Small Arts Organizations: Supporting their Creative Vitality

DISSERTATION

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By

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Abstract

Small arts organizations (SAOs) have not been studied in the field of cultural policy and arts administration, despite their purported importance. This dissertation is intended to identify ways to support the creative vitality of SAOs. To that end, it examines the dynamic ecology of SAOs, highlighting their significant role in the arts world. It explores SAOs’ relationships particularly by looking at their entrepreneurial practices, use of IT, and their support systems.

Conducting extensive personal communications with various agents involved with SAOs, this study incorporates Multiple Case Narratives on selected SAOs in Columbus, Ohio and cross-references them with an in-depth case study on a local small theatre. The findings indicate that SAOs’ entrepreneurial practices and their effective use of technology are crucial for stabilizing the balance between their mission and money, thus enhancing their creative vitality. Finally, implications are discussed, and recommendations are made to create cultural policy that is custom tailored for SAOs.
Dedication

To my parents, Hyung Tae Chang and Yong Ja Shin,

my wife, Ji Young Kim,

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank my professors at the Ohio State University, Dr. Margaret Wyszomirski and Dr. Wayne Lawson in the Arts Policy and Administration Program, Dr. Clayton Funk in the Department of Art Education, and Dr. Michael Camp in the Center for the Entrepreneurship, for their expert advice and feedback throughout the research and writing of this dissertation. I am also grateful to the many individuals in and outside of the small arts organizations that I researched, who shared their time, knowledge, and experiences with me in the process of exploring this subject.
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Fields of Study

Major Field: Art Education
Specialization: Arts Policy and Administration
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Small arts organizations (SAO) have the potential to be a vital foundation of the arts world. The grassroots of the creative sector, they can provide a significant element of cultural diversity to local communities. Large arts organizations often produce more popular and mainstream works in the arts in order to satisfy larger constituencies, including their board members, and they reach more audiences to compensate for bigger budgets and operation costs; hence, they may pass up new and innovative works. In contrast, small arts organizations can provide an outlet for works that large and major arts organizations fail (or hesitate) to accommodate.

Usually operating with a very focused mission, SAOs collectively provide cultural diversity to the arts world and the community. SAOs also benefit individual artists. They offer young artists technical and artistic training (even administrative skills) that are vital for them to join the institutions of the arts. SAOs are also much more
accessible to inexperienced individuals, so that they can successfully move forward into the arts world. In this sense, SAOs serve as artists’ incubators.

Many large arts organizations indeed grow out of (or are comprised of) small arts organizations. Barnard (1968) even has claimed that “all large formal organizations are constituted of numbers of small organizations” (p. 105). Although he has mentioned a unit organization rather than an independent organization, according to him, “it is impossible to create a large organization except by combining small organizations” (Barnard, 1968, p. 105). In fact, in the arts world, there are many project-like informal organizations which are combinations (or collaborations) of small organizations such as various arts and cultural festivals. In this sense, SAOs are collectively the roots and trunk of the arts world. Inevitably, the creative vitality of small arts organizations is critically important for the vitality of the whole arts world. As DiMaggio (2006) urges, “if we want to grasp the dynamism of the nonprofit sector in art and culture, we must focus on those less well institutionalized portions of the organizational universe from which new functions and future directions continually emerge” (p. 454). However, despite their purported importance, SAOs have often been overlooked and seldom been seriously studied. For example, we still do not know how many small arts organizations there are, what proportion they hold in the whole arts world, and how they are performing in their communities and surviving the recent economic difficulties.
1.2 Statement of the Problem

The most basic problem in viewing and studying the creative vitality of SAOs and identifying ways in which to support them is that we don’t have enough information on SAOs, or that we do not use the available information to focus on them. As can be seen in Figure 1.1 below, DiMaggio (2006) divides the non-profit arts sector into three levels: (1) Core Tax Exempt & Free Standing, which are “freestanding arts organizations incorporated under sec. 501(c)3”; (2) Embedded, which are “arts organizations and programs embedded in non-arts 501(c)3s, churches, or public universities”; and (3) Minimalist, which are “informal associations, artists collectives, sole proprietorships with mixed commercial/noncommercial aims, networks, etc.”(p. 434). Many SAOs reside in the levels of “Embedded” and “Minimalist” arts organizations.

Figure 1.1 The world of noncommercial arts activities (DiMaggio, 2006, p. 434)
However, as DiMaggio has pointed out, current research has not paid enough attention to embedded and minimalist arts organizations that involve significant interrelationships with other sectors. In this dissertation I argue that size matters when it comes to managing and supporting arts organizations, that SAOs are too important and crucial to the arts world to be neglected as they have been, and that we need more data on SAOs.

1.2.1 Size Does Matter

The small size of SAOs can be both a weakness and a strength. From one perspective, smaller budgets and lower levels of earned income constrain their performance. Conversely, SAOs’ smaller (or ‘focused’) constituencies encompassing board members and audiences can allow them to experiment with new, innovative, and sometimes controversial works. In the general practice and literatures of arts policy and administration, the size of arts organizations has seldom been seriously considered or studied. For instance, as Sunil Iyengar, director of Research & Analysis at the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), has pointed out, the NEA “does not segregate arts organizations by size during the grants review process” (personal communication, February 20, 2009). That is, although the circumstances of SAOs are different from those of larger arts organizations, we often treat SAOs as variants of large arts organizations. SAOs must not be seen simply as miniature or young versions of large organizations. It is likely to be problematic as well as risky to assume that SAOs can adopt proven practices for large arts organizations simply by scaling them down. Different expectations and administrative strategies need to be applied to each.
In 2009, at the 10th International Conference on Arts and Cultural Management, Ruth Rentschler and Jennifer Radbourne presented a paper entitled “Size does matter: The impact of size on governance in arts organizations.” Using mixed methods of survey and case studies of arts organizations in Victoria, Australia, the authors asserted that the size of arts organizations is a critical factor for the “conformance and performance of governance” in arts organizations. Although their paper is limited to the board governance in arts organizations only in Victoria, it does conclude that the governance of large and small arts organizations differs as their issues and needs are different.

The findings of Rentschler and Radbourne (2009) confirm the views that many research managers, directors, and other administrators in various arts agencies and national arts associations expressed to me in their personal communications (2008-2009). To give one example, the League of American Orchestras (LAO) categorizes its member orchestras into as many as eight groups based on their annual budget size. As Jan Wilson, director of Knowledge Center at LAO, pointed out, the issues and challenges surrounding a small arts organization are very different from those of larger arts organizations (personal communication, December 2, 2008). Therefore, size consideration is important when SAOs strive to develop more efficient and feasible management strategies, and when various arts advocates, including arts agencies develop implementable and effective support programs.

1.2.2 Small Arts Organizations are too Important to Neglect

One way to recognize the importance of SAOs is to consider their numbers.
Ascertaining their numbers however is itself a problem. For example, the Creative Industries Report by Americans for the Arts (AFTA) is formulated from data for both the nonprofit and for-profit arts sectors from Dun & Bradstreet Business and Employment, from which we can derive localized data. Tables 1.1 and 1.2 indicate the number of SAOs determined after sorting the data by employee numbers. These tables show the cumulative numbers of arts businesses with up to five employees in the Columbus metropolitan area and in the state of Ohio, respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees</th>
<th># of Arts Businesses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>3.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>48.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2</td>
<td>1019</td>
<td>68.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3</td>
<td>1129</td>
<td>75.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 4</td>
<td>1193</td>
<td>79.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5</td>
<td>1284</td>
<td>83.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All firms</td>
<td>1498</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1 Number of arts businesses with up to five employees in the Columbus Metropolitan Area (Americans for the Arts 2008a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employees</th>
<th># of Arts Businesses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>3.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1</td>
<td>10022</td>
<td>50.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3</td>
<td>15518</td>
<td>78.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 4</td>
<td>16327</td>
<td>82.62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5</td>
<td>16995</td>
<td>86.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All firms</td>
<td>19760</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.2 Number of arts businesses with up to five employees in the state of Ohio (Americans for the Arts, 2008b)
The number of employees at SAOs has not been agreed upon yet. However, as can be seen in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 above, even arts businesses with one or no employees (perhaps relying mostly on volunteers) comprise approximately half of the arts organizations in both the Columbus metropolitan area and in the state of Ohio. If we borrow the concept of “microenterprise” from the business sector, which literally refers to an extremely small enterprise and is defined as a small business with five or fewer employees, requiring less than $35,000 as seed capital (Jones, 2004, p. 5), then SAOs, as arts organizations with five or fewer employees, comprise 83.63% of arts businesses in Columbus and 86.01% in Ohio.

In terms of their numbers, the vividly visible significance of SAOs in the creative sector can be re-confirmed by the Statistics of US Businesses from the 2006 US Census. In the arts-related sector (of NAICS 71 – Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation including both non-profit and for-profit), the portion that SAOs (with 0 to 4 employees) occupy in terms of firm numbers makes up 61.34% (70,574 out of 115,049 firms) of all arts-related industries (US Census Bureau, 2006a). The percentage increases in the performing arts and the related industry sector. In terms of firm numbers, SAOs comprise more than 78.44% (32,754 out of 41,755 firms) of all the performing arts, spectator sports, and related industries (US Census Bureau, 2006b). Although these statistics reflect industries that can be hardly included in the so-called “arts industry,” such as spectator sports and recreational industries, we can easily assume that if we can sort out the data of SAOs in the arts industry only, the percentage will not change that much (or may even be higher).
because the sports and recreational industries are usually perceived to have larger organizations than the arts.

### 1.2.3 Missing Data on SAOs

There are more possibilities for the high numbers of SAOs when we consider that the public agency statistics do not provide an accurate number of SAOs because a considerable number of SAOs have not been incorporated (Dan Katona, personal communication, May 8, 2009). As Americans for the Arts also noted in their *Creative Industries Report*, their data underrepresents the nonprofit arts organizations because they rely on the database from Dun & Bradstreet which tends toward for-profit organizations. AFTA also admits that many individual artists who run their own businesses are not included in this data because many are not employed by a business (Americans for the Arts, 2009a).

In addition, many administrators and artists participate in multiple SAOs, which complicates the count of the actual numbers. It is quite possible that an artist or a musician can work in a large arts organization while also managing his/her own SAO. As reported by the Ohio Arts Council, “the people who manage small arts organizations are teachers, professors, artists, homemakers, bankers, social workers, scientists and retired professionals” (OAC, 2001a).

Due to the difficulties to measure and define them, SAOs have been neglected in the general arts policy and administration literatures. Consequently, we still do not know exactly what SAOs want and what their motivations are (such as, for example, growth,
sustenance, or survival). The lack of data regarding SAOs also reveals that the current quantitative approach fails to grasp fully the picture of SAOs and demands a qualitative approach.

1.3 Objectives of the Study and Research Questions

As I have established so far, the creative vitality of SAOs is critically important for the vitality of the whole arts world; however, SAOs have actually been neglected by scholars. Therefore, the objectives of this study are (1) to understand how individual small arts organizations maintain their creative vitality and (2) to identify ways to support that creative vitality.

