

digital creation hub

# Program Report

2023



creative  
coast

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## OVERVIEW

The Digital Creation Hub (DCH) program was created as a resource center dedicated to lifting barriers to technology that many creatives endure in central Vancouver Island.

The Hub provides barrier-free access to a suite of technology software, equipment and a Tech Coach, allowing creatives to learn new skills, create new projects, promote themselves online, and learn fundamental digital literacy skills.

The hub is centrally located at The Old School House Arts Centre (TOSH) in Qualicum Beach, BC. TOSH has a secure 300 sqft room on their fully accessible downstairs level for equipment and one-on-one appointments.



# GOALS

1. Provide digital equipment such as computers, software, photography, sound, and video recording equipment to artists in the central Vancouver Island area.
2. Invite artists to learn new skills by providing barrier-free access to equipment and software and a knowledgeable coach.
3. To review the feasibility of tech hubs and gain more awareness of how artists require support with their digital infrastructure and abilities.



# VISION

- 1 A mid-Island tech hub represents a tangible solution to narrowing the digital divide - particularly for those at the beginning of the digital literacy continuum.
- 2 To lift barriers to acquiring foundational tech capabilities through access to tech tools and supports

# MISSION

This project aims to broaden access to tech tools and support to enhance dynamic digital content and presence creation. To this end, the tech hub coordinator will be skilled in using and teaching how to use technology, as well as content development coaching.



## SUMMARY

The DCH launched in October 2023 with funding from The BC Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts. The program was run in partnership with Creative Coast and The Old School House Arts Centre and staffed by our technology coach Lys Glassford.

The program was over-subscribed for its funding length and, in June 2023, was re-launched to test the viability of being a paid service. To keep the service affordable new funding options and sponsorship opportunities are being explored.

# MILESTONES

## APPOINTMENTS

Artists were invited to schedule appointments through the Creative Coast website; the DCH saw 113 appointments from October 2022 to May 2023. The DCH was open two days per week, and appointments were available for 4 hours per day.

Artists could choose between a 1-hour appointment [91 total] or a follow-up 2-hour appointment [22 total].

The DCH was utilized by artists living in the following municipalities: Qualicum Beach, Port Alberni, Quatsino, Bowser, Comox, Parksville, Nanoose, and Nanaimo.

# MILESTONES

## USAGE

Artists requested one-on-one and workshop help in areas they experienced barriers, and our coach created accessible appointments to match each user or group's needs:

- Social media strategies by better understanding algorithms, professional analytics tools, A & B testing, profile optimization, hashtag research, content requirements, usage of scheduling tools, and how to take full advantage of platform features. Several users reported success with audience growth and success with their e-commerce integrations.
- Assistance with their websites to learn how to perform organic marketing through foundational SEO techniques, including keyword research, content optimization, and web accessibility guidelines to make their website user-friendly and include alternative text.

# MILESTONES

## USAGE

- Assistance integrating e-commerce options on their websites, providing a seamless user experience, and understanding or implementing Google Analytics to track their traffic and user statistics.
- Help with their computers to increase the speed of devices, organize their photos and workspace, how to upload and access their cloud to store images and project information.
- Software guidance such as; Adobe Photoshop to enhance images for print, Adobe Lightroom to edit images they took of their artwork, Adobe Indesign to create product catalogues and zines, Adobe Premier Rush to edit audio and video projects, and utilized Procreate on Hubs iPad to create logos, images for quilting, to learn digital art.



# MILESTONES

## USAGE

- Instruction on photographing artwork for shows, digital display on websites and social media, and adding their artwork to print-on-demand services.
- Guidance on using soundboards to record audiobooks and audio for digital art projects and learning the fundamentals of podcasting.
- Assistance recording videos describing their artist practices and other promotional materials for their websites, upcoming shows, and youtube channels.

# MILESTONES

## STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION

Each artist was invited to participate in a satisfaction survey at the end of each session.

Artists were asked the following questions:

- How likely are you to recommend this service to a friend or family member?  
22 users responded with a 100% net promoter score.
- Share your suggestions for ideas or improvement.  
Participants provided few suggestions, often leaving this question blank.
- Would you pay a fee to access these services?  
40% of participants indicated they were willing to be a pay. While 60% indicated payment would be a barrier to accessing these services or have not responded to the question.

# MILESTONES

## STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION

“No suggestions, the hour was super informative and covered a lot of ground. Personally really excited to get involved. Thanks!” -Dec 6, 2022, 5:01 PM

“It was a great introductory session. There was a lot of new information for me so not sure if there was any improvements to be made for this session, its now up to me. The instructor was very knowledgeable and patient with my ignorance. It was a great start.”  
- Feb 18, 2023 9:51 AM

# MILESTONES

## STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION

"I was thrilled with the entire process!  
so great to have a highly skilled person  
to help sort out some of the details!  
Thank you!" -Feb 7, 2023, 4:29 PM

"I can't think of any suggestions for  
improvement. As an artist, I am just so  
thrilled to get  
exactly the technical help I needed. And  
I am looking forward to taking  
advantage of the  
other facilities offered. Thanks! "  
- Nov 3, 2022, 5:25 PM

# LEARNINGS

- 1** The DCH experienced a delay in the arrival of photographic equipment. To fulfil the need to photograph artwork, the Ipad Pro was utilized. However, artists who received their artwork photographed this way reported resolution issues for their e-commerce projects. However, the photos photographed this way were suitable for social media, website display, and promotional brochures.
- 2** The DCH office was not a soundproof location; artists experienced frustration due to the background noise of visitors to the studios and community space in the building. Adobe premier rush balanced the audio and eliminated most background noise. However, one user re-scheduled their appointment and re-did their recordings due to enhanced background noise.

# LEARNINGS

- 3 Artists whose appointments were rescheduled only sometimes received re-booking emails, mainly due to emails ending up in spam, users not checking their emails, and users inputting incorrect email addresses during sign-up.
- 4 Artists experienced significant learning gaps when using the software within the Adobe suite and required more time to work on projects than their appointment timeframes. Due to the overwhelming demand for the program, users reported over a one-month wait period before accessing the DCH for follow-up appointments, resulting in frustration and knowledge gaps.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that future projects provide more availability through longer operating hours and increased weekly or weekend appointment opportunities.

One user reported travelling up to five hours to access the tech coach and suggested having video conferencing options for project follow-ups or mobile availability to allow the tech coach to set up temporary locations to serve rural or remote areas.

Investing in soundproofing the location to enhance quality audio and video recordings would also be beneficial.



# CONCLUSION

Overall, the program achieved its three main goals.

The DCH would like to express appreciation for each artist who participated in the program, provided feedback, and also to our funders, The BC Arts Council and Canada Council for the Arts.

Thank you to The Old School House Arts Centre for providing an accessible location and to Creative Coast for creating this pilot project commitment to seeking new funding and service model offerings.

Currently, funding for this project has yet to be renewed. However, the interest in the project is still prevalent and has been relaunched as a paid-for service. The program seeks new funding opportunities and sponsorship from stakeholders, community partners and funding bodies to increase hours and lower the cost for artists.