

Ownership of craft knowledge in “Live Transmission” : Intangible Cultural Heritage, digital games and the transmission of technological skills in Southwest China’s minority communities

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INTRODUCTION

The transmission of technical skills (skill training) has always been one of the central concerns in serious game design. To get in tune with UNESCO’s principles of sustainable development of Intangible Culture Heritage (ICH), the Chinese government has proposed the Live Transmission (活态传承) approach to encourage innovations on traditional handicrafts since 2006. Aiming at the revitalization of economy and cultural identities of traditional craft communities, government devised a spectrum of projects, such as developing craft industry to adapt to global market and applying digital techniques in ICH education and communication. If we admit that both craft inheritors and the inhabitant in these communities are owners of craft ICH, it would be weird that such projects brought new challenges in practice to ICH ownership of local ICH holders and exaggerated the social inequality--In craft industries, being regarded as lacking of innovation abilities, the indigenous ICH holders were forced to be the outsourcing hands; In digital ICH education, being considered as lacking of the capabilities of using digital devices, they were excluded from the target users either.

Based on the recent field research conducted in a minority ethnic village in Hunan province, SW China and a cross-stitch learning game(*Huayao cross-stitch master growth recorder*) designed for local left-behind children, this paper proposes that local children are critical learners and inheritors of craft ICH and digital games can be a mediated method for their craft learning. Focusing on the skill transmission in game-based learning process, this paper discusses the changes of learner’s embodiment knowledge, as well as

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the influence of digital situated learning on shaping of learner's cultural identity; Further, the creative tension between reproduction and innovation are discussed; Finally, the paper points out that digital game is likely to be an effective mediated learning method to empower these local craft communities.

OPTIONAL BIO

I began my research career working on art&design. I finished my MA in School of Design, Hunan University and got my Dr. degree in Art&design Academy, Tsinghua University. During 2015-2016, as an academic visitor, I spent a year in the department of Social Anthropology in the University of Edinburgh, and focused mainly in design anthropology. Since 2013, I turned my research interest to social innovation for rural china. Based on long-term field research in the remote rural area in Hunan, I regarded serious games as a way of empowering local rural children and tried to combine their local culture with games.

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