To reach these objectives, I initially sought to understand the creative vitality of SAOs with regard to their use of technology, especially information technology (IT), and formulated research questions such as “How do SAOs utilize IT to meet their needs?” and “What opportunities and threats does IT pose to SAOs?” However, these questions changed and evolved after my initial year of field research on SAOs exploring their issues and needs, their daily practices, and available support systems. In the process of visiting, interviewing, observing, and surveying various SAOs, I identified three key levers that move SAOs along the balancing point between their mission and their money in order for them to sustain their creative vitality. Two of these levers are internal – Entrepreneurship and Technology – and one, external – the Support Systems.

Based on these key levers, I reformulated my research questions as follows:
**Research Question #1:** How does the entrepreneurship of individuals affect the creative vitality of SAOs?

**Research Question #2:** How does IT, especially the social media, affect the creative vitality of SAOs?

**Research Question #3:** What new approaches can be taken to support the creative vitality of SAOs?

To answer Research Question #1, I examined the issues and needs of SAOs within their ecology. I also looked into relationships among SAOs, with larger arts organizations, and with the local community, including their audiences and support systems. Finally, I considered the impact of an individual’s entrepreneurship in managing an SAO and how they affect innovation at that organization. To answer Research Question #2, I examined the ways and reasons that SAOs adopt new technologies, focusing on social media and the relationship between IT use and the entrepreneurship and innovativeness of an SAO. To answer Research Question #3, I examined people’s perceptions of the existing support systems for SAOs and identified the missing elements. I then suggested new approaches for supporting the creative vitality of SAOs.

Thus, highlighting the significant role of SAOs in the arts world, this dissertation examines the dynamic ecology of SAOs with foci on the first two key levers, Entrepreneurship and Technology. It also identifies the third key lever, the support systems, and suggests appropriate and affordable ways to support SAOs so that they can sustain themselves in the challenging environment of arts world.
1.4 Research Design

To lay out the framework to view the creative vitality of SAOs within the arts world, I reviewed in Chapter 2 the literature on the concept of the ecology and creative vitality of SAOs. Then, I reviewed the literature on two internal factors that affect the creative vitality of SAOs: entrepreneurship and technology.

After reviewing the literature and before launching my research, I operationalized the definition of an SAO. In Chapter 4, I explored various meanings and manifestations of “smallness” across the creative sector through conducting extensive personal communications with professionals in the arts world. During the course of my exploration across the creative sector, I attempted to determine the number of SAOs in existence in the United States, what proportion of arts organizations they hold, and how significant they are in the arts world and in the creative industry. In my preliminary study, I not only operationalized the definition of an SAO, but also identified the multiple indicators of “smallness,” whose possible combinations can enhance our ability to recognize both the uniqueness and sub-categories of organizations that currently are grouped into a single category of “small” arts organizations.

After developing the operationalized definition of an SAO, I basically utilized two qualitative research methods: (1) Multiple Case Narratives to study multiple populations, encompassing the wide spectrum of SAOs and (2) a case study in order to secure an in-depth understanding of the dynamics within an SAO. These qualitative research methods helped me appreciate the holistic treatment of the ecology of SAOs and their role in
constructing the reality of experience, and not miss the uniqueness of individual cases. As aforementioned, little is known about SAOs, and there are many assumptions regarding them, which may result in questions that only lead (or guide) to expected and biased answers.

The method of the Multiple Case Narrative was useful to see the collective vitality of SAOs. This method is similar to the collective case study, but it mainly focuses on the narratives and stories delivered by interviewees, since narratives are believed to reveal relational and socially constructed realities. Using the Multiple Case Narrative, I was able to map a wide range of SAOs and the relationships among them, including their support systems. I interviewed many professionals in selected SAOs (a total of 13 organizations) in the Columbus area. These included a gallery, R&B band, printmaker, orchestra, theatre, glass art company, artist collective, dance company, and a heritage preservation organization.

I conducted the in-depth case study on one selected SAO, Available Light Theatre. This company showed the most intensive dynamism, allowing me to observe more meaningful changing issues within a limited time. I interviewed company members, board members, and various individuals in the support systems of this theatre, including guest artists, audiences, donors, volunteers, and individuals in public agencies and sponsoring companies. I incorporated the in-depth case study to understand the dynamic relationship and collaborations among individuals involved in an SAO.
Weaving these two methods together gave me a holistic understanding of the dynamic ecology of SAOs. The first method helped me understand the dynamic relationships among various SAOs; and the second helped me understand the dynamics within an SAO.

1.5 Significance of the Study

SAOs are crucial in the arts world and entrepreneurship and technology can play a significant role in the administration of SAOs. However, as aforementioned, there is serious lack of studies on SAOs. The paucity of studies inevitably results in inaccurate assumptions about and perceptions of SAOs. As a result, policy makers and arts agencies at various levels have had difficulties knowing where and when they can intervene to support SAOs most efficiently. It is hoped that this study to understand SAOs in more detail can contribute to designing and developing more on-target policies and programs for small arts organizations.

With the striking meltdown of the world’s economy by the end of the second Bush administration, many economic players have suffered, and the arts world was no exception with its shrinking ticket buyers, grants, and donations. Since the economic recession has been projected to affect small businesses most severely, governments of many countries have sought ways to revitalize them. And as can be seen in the recent movement of the US Congress (Schectman, 2010), supporting small businesses has been one of the most popular issues in the US economy. In general, it is recognized that small organizations have always been vulnerable due to their lack of resources, whether
financial, human, or technological (Perovic, 2008). Therefore, during these times of economic downturn, the topic of SAOs is especially worthy of study.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

This study used a qualitative research method, which inevitably limits my ability to make generalizations from my findings. I attempted to overcome this limitation by conducting research on multiple SAOs. Still, the information I obtained from the 13 SAOs selected for this study may not be sufficient to generalize to other SAOs in other regions.

Based on the four categories of data by Jackson et al. (see 2.2.2 in Chapter 2), the data generated in this study remains in tier 4. As Hagoort (2007) stated, we still need empirical data, which are “too scarce” in the case of small arts organizations. Accumulating rich empirical data can enable researchers to set priorities regarding the issues and needs of SAOs and to create agendas for new management strategies and new cultural policies for SAOs.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In the following literature review, I explore four significant key concepts for this dissertation: (1) ecology, (2) creative vitality, (2) entrepreneurship, and (3) technology. First, I review the literature for the concept of ecology to frame the dynamic nature of SAOs that interacts with various elements of and forces in our community. While examining the ecological perspective on the arts world, I also explore how support systems can be studied by using the concept of ecology. Next, I review the literatures on the creative vitality of SAOs and on entrepreneurship to better examine how individuals’ passionate works in SAOs function in the ecology of SAOs, which is believed to be crucial for their survival. To situate the concept of entrepreneurship more within the ecology of SAOs, I also review social entrepreneurship.

The existing literature basically considers two historical perspectives of technology in our society: that technology is a help, and technology is a threat. I examine the literature on technology in the arts and arts organizations, using three approaches: technology as environment, technology as a tool, and technology as an art form. In each approach, I further review and examine the terms that everyone uses referring to the arts

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world these days. Next, I review the research on how the adoption of technology occurs in the day-to-day management of small arts organizations. Finally, examining innovativeness, a desirable attitude in adopting a new technology, I address how entrepreneurship and technology can lead SAOs to thrive.

2.1 Ecology

In this dissertation, I adopt the concept of “ecology” as a metaphor to capture the dynamic interactions of SAOs with other arts organizations, their local communities, and the supporting infrastructures set by various local agencies, authorities, and businesses in both the private and public sectors.

Basically, the perspective using the metaphor of ecology to explain human phenomena borrows “ecological concepts from biology as a metaphor with which to describe the reciprocity between persons and their environments,” and to explain how organisms adapt to their environments (Sands, 2001).

In 1868, Ernst Haekel, German biologist, physician and artist, coined the term “ecology” to refer to an organism and its interdependencies within a natural environment. The most conventional definition of the term “ecology” is “the interdisciplinary scientific study of the living conditions of organisms in interaction with each other and with the surroundings, organic as well as inorganic” (Naess, 1989, p. 36).

The term “ecology” has been used for over two decades in organizational studies mainly in sociology. As a theoretical and empirical approach in sociology, it adopts
insights and methods mainly from biology, economics, and sociology to understand the
environment under which organizations emerge, grow, and die (Carroll, 1984; Hannan,
Pólos & Carroll, 2007; Singh & Lumsden, 1990). The term has helped the systems
approach to explain that an individual is “constantly creating, restructuring, and adapting
to the environment as the environment is affecting them” by adding the interactive
process to the social elements (Ungar, 2002).

Unlike most behavioral and psychological theories, ecological theories focus on
interrelated transactions between systems, and stress that all existing elements within an
ecosystem play an equal role in maintaining the balance of the whole. The systems theory
was expanded based on an ecological approach, breaking down the term “environment”
into social determinants with varying levels of power and influence, as deemed by
individual stress and need and level of connectedness. This holistic perspective can
provide a paradigm for understanding how systems and their interactions can maintain
the behavior of an individual or an organization.

Bronfenbrenner (1979), who is one of the world’s leading scholars in the field of
developmental psychology, suggests five levels of ecological components as a useful
framework to understand how an individual or an organization reflects the influence of
several environmental systems, which are identified below.

(1) Microsystem: The most basic system in which individual lives referring to an
individual’s most immediate environment. The most immediate interactions with other
elements take place in the microsystem. There are interactions with parents, family, peers,
and the neighborhood in these contexts. The focus is on how the characteristics of an individual, who is not a passive recipient but someone who is actively constructing the environment, affects other interrelated agents. For example, the effects of someone’s personality on his/her family members.

(2) Mesosystem: This is a more generalized system referring to the relationship among multiple microsystems. For example, the effect of the relationships of family members to the children’s school experiences.

(3) Exosystem: This involves indirect links between a social setting where an individual does not have any immediate relationships. For example, the effect of a mother’s experience at work on the children’s experiences at home.

(4) Macrosystem: This is the most generalized system describing the culture where individuals live. For example, cultures in terms of a geographical environment such as urban or rural, cultures in terms of socioeconomic status such as poverty or wealth, and cultures in terms of ethnicity.

(5) Chronosystem: This level refers to a patterning of all of the levels listed above, over time. For example, while divorce is one transition in the level of a microsystem, it affects children differently over time (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Although Bronfenbrenner’s research is mainly about human development, his work has provided the foundational elements to the ecological perspectives in various fields. In this dissertation, I use the concept of “ecology” and incorporate the ecological
perspective because it provides expressive language and indicates very well the dynamic interrelations of SAOs with other agents in several different sectors and systems. SAOs can be best understood by applying the ecological approach and looking at relationships among agents such as individuals, organizations, communities, and cultures across the aforementioned levels of ecology. For example, the effect of the arts administrators’ entrepreneurship on other members in SAOs (microsystem-level), the effect of relationships among individuals in SAOs on the management of SAOs (mesosystem-level), the effect of the supporters’ entrepreneurial practices on the experience of artists in SAOs (exosystem-level), the effect of eCulture provided by social media on the management of SAOs (macrosystem-level), and the effect of the SAOs’ ongoing economic hardships on the SAOs’ management (chronosystem-level). This ecological approach can offer the best way to support SAOs by identifying and negotiating the strengths and weaknesses in the interrelational processes among agents.

