of interconnectivity in fortifying the artistic domain. In its development, it is explained that creativity is enhanced through them because it is never an individual result (Gaggioli et al., 2013), because individuals are influenced by the social environment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999), and because it can be understood as a social process – understood as collective – in which precisely exposure and interaction stimulate the generation of ideas (Perry-Smith and Mannucci, 2015). However, the text also reveals the vulnerability of the sector's organisations, particularly in regard to the manner in which relationships are formed and maintained. Therefore, the transition from platform to social network-based interactions is perceived as beneficial in terms of preserving the value of creativity. However, further optimisation of connectivity within the sector may still be warranted.

## 4. Conclusions

The fundamental conclusion is that the economic aspects and those linked to networks and ways of networking are inextricably intertwined. In this regard, the question of whether fostering closer ties between the creative industries and social networks is beneficial or poses potential concerns could be partially answered by concluding that there are promising opportunities in this regard. The warnings concentrate on issues such as a proclivity towards homogenisation, or a kind of depreciation due to the apparent lack of effort required to use these platforms, in addition to the potential impact of artificial intelligence. It is evident that the accessibility of digital content on the internet can have a significantly amplified impact compared to its physical counterpart. In light of these considerations, it is imperative that creative professionals exercise discernment with regard to these nascent channels. Nevertheless, it

appears that the potential for interaction and business generation, hallmarks of the creative economy, will not overshadow the broader impact of these initiatives.

The concurrent development of digital portfolios and social networks has inevitably shaped the latter's underlying logic. At the outset, the creators of these networks were committed to increasing connectivity and basing it on the primordial action of the user. It is evident that these digital platforms are evolving into new business models that facilitate user interaction. This evolution is a natural consequence of the technological and social changes that have occurred during their existence.

Concurrently, a transformation in the established forms of relationship is also evident. The aforementioned writings that refer to the problems of the creative spheres with regard to how they optimise relationships leave room for improvement, which, if undertaken, would generate more opportunities. It seems plausible to suggest that the logic of the new digital networks and platforms used by creatives, due to their more agile and easily interconnectable nature, could bring a new way of working to the more traditional clusters and associations, thereby contributing to a modernisation of these systems.

It is also conceivable that creative portfolio platforms themselves could be rethought as spaces for experimentation, not only in terms of their current and future functionalities, but also in terms of how designers relate to each other. Furthermore, there is an opportunity to explore new and innovative ways of engaging with potential clients and interlocutors, which could potentially disrupt traditional approaches. In other words, there is a need to explore new forms of collaboration where creatives would engage in these meeting spaces not only in pursuit of technical roles, which are increasingly being threatened by AI. The relationship between designers is a field that has not yet been fully explored in terms of its potential. This could also be extended to other intangible or service-specific aspects of their field, which may be more readily implementable in a digital environment. Nevertheless, a common feature of digital environments for creative professionals is the capacity to construct a primarily visual digital portfolio, comprising varying degrees of content and functionalities. In relation to this constant, it is notable that the creative portfolio is increasingly included in the curricula of academic institutions, given its construction is understood as a critical process of generating ideas and positions, and therefore innovation. In this context, it is possible to envisage future transformations of these spaces of relationship around creative portfolios, with a view to further enhancing the industries of the creative economy. This would entail exploring ways in which the creative economy can support other sectors in the transition from Industry 4.0 to Industry 5.0.

## **5. Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have contributed to the realisation of this work, and in particular to all the creative professionals who have provided inspiration.

## References

- Castells, M. (2005). *The Network Society: from Knowledge to Policy*, The Network Society: From Knowledge to Policy, (Castells, M., Cardoso, G., eds). Center for Transatlantic Relations, p.3-22.
- Csikszentmihayi, M. (1999) *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*. HarperCollins, New York.
- Creative Chair. (2022, 16 junio). *Scott Belsky - The meaning of the word Behance - Creative Chair*. Creative Chair. <https://creativechair.org/scott-belsky-the-meaning-of-the-word-behance/>
- Deloitte (2021). *Report: The Future of the Creative Economy*. Deloitte
- European Commission (2010). Green paper –Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52010DC0183&from=BG>
- Felton, E., Collis, C., Graham, P. (2010). *Making connections: Creative industries networks in outer-suburban locations*. Australian Geographer, 41(1), 57–70.
- Fu, S. y Belsky, S. (2023). *Bloomberg Cornell Tech Series: Scott Belsky, Adobe's Chief Product Officer* [vídeo y entrevista]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCVJKj35FQw>
- Gaggioli, A., Riva, G., Milani, L. and Mazzoni, E. (2013). *Networked Flow: Towards an Understanding of Creative Networks*. Springer, New York.
- Kim, N. W. (2017). *Creative Community Demystified: A Statistical Overview of Behance*. arXiv preprint arXiv:1703.00800
- Komorowski, M., Pepper, S., Lewis, J. (2021, Agosto). *Joining the Dots: Understanding the value generation of Creative Networks. Research Report*. Cardiff University. <https://creativecardiff.org.uk/joining-dots-research-report-understanding-value-generation-creative-networks>
- Komorowski, M., y Picone, I. (2020). *Creative Cluster Development: Governance, Place-making and Entrepreneurship*. Routledge.
- Kosner, A. (2013). *Adobe's Behance: The Creative Graph Lets Your Work Do the Networking*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/anthonykosner>
- Luckman S., y Andrew J. (2020). *Creative Craft and Design Microenterprise in the Age of Social Media*, Craftspeople and Designer Makers in the Contemporary Creative Economy. Palgrave Macmillan Cham. p.207-238.
- Parker, G.G., Alstyne, M.W.V., Choudary, SP (2016). *Platform Revolution: How Networked Markets are Transforming the Economy – And How to Make Them Work for You*. Primera edición. W. W. Norton & Company, Nueva York.
- Perry-Smith, J-E. and Mannucci, P-V. (2015). *Social Networks, Creativity, and Entrepreneurship*, The Oxford Handbook of Creativity, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship. Oxford University Press.
- Shaleph O'Neill, F.B., y Hawari-Latter, S. (2022). *Insights on Creative Networks: A Social Network Analysis of Five Arts Organisations*. Vol. 17 No. 1. Proceedings of the 17th European Conference on Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Staub, N., Haki K, Aier S, Winter R. (2021). *Taxonomy of Digital Platforms: A Business Model Perspective*, Proceedings of the 54th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences, pp. 6163-6172.
- Stavrianidi, P., & Constantelou, A. (2021). *Digital Platforms for the Creatives Towards a Taxonomy*, Proceedings IADIS International Conference Information Systems 1, p.108-114. <https://www.esociety-conf.org/>
- UNCTAD. (2019). *Informe sobre la economía digital 2019: Creación y captura de valor: repercusión para los países en desarrollo*. UNCTAD. [https://unctad.org/publications-search?f\[0\]=product%3A598](https://unctad.org/publications-search?f[0]=product%3A598).