2.1.1 Ecology of Small Arts Organizations

Ecology is basically a metaphorical use of the conceptualization and organization of the biological aspects of phenomena and human activities. The metaphor in the concept of ecology is a powerful and cost-effective tool for promoting a deep understanding of the key issues involved. Therefore, at present, the use of the concept of ecology has been prevalent in the field of business. For example, *Blue Ocean Strategy* (2005), a bestselling book on business strategies co-authored by W. Chan Kim and Renée Mauborgne uses the ecological perspective on the market illustrating Blue Ocean, metaphor for an uncontested market space where an organization can generate high
growth and profits by creating new demands. In contrast, Red Ocean is a metaphor for an existing industry, where competition is severe with other suppliers for known customers. By using 150 successful strategic moves spanning 120 years of business history and across 30 industries including the performing arts industry, the authors suggest “not to out-perform the competition in the existing industry, but to create [a] new market space, […] thereby making the competition irrelevant” (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005), which suggests entrepreneurship.

The ecological perspective on the arts world is especially useful because it encapsulates the nature and dynamic structure and composition of the arts world. Hearn, Roodhouse, and Blakey (2007) focused on the metaphor of a “value creating ecology” in the creative industries. Through that metaphor, the authors captured three important trends: (1) the shift from consumers to co-creators, (2) the shift from product value to network value, and (3) the shift from cooperation or competition to co-opetition.

Paul DiMaggio (2006) is an influential scholar who recommends the ecological perspective to frame the dynamic relationships and shifts in the arts world. In his article, “Nonprofit Organizations and the Intersectoral Division of Labor in the Arts,” he discusses existing theoretical explanations of the prevalence of non-profits in cultural industries that, however, do not adequately solve some conundrums of non-profits in cultural industries. His approach to the non-profits in cultural industries is ecological, in that he believes that the nonprofit arts sector can “best be understood in the context of the intersectoral division of labor” (DiMaggio, 2006, p. 432).
By viewing the arts world, the definition of the arts is not restricted to certain genres or sectors, as DiMaggio (2006) defines the arts very broadly to include “works associated with high, popular, and folk culture: Othello, the Drew Cary Show, and outdoor religious drama, Swan Lake, clogging, and Las Vegas chorus lines and the works of Rembrandt, the products of Native American craft artists, and the poker-playing dogs of Cassius Marcellus Coolidge” (DiMaggio, 2006, p. 432). In his article, DiMaggio (2006) explores three scholarly accounts for the division of labor between nonprofit and for-profit organizations in the arts: (1) Market-failure approach, (2) Industrial-organization approach, (3) Historical/political approach. The first approach emphasizes market failure to provide sufficient incentives for capitalists to invest in cultural enterprises that produce socially valued goods and services, and the need for philanthropic and government subsidies to which such market failure leads. The industrial-organization approach focuses less on the need for subsidy than on the way that the organization of production and contracting in the arts poses specific problems that nonprofit organizations are well equipped to solve. The historical/political approach focuses on the various uses to which entrepreneurial artists and patrons have sought to put the nonprofit form in different eras (DiMaggio, 2006).

Although DiMaggio admits that the market-failure approach provides ways to solve the problem of motive, that the industrial-organization approach explains opportunity, and that the historical/political perspective helps us understand the means by which entrepreneurs succeed in making nonprofits effective vehicles for the purposes they pursue, he identifies a series of theoretical challenges. These challenges are basically
concerned with the blurring boundary between non-profit and for-profit sectors. Among them, he poses the following important questions regarding research on SAOs: “To what extent do endemic deficits in nonprofit arts organizations reflect the ‘cost disease,’ and to what extent do they stem from organizational expansion or other managerial choices?” “What accounts for the increase in hybrid arts organizations and interorganizational (and sometimes intersectoral)?” and “Is it more productive to view [some SAOs] […] as for-profits (which they are as a legal matter), nonprofits (when they are nonprofit in ethos), or as means for workers to survive difficult labor markets?” (DiMaggio, 2006, p. 453). DiMaggio then suggests developing more sophisticated and rigorous analytical methods to address such questions and developing population data over-time that enable us to test them in the context of realistic models of population dynamics.

Substantially, DiMaggio suggests the ecological perspective that focuses on the dynamic relationships among the various non-profits that have been less institutionalized in the arts world. His call on the ecological perspective involves multiple levels. In the sense that DiMaggio focuses on the relationships among individual agents in the non-profit arts world, his focus is more on the microsystem level according to Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) classification of ecological levels. In addition, DiMaggio focuses even more on the mesosystem and exosystem levels, as he proposes two policy research priorities: (1) research to “enable grantmakers to assess the relationship between organizational form and behavioral differences toward the values that cultural policy makers ordinarily wish to promote”; and (2) research to “undertake community cultural resource studies that view arts organizations as interrelated parts of coherent systems”
(DiMaggio, 2006, p. 454). Furthermore, when DiMaggio stresses his basic research premise that focuses on a broader range of cultural nonprofits to understand the current and likely future importance of the nonprofit arts sector, his research focus is mostly on the chronosystem of the arts world.

In this dissertation, I explore relationships among agents – individuals, organizations, communities, and cultures – with three themes that correspond to the three key levers – Entrepreneurship, Technology, and Support Systems – that move SAOs along the balancing point between their mission and their money. Along these themes, I investigate the aforementioned levels of SAOs’ ecology. I mostly explore the microsystem level in the ecology of SAOs by probing the narratives and stories of individuals in SAOs. By viewing individuals’ lives in their everyday environment, I examine the roles they play in the arts world. I also explore the mesosystem level, as I examine the effect of individuals’ relationships on their experiences and on the management of SAOs. In addition, I consider SAOs’ exosystem level, such as how political and economic changes drive the adjustment that SAOs make in their management, as well as considering the macrosystem level, such as how American culture of private donations affects SAOs’ management.

2.1.2 Support Systems in the Ecology of Small Arts Organizations

In the ecology of small arts organizations, support system plays a significant role. It can be divided into two basic categories: Public and Private. However, there are multi-layered meanings and dynamic relationships and shifts among public, private, and
intersectoral divisions. Margaret Wyszomirski and Ann Galligan (2009) took the concept of ecology to explain this multi-layered dynamism in the support system for the arts. In their collaborative work titled “Organizations Influencing Art Education Policy,” which was presented in 2009 at the NAEA National Convention, they addressed the ecology of cultural policy making, which is more at the mesosystem level, in order to articulate where constituency fits into the cultural policy-making system. They actively used the metaphor of the pond and the lives in the pond to view the policy-making system: Subgovernment as lotus leaves, Advocacy Coalition as lotus roots, Issue Network as groups of lotuses, Policy Community as fishes, and Grassroots as frogs, as can be seen in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Policy governance ecology (Wyszomirski & Galligan, 2009)
Wyszomirski and Galligan (2009) define policy Subgovernment, depicted as the lotus leaf, as “groupings of societal and state actors with routinized patterns of interaction that exercise policymaking control to their mutual benefit” (p. 25). The Subgovernment involves three key actors that are an organized interest, relevant congressional subcommittee, and a related administrative agency. The lotus leaf of Subgovernment is supported by the lotus root, or Advocacy Coalition. Advocacy Coalition is defined as “actors from a variety of public and private institutions who share common interests regarding a cultural policy and a set of beliefs on the goals of the policy” (p. 27). Examples of advocacy coalition are American Arts Alliance (AAA), National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) and Americans for the Arts (AFTA) and National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies (NALAA). When a number of branch-and-root clusters congregate, they form an Issue Network, which is “loosely integrated systems of issue-specific subgovernments operating in a general policy arena and that are instrumental in formulating and developing policy” (p. 29). The fishes, a metaphor for the Policy Community, are “networks of specialists in a given policy area, drawn from inside and outside government, spanning a range of partisan and ideological perspectives.” They are “primarily active in issue definition, option development, and policy evaluation” (p. 31). Lastly, the moving frogs, a metaphor for Grassroots Movements, represent “policy engagement that originates from the individual or community level.” Grassroots Movements are “primarily concerned with building awareness for emergent issues” (p. 33).
Wyszomirski et al. (2002) also categorized the support system of the arts by types of support, which include financial, social, and professional. The financial support system includes (1) private contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations; (2) direct government funds; (3) earned income; and (4) investments and endowment funds. The social support system involves human resources, such as audience development, public opinion, and voluntary action. Lastly, the professional support system highlights the role of specialized services such as volunteer lawyers of the arts and mutual benefit organizations formed around professional interests (Wyszomirski et al., 2002). In this dissertation, Wyszomirski’s ecological perspective on support systems for the arts is utilized to articulate the significant role of support systems for, and their dynamic relationships with, the arts. In fact, agents of support systems have relationships at all five levels of the ecology system that Bronfenbrenner (1979) classified. In this sense, particularly in the conclusion chapter, I suggest that cultural policy come in at all of those levels of relationships.

2.2 Creative Vitality

Within the ecology of small arts organizations, this study focuses on the collective creative vitality of SAOs as well as the creative vitality of an individual SAO. The term “creative vitality” has been used in the creative sector since the Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF) introduced the Creative Vitality Index (CVI) and used it to measure the health of the creative economy in a specified geographic area.
2.2.1 The Creative Vitality Index

Developed by the Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF), the Creative Vitality Index (CVI) is designed to reflect the relative “economic” health of the creative economy in a certain area (a city, county, or a state) by aggregating the data streams from per-capita measurements of revenue and employment of both for-profit and non-profit entities into a single index value. WESTAF is one of six non-profit regional arts organizations funded by NEA; it works in partnership with the state arts councils of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. In addition, the index has been utilized by many state arts agencies in other states in the United States, as it provides easily understandable numbers to show the impact of the arts to the broader arts coalition members such as policy makers. The index is designed to be measured annually, its longitudinal data allowing for compelling year-to-year comparisons as well as cross-city, -county, and -state comparisons. Therefore, CVI is useful to overview the rise and fall of the creative vitality of the arts in a certain area (WESTAF, 2010).

It is not clear how WESTAF defines creative vitality. However, the definition can be derived from how the index is measured. The index has two major measurements: (1) per-capita occupational employment in the arts (40% weighting assigned), and (2) community participation based on per-capita revenues of arts-related goods and services (60% weighting assigned). The rationale for the weighting assignment is claimed to be related to consideration of the cause-and-effect relationship between participation levels and jobs. To measure community participation, the index is comprised of nonprofit arts
organization income, nonprofit humanities organization income, per-capita book store sales, per-capita music store sales, per-capita photography store sales, per-capita performing arts revenues, and per-capita art gallery and individual artist sales.

CVI helped me decide what to focus on in my study in order to see the creative vitality of an SAO: participation of the community. I incorporate the underlying theory in the creative vitality index which uses community participation as a major measurement. The index designers believe that community participation in the arts (or public demand for arts experiences and events) is ultimately what drives budgets and organizational funding levels, which in turn support artists and arts organizations (Wyoming Arts Council, 2008). However, my primary focus is not on the revenue component to “calculate” community participation, but rather on the intimate and dynamic relationships based on the narratives and stories of individuals in the community.

2.2.2 The Cultural Vitality of a Community and the Creative Vitality of an SAO

Maria Jackson, Florence Kabwasa-Green, and Joaquín Herranz at the Urban Institute authored a report about the cultural vitality of a community titled Cultural Vitality in Communities: Interpretation and Indicators in 2006. In the report, the authors first introduced a definition of cultural vitality that includes the range of cultural assets and activities that the people in the community register as significant. They define cultural vitality as “evidence of creating, disseminating, validating, and supporting arts and culture as a dimension of everyday life in communities” (p. 4). They use this definition as a lens to understand the necessary and available data in order to include arts
and culture among the more general quality of life indicators and finally to develop an initial set of arts and culture indicators (Jackson et al., 2006).

This report suggests three domains of inquiry to capture cultural activity and its role in communities: (1) the presence of opportunities to participate, (2) participation in its multiple dimensions, and (3) support systems for cultural participation. The authors believe these three domains are appropriate for indicator measurements and make possible a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of arts and culture. With these domains in mind, Jackson et al. (2006) categorize the wide range of actual and potential data sources into four tiers along with variables: quantitative vs. qualitative, publicly available or restricted, annually recurrent or not, and nationally available or not.

Jackson et al.’s (2006) report tilts toward participation rather than creation, while I argue the creative element should have at least equal attention among SAOs. Therefore, following Jackson et al.’s definition on cultural creativity and considering participation of the community as a major measurement as WESTAF does, I define “creative vitality” as evidence of creating, disseminating, validating, and supporting artistic endeavors in the everyday life of a small arts organization. To identify the evidence for creative vitality in SAOs, this dissertation aims to produce qualitative documentation of the phenomena of SAOs which is collected by the anthropological and ethnographic approach to scan through the diverse relationships within the ecology of SAO. This documentation constitutes tier four data based on Jackson et al.’s (2006) categorization. I believe that tier four data provides a sound foundation for further tiered data on SAOs.
2.3 Entrepreneurship

Within the ecology of SAOs, there are many forces that enable dynamic relationships among the multi-layered, multi-leveled agents. Among the forces, entrepreneurship has been discussed as a key word that keeps many individuals in SAOs, or the SAOs themselves, creative, yet sustainable within the dynamic ecology of SAOs. The concept has been a topic of academic research in the business field over the last several decades, although it is still considered an emerging (or unrigorous) field even in business, and has been defined in many ways. However, even with this uncertainty, entrepreneurship is emerging as an empowering concept in many other fields, including the arts world, where people keep searching for new ways of thinking, and it has been a preferred method to explain the significant role of personal engagement to move forward. In this section, the concept of entrepreneurship is reviewed as one of the significant assets of SAOs to relate to other agents in their ecology in order to identify how it functions in the intersection of the arts, arts culture, and SAOs.

According to Collins English Dictionary, “the owner or manager of a business enterprise who, by risk and initiative, attempts to make profits” is an “entrepreneur.” It comes from the French word, “entreprendre,” meaning “to undertake.” Therefore, the general business definition of entrepreneurship always involves using business acumen to undertake risky innovation to produce profitable goods. The most widely known definition of entrepreneurship is a practice to start a new organization. However, the term has been extended to include social and political forms of entrepreneurial activity, so that
it also refers to the practice of revitalizing existing organizations in response to identified new opportunities. Both practices connote risk-taking.

Entrepreneurship as a process can be divided into three types: individual, intrapreneurial (within an organization), and organizational (Cornwall & Perlman 1990). Some scholars like Scott Shane (2003) identify activities within a large organization such as corporate venturing as intrapreneurship. However, all three types are closely connected to managing arts organizations. According to Aleksandar Brkić (2009), because of the nature of the artistic disciplines, individual entrepreneurship is commonly observed in visual arts and design, which have the “tendency to integrate an artist and arts manager in one person,” and organizational entrepreneurship is commonly observed in all “syncretic artistic disciplines” such as theater and film. He also sees that intrapreneurial entrepreneurship or intrapreneurship can be suitable for large arts organizations that “foster and support partly independent subunits” (Brkić, 2009).

### 2.3.1 Social Entrepreneurship

In terms of scale, entrepreneurial activities range from a single project to major practices to create many job opportunities. In actual pattern, many entrepreneurial entities look for venture capital or seed money to raise capital to start a business. Venture capital or seed money investors who are usually called “angels,” invest their capital for later returns, as well as extensive involvement in the management of the organization (Osnabrugge & Robinson, 2000). However, as the term “entrepreneurship” has been extended to include elements not necessarily related to forming a business, this pattern
has been significantly changed, resulting in entrepreneurial initiatives, such as in the form of social entrepreneurship.

Social entrepreneurship is defined as “a process by which citizens build or transform institutions to advance solutions to social problems, such as poverty, illness, illiteracy, environmental destruction, human rights abuses, and corruption, in order to make life better for many” (Bornstein & Davis, 2010, p. 1). It is a general term that applies to any individual or organization that uses an entrepreneurial mindset and principles to generate social impact and profits. Since social entrepreneurship aims at public value, the concept has also been extensively used in the arts world in the perspective that both social entrepreneurship and the arts embrace a common ground in their philosophical roots that cultivates a public value. In addition, one of the characteristics of social entrepreneurship is that it is not only about running an organization to solve social problems, but also about giving philanthropic money to an organization solving social problems. There are a number of variations on the social entrepreneurship model that have “blended traditional giving models with innovations from entrepreneurship,” such as “Venture Philanthropy” based on the concept of venture capital, “Microlending” for SAOs based on the idea of microloan in business, “Giving Circles” formed by grouping donors, and “New Online Giving Strategies” using web-based social networking media (Ogletree, 2010).
2.3.2 Entrepreneurship in the Arts

As social entrepreneurship has been discussed more widely recently, the concept of entrepreneurship has also been more frequently discussed in arts administration mainly with regard to managing risk in terms of resources. Hence, Kevin Mulcahy (2003) affirmed that “arts administrators have always had to be entrepreneurs” (p. 167). Giep Hagoort (2003), in his book, *Art Management Entrepreneurial Style*, also concluded that entrepreneurial configuration suits the cultural sector very well. Hagoort points out the connection between the strategy-making process and the entrepreneurship that suits the cultural/artistic sector (2003). Evidently, scholars in the field of general management consider entrepreneurship as one of the main characteristics of artistic leadership (Mintzberg, 1989). Thus, in this dissertation, I use the term “entrepreneurship” almost interchangeably with “leadership.”

Gus Geursen and Ruth Rentschler (2003) explained cultural entrepreneurship in relationship with cultural values. In their article, “Unraveling Cultural Value,” they described two views of the concept of cultural values: the aesthetic view and the neoclassical economic view. The aesthetic view focuses on the quality of life and understanding of the social and psychological values of a culture. The neoclassical economic view focuses on measuring the economic impact of culture, such as in tourism (Geursen & Rentschler, 2003). According to Geursen and Rentschler (2003), cultural value is multidimensional and represented by different stakeholders such as audiences, sponsors, and government in ways that are convenient to their individual purposes. To balance the multidimensional cultural value, Geursen and Rentschler borrowed
Schumpeter’s (1961) definition of entrepreneurship as the ability to take exiting resources and rearrange them in a more relevant manner. With this definition, they viewed cultural entrepreneurship as a process of creating value for the community that brings together unique combinations of public and private resources to enhance social and cultural opportunities in an environment of change, while remaining true to the creative mission of the organization.

Entrepreneurship in the arts is also defined with innovation and creativity, following Peter Drucker's (1985) view. According to Drucker, entrepreneurship is a practice that has a knowledge base and that seeks to enable organizations to innovate while remaining true to their mission. Innovation which usually comes together with the concept of entrepreneurship has also been discussed in various contexts, such as technology, business, social systems, and policy making. Therefore, there is a wide range of approaches to conceptualize innovation (Fagerberg et al., 2004). The classic definitions can be found in *The American Heritage Dictionary* (“the act of introducing something new” and “something newly introduced”) and in *The Merriam-Webster Dictionary* (“the introduction of something new” and “a new idea, method, or device”). In addition to these traditional definitions, Drucker (1985) defined innovation as a change that creates a new dimension of performance (Hesselbein, 2002). As can be seen, despite a variety of approaches, a consistent theme in these definitions can be identified: innovation is typically understood as the successful introduction of something new and useful. In this view, innovation is the specific tool of the entrepreneur and creativity becomes the specific mission of the arts. Together, innovation and creativity exploit
change as an opportunity to create cultural value. Therefore, entrepreneurship in this sense is very necessary for arts administrators as they encounter technology-driven environmental changes. Indeed, many scholars claim that in arts entrepreneurship, innovation, and creativity taken together are “the driving force behind the sustainability of arts organizations” (Rentschler, 2003, p. 164).

According to Sharon Alvarez (2005), there are two major theories of entrepreneurship: the discovery theory and the creation theory. In the discovery theory, opportunities are objective and unique individuals (entrepreneurs) need only find opportunities by taking a risk. However, in the creation theory, opportunities are subjective and entrepreneurs create those opportunities. Therefore, the discovery theory can be found in a stable environment where many things are certain and expected. As can be seen above, most scholars in the field of arts administration who talk about entrepreneurship usually follow this perspective. Therefore, their focus is usually on major arts organizations in a relatively stable environment, searching for a niche market. This theory was appropriate during the relatively stable period that saw booming growth in the number and size of arts organizations between the 1960s and 1990s. However, since the 1990s, the arts have encountered an increasingly unstable and shifting environment.

Alvarez’s (2005) creation theory assumes that entrepreneurs bear uncertainty and exhibit their ability in an unstable environment; with their talent, they create opportunities. This theory has something in common with Blue Ocean Strategy. In the their book by that title, Kim and Mauborgne (2006) claim that entrepreneurs can avoid
harsh competition (Red Ocean) and create opportunities where competition is irrelevant (Blue Ocean) by creating a leap in value. As the technical environment is very unstable, which is especially true for SAOs, technology in the arts and in arts organizations can be explained more insightfully through the lens of the creation theory of entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the creation theory can be seen most clearly by looking at SAOs.

Alvarez’s (2005) creation theory also leads us to formulate the concept of artistic innovation combining the innovation and creativity of entrepreneurship. In her article, “Management, the Arts and Innovation,” Mary Cloake (1997) defined artistic innovation as the introduction in the arts field (or market) of something new. Castaner and Campos (2002) took this view further and distinguished two dimensions in which arts organizations can innovate: content and form. They discussed repertoire and multi-disciplinarity in terms of content, and interactivity in terms of form. Their discussion on content (repertoire and multi-disciplinarity) can be related to my concept of technology as the arts. Likewise, their discussion on form (interactivity) can be related to my concepts of technology as tool and technology as environment, which will be introduced later in this chapter.

A good explanation of artistic innovation can be found in the introductory webpage of the Artistic Innovation Fund of the James Irvine Foundation. This fund is said to be designed “to enable arts organizations to respond to […] the major structural changes brought on by technological advances, demographic changes and shifting consumer behaviors […] by seeding innovative ideas, projects and directions that will constitute significant advancements for the organization, as well as potential leadership
opportunities.” For the purposes of the fund, the foundation defines artistic innovation as instances of organizational change that, to a recognizable degree (1) provide new pathways to fulfilling the mission, (2) are not an extension of “business as usual,” and (3) result from a shift in underlying organizational assumptions (The James Irvine Foundation, 2011).

By focusing on artistic innovations in three priority areas – artistic capacity, constituency engagement, and organizational management – the James Irvine Foundation believes it can encourage organizations to (1) “create new work, experiment with new aesthetics or develop new programming; (2) reach into their community to broaden, deepen or diversify audiences; and (3) lead effectively through innovative organizational management, board and staffing structures, and build valuable knowledge for the arts and culture sector.”

It is important to note that the Foundation believes that by artistic innovation, arts organizations can both exercise and further develop their adaptive capacity, which is defined as “an organization’s ability to initiate and implement purposeful change in response to shifts in its operating environment” (The James Irvine Foundation, 2011). The current study adopts and shares the Foundation’s view of artistic innovation to understand the relationship between technology and SAOs.

2.4 Technology

In this section, I review various perspectives on technology, starting with two historical perspectives of technology in our society: that technology is a help, and
technology is a threat. Next, I explore the literature about technology in the arts and arts organizations, categorizing it into three approaches: technology as environment, technology as a tool, and technology as art. I then examine the literature on the relationship between artistic innovation and new technologies. In addition, I review the literature regarding how one adopts technology, mainly referring to Everett M. Rogers’s (1995; 2003) diffusion of innovation theory.

2.4.1 Two Perspectives of Technology in our Society

There are basically two perspectives toward technology: pessimistic and optimistic. Reviewing these two perspectives will provide a brief historical context of technology in our society. Following the Industrial Revolution in the late 18th- and early 19th centuries, it is true that many people expressed concerns about society and the arts driven by technology. French philosopher and sociologist Jacques Ellul (1964) is one of them. In his book, The Technological Society, Ellul formulates seven characteristics of modern technology. These characteristics which serve to make efficiency a necessity are rationality, artificiality, automatism of technical choice, self-augmentation, monism, universalism, and autonomy. The rationality of technology enforces a logical and mechanical organization through division of labor, the setting of production standards, etc. Ellul (1964) eventually foresaw that technology will overthrow everything that prevents the internal logic of its development, including humanity itself.

In the 1990s, following the advent of the Internet, people were so stirred up by the unlimited usability and possibilities of the Internet, that it seemed like it would change
everything we have constructed so far. Indeed, this has been the case, amplifying both the concerns and praises regarding technology.

Particularly, many artists and critics have expressed deep concern about the degeneration of human culture and the arts. They believe that while quantity increases with technology, quality is bound to decrease. As early as 1935, in his article, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” Walter Benjamin had already observed that “quantity has been transmuted into quality” (p. 249). In 2007, Andrew Keen, a self-proclaimed “leading contemporary critic of the Internet,” also admonished against the effect of the amateur on the Internet, which erodes our culture and the arts. In his book, Cult of Amateur, Keen (2007) argues that, due to the amateur ethos that is prevalent on the Internet, expertise of knowledge, wisdom, and culture are fast eroding.

Along with these pessimistic perspectives, the notion of a “third culture” comes up quite a bit. Following John Brockman’s (1995) book, The Third Culture, the term denotes “the offspring of the marriage of art and science” (p. 26), and the negative impact of technological globalization, in particular. In his article, “Manifesto for a Digital Bauhaus,” Pelle Ehn (1998) also explored various studies that examined the notion of “third culture,” tracking back to C.P. Snow’s book, The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution (1959). In this book, Snow expressed concern about the widening and worrisome gap of misunderstanding and mistrust between scientists and non-scientists. By introducing the concept of “third culture,” IT has invalidated the dichotomy between science and the arts, not just in a positive way, but also (maybe more so,) in a negative way. Kevin Kelly (1998), the executive editor of Wired magazine, even warns in his
article, “The Third Culture,” that “the nerds of the third culture are rising” (p. 993). The term “third culture” has evolved and has been reinterpreted in the last decade. With regard to arts administration, third culture refers to the way(s) in which arts administrators straddle both the role of technician (scientist) and artist (non-scientist). In this sense, third culture links the creative – artistic – side of arts administrators to their innovative – managerial – side. This in-between characteristic has led to the perception of an arts administrator as the intermediary.

Conversely, many people have praised technology on the increasing possibility (or belief) that it can solve many social problems. Among them, Alvin Weinberg (1956/2003) asked himself whether technology can replace social engineering, and he answered, “yes.” In his article, “Can Technology Replace Social Engineering,” Weinberg introduced the concept of a “Technological Fix” (p. 33) and claimed that technology is capable of finding shortcuts to the solution of social problems.

Following the advent of the Internet, some became anxious about the growth of the extensive online communities and the Internet’s high-quantity but low-quality products, while others thought the anxiety was overstated. For example, Don Tapscott and Anthony Williams (2006) claimed that the anxiety and fear are folly, based on a nine million dollar research project. In their book, Wikinomics, the authors presented various examples on how smart entrepreneurs and firms have harnessed the collective capability and genius derived by the Internet in order to spur innovation, growth, and success.
Ritva Mitchell (2005) also observed that, unlike the ideas of modernization and post-modernity, a new eCulture and an information society enabled by the Information and Communication Technology (ICT), have been perceived positively and “taken more or less for granted” (p. 9). Particularly after the introduction of the Internet, it is less likely to find pessimistic perspectives on uses of the Internet. Even Keen (2007), who criticized the amateur cult, commended ICT for “the means to globally connect and share knowledge in an unprecedented way” (p. 185). Keen made it clear that he only wants “to find a way to balance the best of the digital future without destroying the institutions of the past” (p. 185).

Mitchell (2005) attributed the positive perception of eCulture and the information society to the fact that it is “intuitively more easily perceived” (p. 9). That is, information connotes a lot of positive concepts such as “knowledge, creativity, innovations and democratic participation” (p. 9). As a result, the positive perceptions of ICT and eCulture are reflected in every level of our society, which in turn provides another reason for arts administrators and arts organizations to consider ICT and eCulture.

2.4.2 Technology in the Arts and in Arts Organizations

In this dissertation, I view technology as one of the three key levers that shifts the balancing point between the mission and the money. I consider three approaches concerning the relationship between technology and the arts: (1) technology as environment, (2) technology as a tool, and (3) technology as art (see Figure 2.2). The basic conceptualization of these approaches is as follows. A new technology in our
society is firstly perceived as a new environment for artists and arts administrators to survive. Therefore, I discuss technology as environment first. Second, in order to survive the technology-driven social changes, arts administrators make use of technology. Therefore, I also discuss technology as a tool. With the growing role of technology in the arts, some art forms develop out of the new technologies. Therefore, technology must be acknowledged when discussing the arts, that is, discussing technology as “art.”

Figure 2.2 Schema of three approaches to technology in the arts

*Technology as Environment*

As the first approach to the relationship of technology and the arts, I suggest technology serves as an environment. Our society has been influenced and driven by
technology, and it is within this technologically driven society that artists and arts administrators dwell. A new technology within this society creates a new environment in which artists and arts administrators must function. The advent of the Internet and the emergence of the information society pose another new environment.

**IT.** This dissertation problematizes the uses of IT in SAOs. Literatures in the field of cultural policy and arts administration discuss or at least mention IT and the arts in one way or another (Greffe, 2002 & 2004; Holden, 2007; McCarthy, 2001, 2004; McCarthy & Ondaatje, 2002; Mercadex International, 2002a; Murdock, 2001; Norris & Grams, 2008; Pope, 1999). There are also many case studies about several major arts organizations utilizing IT successfully from early 2000s (Grinter et al., 2002; Fleck et al., 2002; Kretschmer at al., 2001).

**eCulture and the Information Society.** The concept of eCulture has been explained and explored extensively as early as in the 2003 publication of Culturelink, *eCulture: The European Perspective – Cultural Policy, Creative Industries, Information Lag*. In the book, Jos de Haan and Frank Huysmans (2005), exploring Dutch experience on eCulture and ICT, define eCulture as the “culture in a world of digitization,” and they regard ICT as a “catalyst in a process of cultural change” (p. 41). Biserka Cvjetičanin, the director of Culturelink Network, also claimed that eCulture should be viewed in light of cultural changes and new developments in information and communication technologies. In this regard, the author views eCulture “as a multilayered, complex phenomenon which needs to be studied from a variety of aspects – cultural policy, new economy, online resources” (p. 9). eCulture is reshaping our concept of the arts, artists, and the audience.
As Phu (2007) seriously observed in his blog, they (the virtual world especially) blur the line between the artist and the subject.

**World Wide Web and Web 2.0.** eCulture is significantly related to the advent of the World Wide Web, which may be the most important term that depicts the environment in which we live. The World Wide Web (commonly shortened to www or simply the Web) is a system of hyperlinked texts and images accessed via the Internet. The acronym “www” is what we call “the Internet” in general.

In his book, *Logging on: Culture, participation and the web*, John Holden (2007) reports in detail the dynamic changes in the arts enabled by the Internet. For many arts administrators, the www provided many opportunities such as distribution of artworks to an unlimited audience via the Internet. However, it is also true that many others have expressed difficulties to adapt themselves to the new environment, because it is a change not only in technology, but also in their role, their identity, their communities, and finally, in society (Holden, 2007).

Moreover, before the Web was fully understood, another new term and phenomenon, Web 2.0, was introduced. Web 2.0 generally refers to the second generation of Web-based services. The most important characteristic of Web 2.0 is that it enables more active and interactive engagement of the users. Tim O'Reilly (2005) who first introduced the term, explained the concept of Web 2.0 in his article, “What is Web 2.0?” He considers Web 2.0 to be a “platform where people communicate in a much more active manner, in which they can control their own data.”
**Audience 2.0.** The concept of Web 2.0 has given rise to many other spin-off concepts, such as Business 2.0 and Customer 2.0. These new concepts basically exhibit the connotation of interactivity between creators and end-users. Among them, Audience 2.0 provides a new environment to arts administrators.

Nathan Lovejoy (2007), an editor for *LimeWire*, explicated the term, “Audience 2.0” by distinguishing “audience” from “the audience.” In his online article, “Swarming media: (The) audience (2.0): How Shakira, Dirty Harry, and del.icio.us have come to define interactive subjectivity,” he begins his discussion about Audience 2.0 by examining the term “audience.” For Lovejoy, while “audience” implies knowingness and hearingness and holds a far higher value than that of speaking, as seen in “Court of Audience,” “the audience” refers to the mass of disenfranchised participants, where one’s audience has a very low value. According Lovejoy (2007), it is that “audience” has become “the audience” under the mass media culture and individuals have lost their identities under the weight of the mass media.

However, Lovejoy (2007) deems that “audience” / “the audience” has regained (albeit not totally) its power and control by its new identity created collectively and socially in Web 2.0. By using del.icio.us – a social bookmarking tool – as an example, he postulates that the individual’s identity is no longer defined by a collective other, the mass media, but by multiple sources, including the individual himself. As a result, the new audience, Audience 2.0, does not lose its identity under the gigantic system of the mass media, “but at the same time he loses the ability to define the reinstated selfness on his own.” Finally, Lovejoy (2007) defines Audience 2.0 as “the people who use,
experience, and interact with one another through whatever it is we may call Web 2.0” and claims that Audience 2.0 is an Internet neologism, so the cause of its existence and its product / derivative should be focused on, as well as the lifespan of the functional term.

With the advent of Web 2.0, arts audiences are evolving into Audience 2.0, which in turn challenges arts administrators to adopt the new technologies. In fact, arts administration is becoming less about the application of expertise and distribution of products and skills/talents, and more about how to “actively” engage the audience in the production itself.

**User-Created Content (UCC).** For Audience 2.0, the arts is not only about appreciating an artwork in a comfortable chair, but it is something that Audience 2.0 can also engage in producing, referred to as “User Created Content” (UCC). When emphasizing the informational aspect of the content, UCC is also called “User Generated Content” (UGC). However, since this dissertation is about technology and the arts, the term “UCC” is used to emphasize the artistic aspect of technology. UCC has caused the major media’s focus to shift from creating online content to creating facilities and a framework where non-professionals can publish their own content (Thurman, 2006, 2008). Thus, UCC can be perceived as a threat to the authority and expertise of artists and especially arts administrators because they have typically operated as facilitators and/or gatekeepers. Yet, many scholars and journalists believe in User Created Content’s capability to provide a future full of new opportunities (Cha et al., 2007; Dijk, 2009; Edery, 2006; Krumn et al., 2008; Thurman, 2006 & 2008).
**Virtual Institutions.** The shift from creating online content to creating facilities and a framework for non-media professionals may be deeply related to the concept of “Virtual Institutions.” David Bray and Benn Konsynski (2007) explain that virtual places are no longer just a place for individuals to interact through computer-mediated reality, but instead become significant structures and mechanisms of social order and cooperation within the real-world. In their article, “Virtual Worlds, Virtual Economies, Virtual Institutions,” Bray and Konsynski (2007) provide details about the virtual worlds such as the growing Second Life, which allows users to create an avatar representing themselves and to interact with other computer-generated individuals, landscapes, and even virtually run global businesses in real-time. Bray and Konsynski (2007) found that both endogenously produced economies and social orders are emerging in these virtual worlds.

The concept of “Virtual Institutions” can expand the traditional institutions of the arts, which are museums, galleries, and many other arts organizations and arts professionals. Therefore, the traditional arts institutions are also, although slowly, accepting the new concept of these emerging virtual institutions. For example, as early as in 2006, Saatchi Gallery in the UK launched STUART (www.saatchi-gallery.co.uk/stuart/), the interactive website on which students from around the world can display and sell their artworks (Hyde, 2006).

**Social Media.** Finally, all of these key terms to understand new technology as reviewed above – IT, eCulture, the World Wide Web, Web 2.0, Audience 2.0, UCC, and Virtual Institutions – converge on the latest buzz word, “social media.” There are multiple definitions of social media, all of which basically incorporate social interactions
and co-creation via Web 2.0 technologies. The social media transforms and broadcasts media monologues into social media dialogues. They are the media for social networking, using highly accessible and interactive publishing techniques based on the idea of Web 2.0 (Manovich, 2008; Smith, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Mason, 2011; Kietzmann et al., 2011; Reid, 2011). It is also important to view social media not only as an environment, but also as a tool for many SAOs to connect with the environment. Indeed, for arts organizations, social media became the most powerful tool for attracting a larger audience. All the above explored terms in fact have aspects of technology as a tool and as art, which is reviewed in following sections.

**Technology as a Tool**

The concept of technology as a tool may be the more usual perception of technology for many arts administrators. Clearly, technology is a useful tool to manage an arts organization, to communicate with the audience, and to produce/present the arts. Technology as a tool as reviewed in this section typically refers to management tools and production tools, rather than an arts-creation tools. Therefore, various uses of the Internet and new software/applications as management and production tools are the main focus in the concept of technology as a tool.

Just as there has been some anxiety and some praise regarding technology in general, many people in the arts world have also expressed their hopes and concerns pertaining to technology as a tool. For example, in 1986, Nicholas Kurti tried to provide a reasonably balanced view of the effects and influence of technology on the arts in his
book, *Science and Technology: Blessing or Curse to the Arts?* Kurti (1986) explored both the positions of those who believe that technology should stay clear of the arts except as modest providers of assistance, and those who claim that the arts will be fossilized unless they are revitalized by technology. He emphasized the relevance of present-day technology not only in relation to a more extensive and precise cognition of the arts, but also in relation to the techniques which have perfected existing procedures or created new ones.

However, whether it is a blessing or a curse, following the advent of the Internet, as Mitchell (2005) argued above, it seems that technology as a valuable tool has been perceived positively. Thus, the main discussion regarding technology has become how to “utilize” it. It is not difficult to find literature that discusses the use of technology to improve communication, data management, or customer service, etc. (Townsend et al., 1998; Chen & Popovich, 2003; Turban et al., 2008). Among others, using social media for promoting the arts has also been one of the most popular issues in the arts world (Manovich, 2008; Smith, 2009; Reid, 2011).

Among the various literatures on the use of technology in the arts, “High-Tech Transactions and Cyber-Communities” written by Wendy Leigh Norris and Diane Grams (2008) provide a wide range of technologies as tools that arts administrators can utilize. The authors examined the use of technology in streamlining transactional forms of participation by improving data management and new methods of making transactions through e-commerce. In particular, they reviewed the websites of 93 arts organizations to estimate how far arts organizations have adjusted themselves to the Web 2.0
environment. In order to acquire more insightful narratives, Norris and Grams (2008) supplemented their review with some interviews with arts administrators in several arts organizations. As a result, they found most websites are still primarily and merely informational, and fail to feature interactivity and diversity that are important to draw the attention of Audience 2.0. Many arts organizations have tried to employ blogs in their websites. However, the authors found that most of their blogs are unsuccessful to generate any response whatsoever to an initial posting. Norris and Grams (2008) deem that this failure comes from not knowing the audience and ignoring profoundly diverse relationships between users and the technology.

Interestingly, Norris and Grams’s (2008) findings do not depart much from the findings of Pope et al. (1999) who conducted a survey on how technology in the late 1990s was used by arts constituents in seven participating states, including Ohio. Pope et al. concluded that most artists and arts organizations were using the Internet as a one-way street (a typical characteristic of Web 1.0), posting information for the public, but not using many forms of two-way information exchange. Also only half of arts organizations reported having web pages. Even though the survey was conducted before the introduction of blogs and the beginning of Web 2.0, the researchers had already observed that arts administrators are struggling with adapting information technologies (Pope et al., 1999).

Although “technology as environment” has changed dramatically, it seems that “technology as a tool” has not been usable or affordable enough for many arts administrators and many arts organizations. Moreover, because the information society
and the information technology have been so positively perceived as Mitchell (2005) pointed out, technology has been taken for granted, which forced arts administrators to use the new technologies that seem to be so popular.

Mercadex International’s (2003b) findings, as reported to the Cultural Human Resources Council (CHRC) in Canada, were also very similar to the results of the Pope et al.’s surveys and the findings of Norris and Grams (2008). In *Face of the Future: A Study of Human Resources Issues in Canada's Cultural Sector* (2003a), it is reported that contrary to the expectations of many artists and arts administrators, “the Internet and the new technology has not been as successful a tool as originally anticipated” (p. 20). Indeed, there are many arts administrators who refuse to use the new technology and even disregard it. Mercadex International (2003a) also found that arts administrators have some fears about adopting those new technologies in their practice. Moreover, Mercadex International (2003b) warns that the arts administrators “who refuse to use new technologies in the practice of their profession, the management of their career and the distribution of their work will be at an increased risk of facing disadvantage and even marginalization” (p. 16).

Therefore, the apprehension has caused many arts advocates to request the support of political decision-makers. As early as in 2001, in a report to Congress, *A Digital Gift to the Nation*, Lawrence Grossman and Newton Minow proposed that Congress should endow multibillion dollars to launch the Digital Opportunity Investment Trust, to encourage the use of digital media. They proposed that the trust would provide
educational materials in digital media to nonprofit organizations in the humanities and the arts.

In 2003, another report titled *Beyond Productivity* was presented by the Committee of the National Academies on Information Technology and Creativity. Linking information technology and creative practice (ITCP), the report elaborated on the major benefits to be gained from encouraging, supporting, and strategically investing in ITCP. Then, it made detailed recommendations for four groups to foster the information society and the culture of ICTP: (1) educators and academic administrators; (2) foundations, government agencies, and other funders; (3) industry; and (4) the National Academies. To make these detailed recommendations, the report firstly focused on how IT empowers creative practices. Worth noting in this report is the next focus, where it stresses IT beyond tools. Introducing information arts, the report regards ITCP not only as a tool, but also as art itself.

*Technology as Art*

The idea of technology as art may seem paradoxical. The root of the term “technology” is the Greek word for art, “techne.” Although the distinction between technology and art persists, the sense of technology as art has always had some relevance because of the role that each plays in both realms and also because both involve the transformation of matter (Barasch, 1990). However, art and technology have diverged over time. One explanation of this divergence is that technology suggests constant change and improvement resulting in progress, while the concept of progress is hardly accepted.
in the arts. New technology always seems to replace old technology, whereas the old arts and the new arts continue to be appreciated and admired at the same time.

In the late 20\textsuperscript{th} century, technology and the arts began to be reunited in the medium of the computer (Barasch, 1990). It became possible to use computers to create musical compositions, design three-dimensional models of commercial products, generate animation, and manipulate images for films. Computers gave rise to art forms that were expressly intended to be experienced through the computer medium itself. Ever since, technology has become indispensable in creating and appreciating the arts. Now it has become not only a tool, but also art itself, as can be seen in such terms as “computer art,” “video art,” “media art,” “new media art,” and “Internet art,” even including “social media art” (Paul, 2003; Greene, 2004; Davis, 2011). In these newly emerged and still emerging art forms, the choice and role of technology in art is so significant to the theme and concept of art in its new forms that technology and the arts have become inseparable.

There is still some resistance to viewing technology as art. For example, John Brockman (1995) talked about the aforementioned “third culture,” in his book, \textit{The Third Culture}, to denote the undesirable offspring of the marriage between the arts and technology. However, it cannot be denied that today, in many cases, the traditional notion of the arts that defines the content of an artwork as being separate from technology is no longer appropriate.

Victoria Vesna (2007), in her edited book, \textit{Database Aesthetics}, took this perspective one step further and concerned herself with “novice media artists and
designers” who often develop a work first, and then turn to thinking about technology such as how to store/deliver/manage artworks. She claimed that this incongruent method “results in many awkward pieces that use preconceived notions of organization that may actually contradict the meaning of the piece itself” (Vesna, 2007). As can be inferred from the title, Database Aesthetics, Vesna searched for the aesthetic nature in technology in order to emphasize technology as art. Similar attempts can be found in Aesthetic Computing edited by Paul Fishwick (2006). In his book, Fishwick explored the concept of aesthetic computing that is interpreted by many other scholars who focused on how aesthetics are interpreted via mathematics and computing. The author not only viewed technology as art, but also put more emphasis on how aesthetics affects computing or computer science. Given these perspectives, we have good reason to view technology not only as a tool, but also as art itself. Just as, more than 40 years ago, Marshall McLuhan (1967) declared that “the medium is the message;” it is not radical to declare “technology is the arts.”

The three approaches to the relationship of technology and the arts explored in this section are not isolated but overlap. They are deeply related to each other, and we should consider all three approaches when we examine technology and the arts. For example, as Pamela Jennings (2000) underlined in New media arts/New funding models, the new media art (technology as art) in the information society (technology as environment) needs a new funding model, a set of funding tools (technology as tool) (Jennings, 2000). One important issue that we must not ignore at this point is how individuals especially in SAOs are perceiving and adopting new technologies.
2.4.3 Technology Adoption

One of the main research questions is how IT, especially the social media, affects the creative vitality of SAOs; therefore, it is important to know how SAOs adopt new technologies. In this section, I review what is generally known about the technology adoption process – how, why, at what rate, and with what attitude people adopt technology. Then, utilizing “innovativeness” as a main criterion, I review the categories of adopters that were developed by many researchers.

*Theory of Technology Adoption and Innovativeness*

The literature on the adoption of technology has a long and impressive history. Among this literature, the widely cited and influential book in the field of the adoption of technology is Everett Rogers’s (2003) *Diffusion of Innovations*. According to Google Scholar (2011), Rogers’s work has been cited 31,402 times to date, August 12, 2011. In his book, Rogers theorizes about many concepts, processes, and stages related to the adoption/diffusion of technology/innovation. He considers technology equivalent to innovation and used the terms interchangeably.

Rogers suggests five characteristics of technology/innovation when adopting, which are (1) relative advantage, (2) compatibility, (3) complexity, (4) trialability, and (5) observability. These characteristics can also be recognized as five perceived attributes of innovations (Rogers, 2003). One of the most important theories by Rogers is the Innovation-Decision Process, which is “a series of choices and actions over time through which an individual or a system evaluates a new idea and decides whether or not to
The five stages of the Innovation-Decision Process are (1) Knowledge of technology, (2) Persuasion: forming an attitude toward the technology, (3) Decision to adopt or reject, (4) Implementation of the new idea, and (5) Confirmation of this decision. This model basically suggests that the adoption of a technology is a process that occurs over time, rather than involving a single step.

Innovativeness is “the degree to which an individual (or other unit of adoption) is relatively earlier in adopting new ideas than other members of a system” (Rogers, 2003, p. 267). That is to say, if one possesses more innovativeness, one can be interpreted as having an “innovative” attitude and would be more likely to adopt an innovation or a technology faster than other members of a system. Rogers’s (1995) measure of innovativeness is referred to as “time of adoption.” He views the speed of adoption as the core platform of innovativeness. Rogers found that when the number of individuals adopting a new technology is plotted on a cumulative frequency basis over time. The resulting distribution is an S-shaped curve, as can be seen in Figure 2.3.

According to Rogers (2003), the S-shaped diffusion curve typically begins to level off after half of the individuals in a social system have adopted an innovation. When adopters are plotted over time on a frequency basis, which is not a cumulative basis, the adopter distribution follows a bell-shaped curve over time, as can be seen in Figure 2.4. By investigating various diffusion literatures, Rogers reached a generalization that a certain percentage of the population readily adopts an innovation, while others will be
less likely to adopt. Starting with this observation, Rogers categorized adopters on the basis of innovativeness.

As can be seen in Figure 2.4, with the criterion of innovativeness, Rogers categorizes adopters of innovations into (1) Innovators, (2) Early Adopters, (3) Early Majority, (4) Late Majority, and (5) Laggards. “Innovators,” those who radically adopt an innovation/technology, account for about 2.5% of the whole population in the system. “Early Adopters” who readily adopt an innovation/technology make up approximately 13.5% of the population. Most people will be under the categories of either “early majority” (34%) or “Late Majority” (34%). “Laggards” who resist an innovation/technology until the very end will make up as much as 16% of the population.
Rogers’s (2003) aforementioned generalizations have been proven over time by researchers in various fields; so they are applicable to the study of innovations in almost any field. Unfortunately, there is limited research that focuses on the attitudes of arts administrators or arts organizations toward technology and how they are adopting technology. In this section, I explore some attitudinal research about innovation and technology that focuses on arts administrators as well as various non-profit organizations.

Lievrouw and Pope’s study (1994) is one of the first, if not the only, innovation diffusion studies that examined the world of the arts. In their article, Contemporary Art as Aesthetic Innovation: Applying the Diffusion Model in the Art World, they investigated...
the popularity of new art and new artists. The authors equate the arts with technology and innovation. They view new art as an aesthetic innovation and they find unique qualities of aesthetic innovation in terms of its diffusion and adoption. For example, if an innovation is too radical relative to the existing system and its norms, its radicalness will generally slow down the diffusion/adoption process. However, the authors observe that the new art must at the same time be somewhat radical, if it is to be popular and to diffuse more rapidly. The authors covertly attribute this uniqueness to the fact that aesthetic innovations are highly observable. They address that “observability may be one of the most powerful incentives for the diffusion of aesthetic innovation” (Lievrouw & Pope, 1994, p. 387).

Rogers links this observability to people’s desire to have higher social status. He points out that “one motivation for many individuals to adopt an innovation is the desire to gain social status” (Rogers, 2003, p. 230). According to Rogers, highly visible innovations are especially likely to be status-conferring. Lievrouw and Pope’s (1994) study and Rogers’s observations regarding status conferral are in line with Pierre Bourdieu’s (1973) framework of “Cultural Capital,” in which people’s artistic preferences are believed to strongly tie in with their social position. Indeed, the arts are a very useful tool to show off one’s social status because social status is highly observable. In fact, I have seen many artists and arts administrators who are overactive to adopt new technologies. Their over-active adoption of new technology can fall into what Rogers calls “overadoption.” According to Rogers, “overadoption may occur because of insufficient knowledge about the new idea on the part of the adopter, an inability to
predict the innovation’s consequences, and/or the status-conferring aspect of a new idea” (Rogers, 2003, p. 232). Overadoption sometimes occurs when some attributes (or sub-attributes such as status conferral) of a technology are perceived as so attractive to an individual that they overrule all other reasonable considerations (Rogers, 2003).

Studies specifically focusing on art administrators’ attitudes toward technology are also rare. Among these studies, two surveys (Pope et al., 1999; and Norris & Grams, 2008) that were reviewed above show that many arts administrators feel the difficulty of adopting the Internet technology into their ongoing practice. In addition to these surveys, a group of graduate students at Carnegie Mellon University researched how arts organizations of various sizes feel about and make decisions about technology. In their report, Technology Motivators and Usage in Not-for-Profit Arts Organizations, Bitar et al. (2007) tried to identify the factors (“motivations” as they call it) that lead arts organizations to decide to adopt information technology.

In collaboration with the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council (GPAC), the co-authors selected about 100 arts organizations that “vary in budget size, technological savvy, artistic discipline, and audience” in the Pittsburgh area (Bitar et al., 2007, p. 5). Through analyzing data they gathered from the sample organizations, the authors identified three key areas as most influential for technology adoption, which are training, planning, and evaluation. They claim that these key areas are important in determining one’s attitude toward existing technology and thus adoption of technology. Around the key areas, the authors also identified motivators that affect the decision-making process. They categorized various motivators into internal and external motivators. The internal
motivators are financial mandates, social mandates, and physical mandates. The external motivators are awareness & knowledge, resources & time constraints, attitudes about technology, sentiments & satisfaction, mission, vision, & values, institutional culture, priorities & values, individual’s identity, balancing art & administration, and organizational identity.

One of the interesting ideas the researchers posed is that they identified two different kinds of decision-making to adopt technology, which are based on “Hunch” and “Crunch.” Decisions by Hunch are based on intuition and assumptions, while decisions by Crunch are based on information acquired from research, including various types of communication. The authors found that many arts organizations have decided on technology adoption or rejection just based on hunches; even the hunches were verifiable without much difficulty. They categorized decisions made through hunches as an Imitative Decision-Making process and decisions made through crunch as a type of Data-Driven Decision-Making process. However, admitting that time and financial constraint may result in the decisions made by hunches, the authors recommend that arts organizations must not rely only on hunches to make decisions.

Bitar et al.’s (2007) study also includes many findings regarding arts administrators’ attitudes toward technology. Among their many discoveries, they found almost everyone (91% ~ 100%) in all of the age groups they interviewed responded that technology is extremely important to today’s society and management of arts organizations. However, the younger generation still was more likely to agree on the significant role of technology. Most importantly, Bitar et al. (2007) found that there is a
common perception in the non-profit cultural sector that SAOs cannot afford additional functions for new technologies. They concluded that this is not true in general, because no organization they have encountered completely lacks resources. They attribute the false assumption to the matter of institutional culture which sets the priority of tasks in the organization.

In addition to their findings regarding the motivators and attitudes toward technology, Bitar et al.'s (2007) report shows much effort to depict the everyday technological struggles in the real nonprofit arts organizations. The concern that they showed about SAOs at first gets smaller and almost invisible in the recommendations part. Their report does not give a detailed picture of how arts administrators adopt technologies and how their attitude affects their adoption of new technologies. Still, their report is successful in giving a general picture of the non-profit cultural sector in terms of technology adoption.

2.5 Summary

Thus far, I have explored four significant keywords to conduct research on SAOs: (1) ecology, (2) creative vitality, (3) entrepreneurship, and (4) technology. Through the literature on the concept of ecology, I found that the concept is not only applicable, but also very necessary to frame the dynamic nature of SAOs which interacts with various agents in the arts sector, including the support systems for the arts.

Based on my review of the literature, I define the concept of creative vitality in this dissertation as evidence of creating, disseminating, validating, and supporting artistic
endeavor in the everyday life of an SAO. The literature on entrepreneurship unveiled that entrepreneurship is an efficient concept to explain the passionate works regarding people in and around SAOs: advocates of SAOs as well as artists in SAOs. Entrepreneurship is a crucial feature to survive the ecology of SAOs. We also observed that the dynamic changes of technology have walked us through changes in perspectives on technology in the arts and in arts organizations. This requires arts administrators to consider all three approaches when dealing with technology in their arts administration.

Two historical perspectives of technology (pessimistic and optimistic) and three approaches toward technology (as environment, as a tool, and as art) have been suggested to understand various ways to view technology in the arts. Given that the three approaches of technology describe the relationship between technology and the arts, innovativeness boosts the entrepreneurship of SAOs and eventually leads to accepting a new technology.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

As stated in Chapter 1, there is little consensus on the definition of an SAO. Consequently, there is little reliable data about SAOs, although much effort has been made to improve the quality and availability of data regarding arts organizations in general. This is evidenced in “the enhanced quality . . . of cultural data in the Census of Business; the Urban Institute’s success in building data bases out of IRS Form 990s; and Princeton University’s establishment of the Cultural Policy and the Arts Data Archives (CPANDA)” (DiMaggio, 2006, p. 453). As DiMaggio (2006) has also pointed out, current research has not paid enough attention to “embedded and minimalist arts organizations” (that I take as SAOs) that involve a significant amount of “interrelationships with other sectors” (p. 434). The lack of data regarding SAOs indicates that quantitative research alone is insufficient to fully grasp the picture of SAOs. Therefore, I take a qualitative approach, using the ecological perspective, and focus on listening to the voice of SAOs.

In Chapter 2, I suggested that the dynamic nature of SAOs can be captured by using the ecological perspective. The ecology of SAOs is composed of unique cases of
individual SAOs and their experiences, which collectively construct their dynamic phenomena and ecosystems. In essence, the ecological perspective focuses on the influence of environmental factors at multiple levels that shape individual or organizational behavior. This perspective helps us appreciate the holistic treatment of the ecology of SAOs and the impact of entrepreneurship and technology in constructing the reality of experience. It also helps us not to miss the uniqueness of individual cases (Lieblich et al., 1998; Shkedi, 2005). I believe that the complicated and rich phenomena of SAOs’ life and experiences can best be captured by tracing the interactions and relationships among the agents within the ecology of SAOs and so that they are better represented in stories and narratives.

The research design for this dissertation combines a preliminary study and a two-tier qualitative research method: For the preliminary study, I focused on operationalizing the definition of SAOs. For the first tier, I conducted the method of the Multiple Case Narrative on arts administrators at 13 selected SAOs in Columbus, Ohio. For the second tier, I conducted a year-long in-depth case study on a small theatre, Available Light, in Columbus. In addition, I complemented these two research methods with small-scale qualitative research tools.

3.1 Preliminary Study: Defining Small Arts Organizations

Considering that small arts organizations are not firmly defined, and that the majority of missing data about arts organizations concerns SAOs, the logical starting point of research on SAOs should be to operationalizing the definition of an SAO.
Therefore, before conducting my main research, I attempted to operationalize the definition of an SAO. In Chapter 4, I explored various definitions of SAOs in both non-profit and for-profit arts sectors and across various disciplines of the arts through extensive personal communications with professionals in the arts world. I conducted interviews via telephone calls, emails, and one-on-one meetings, from December 2008 to May 2009, and in some cases multiple contacts with a particular individual. This preliminary study has been published in the *Journal of Arts Management, Society, and the Arts* under the title, “How ‘Small’ Are Small Arts Organizations?” (2010).

The professionals with whom I communicated included Alexa Antopol, research manager at OPERA America; Susan Austin, membership assistant director at American Association of Community Theatre (AACT); Julie Crawford, executive director of AACT; Ruby Classen, coordinator of grants & services at Greater Columbus Arts Council (GCAC); Robin Pfeil, interim director of grants & services at GCAC; Kellee Edusei, membership manager at DanceUSA; Sunil Iyengar, director of research and analysis at National Endowment for the Arts (NEA); Dan Katona, director of organizational services at Ohio Arts Council (OAC); Philip Katz, assistant director for research at American Association of Museums (AAM); John Munger, director of research and information at DanceUSA; Ilana Rose, management programs research associate at Theatre Communication Group (TCG); Sandi Smith, senior officer of community research and grants management at the Columbus Foundation; Vanessa White, director of community engagement and strategic initiatives at Fine Arts Fund in
Cincinnati; and Jan Wilson, director of Knowledge Center at League of American Orchestra.

Through this preliminary study, I concluded that it is necessary to use multiple indicators of “smallness” to define small arts organizations. Then, given the aim of this dissertation to find ways to support SAOs, I narrowed down the indicators to select SAOs for the main study to two indicators: fewer than five paid staff members (representing human resources) or an annual budget (representing financial resources) less than $100,000.

3.2 The Multiple Case Narrative: Mapping The Dynamic Nature of SAOs

After my preliminary study, I went on to my main field research to understand the dynamic nature of SAOs in more depth. This main field research consists of two tier studies. For the first tier study, I conducted a Multiple Case Narrative with 13 selected arts administrators of SAOs in the Columbus area. This method is especially designed to understand the dynamic nature of, and relationships among SAOs and their external environments, including their support systems. The Multiple Case Narrative is similar to the collective case study which presents and compares several single case narratives (Shkedi, 2005). While the collective case study utilizes a variety of triangulation data – observations, interviews, and documents – the Multiple Case Narrative utilizes mainly interviews. The observations and documents are considered secondary data.

The Multiple Case Narrative method is typically used when researchers are interested in systematically comparing cases, but want to maintain a qualitative, multi-
aspect, in-depth study of the cases (Shkedi, 2005). The Multiple Case Narrative is a good associational approach that includes a large number of case narratives, emphasizing broad cross-narrative patterns. This protects the research from the idiosyncrasies that may appear in a single case narrative (Shkedi, 2005).

The purpose of using the narrative research approach is to describe and explain phenomena narrated by the participants, and to develop grounded theory regarding these phenomena (Shkedi, 2005). In narrative studies, there are usually no à priori hypotheses. The specific directions of a study usually emerge from reading the collected materials and hypotheses (Lieblich et al., 1998; Shkedi, 2005).

### 3.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

I used the Multiple Case Narrative by conducting several rounds of interviews with 13 arts administrators in SAOs in the Columbus area. The interviews were semi-structured, in that I retained the discretion to loosely follow the prepared questions, while adjusting them according to each interviewee’s response. Through conducting semi-structured interviews with arts administrators in SAOs, I examined the issues and needs of SAOs focusing on their day-to-day management and explored their dynamic relationships with other SAOs and other agents in the creative sector, as well as with their audiences and support systems.

On June 7, 2009, the set of instructions and possible questions for the interview were reviewed by my colleague, Connie De Jong, who is the CEO of Global Gallery, an SAO in Columbus. De Jong provided the general perspective of arts administrators of an
SAO in Columbus and helped me remove some questions that were based on assumptions from my managerial experiences in Korea. The final set of questions (ver. 3.8) consists of seven categories: (1) Face Sheets of Interviewee, (2) Face Sheets of SAO, (3) Goals and Issues of SAO, (4) The Management of SAO, (5) Entrepreneurship/Leadership in SAO, (6) IT in SAO, and (7) SAO and its Support Systems (see Appendix 1). Sub-questions were developed in each category to cut back on the time of the interviews. However, they were open-ended and were frequently adjusted for each interview. They were constantly modified and updated during the rounds of interviews.

As the Multiple Case Narrative method is based on a purposeful sample of selected new informants, the interviewees in this study were carefully selected with the help of Dr. Wyszomirski, my academic advisor, and Dr. Lawson, my dissertation committee member, emeritus director of the Ohio Arts Council. After the first round of interviews, additional interviewees were recruited with advice from Dr. Wyszomirski, Dr. Lawson, and Dia Foley, the director of the Office of Grants Administration in the Ohio Arts Council.

The first round of interviews was conducted with four interviewees between July 30th, 2009 and September 10th, 2009. The interviewees were Cindy Davis of Phoenix Rising Printmaking Cooperative (July 30th, 2009), Jennifer Barlup of Madlab Theater and Galley (August 20th, 2009), Betsy Gillespie of Westerville Symphony (August 31st, 2009), and Cathy Mast Kane of Landmark Foundation (September 10th, 2009). These interviews were then analyzed and the questions were updated and sometimes reformulated and
combined to better elicit information relevant to my conceptual framework and to avoid any redundancies.

Next, multiple indicators of “smallness” in arts organizations were identified to distinguish various types of SAOs, whose possible combinations can enhance our ability to recognize both the uniqueness and sub-categories of arts organizations that currently are grouped into a single category of “small arts organizations.” Then, the multiple indicators of “smallness” were utilized to develop a multidimensional classification scheme of SAOs and arrive at four possible types of SAOs: Emerging, Self-Subsidizing, Cooperative, and Civic.

Based on my categorization of SAOs, the interviewees in the second round were selected to distribute the number of interviewees evenly in each category of SAOs, which is designed to enhance the validity of my study. The second set of interviews were conducted between November 17\textsuperscript{th} and December 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2009. The interviewees were TalleBamazi of Kiaca Gallery (November 17\textsuperscript{th}, 2009), Matt Slaybaugh of Available Light Theatre (November 20\textsuperscript{th}, 2009), Alfred Dove of Dove Project (December 1\textsuperscript{st}, 2009), AbdouKounta of Thiossane West African Dance Institute (December 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2009), Suzan Bradford Kounta of Lincoln Theatre and Thiossane West African Dance Institute (December 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2009), and Heidi Schmenk of Glass Axis (December 2\textsuperscript{nd}, 2009). Based on these interviews, I identified three sub-types in the civic type of SAOs: Religion-based, Ethnic-based, and Region-based. Religion-based SAOs usually originate in a religious group, such a church choir or a liturgical singing and dance group. Ethnic-based SAOs
usually originated in arts groups that represent a particular ethnicity. Region-based SAOs identify themselves by the region in which they are located.

A third round of interviews was conducted since then, which led to including four more SAOs and follow-up interviews. These four SAOs were added to illustrate the diversity of SAOs that I observed as I developed my categorization of SAOs. The new interviewees included Adam Brouillette in Couchfire (January 24th, 2011), Sandra Rolland in Spirit Field Production (Jan 28, 2011), Jared Mahone in the Jared Mahone Bandand the J.A.M. Sessions (email communications between March 16th 2011 and January 28th, 2011 and follow-up in-person interview on March 25th, 2011), and members of Cloudhaus (April 3rd, 2011). There were also follow-up interviews by phone and email, and interviews in person with Jennifer Barlup (January 26th, 2011), Emily Hickman in Westerville Symphony (March 1st, 2011), Kathy Kane in Landmark Foundation (January 24th, 2011), and Alfred Dove in the Dove Project (January 26th, 2011).

Altogether, I included a total of 13 SAOs, two of which were the Emerging type, three were the Self-subsidizing type, three were the Cooperative type, and four were the Civic type. Of the Civic type of SAOs, one was religion-based, one was ethnic-based, and two were region-based. While my categorizations indicate each SAO’s primary inclination according to what I observed, the types and sub-types tend to overlap quite a bit, and may lead other observers to identify them as a different type than I did in my work.
3.2.2 Secondary Data: Documents and Observations

Secondary data, including documents and observations, were also utilized. After the first interview, I requested any documents the interviewees had created, pertaining to the following subjects: (1) Vision and Planning, (2) Board Governance and Structure, (3) Financial Management and Operations, (4) Management and Human Resources, (5) Fundraising and Resource Development, (6) Programs and Evaluation, and (7) Public Relations and Community Collaboration. The interviewees were asked not to “rush to create” any documents they did not have, in order to avoid manipulating their current status. The obtained documents were analyzed to complement the results of the interviews.

The observations were done by using the method of virtual ethnography, which will be explained in the next section in more detail. I participated in various events, including shows, fundraising events, and weekly meetings, when I took notes of my observations. I also actively observed and analyzed the online activities in the established websites of SAOs and their social networking tools, such as FaceBook and Twitter.

The narratives and findings from the interviews, documents, and observations were analyzed. For data analysis, cross-case synthesis was applied, which is a method performed when there are multiple case studies that can be cross-referenced. The individual case studies that are used in this technique can be independent research studies that have been previously conducted by other researchers or a predesigned part of the same study. The technique treats each individual case narrative as a separate study and
aggregates findings across a series of individual studies (Yin, 2009, p. 156). The analysis and results of the Multiple Case Narrative are discussed mostly in Chapter 5 and also in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, along with the findings of the in-depth case study on a single SAO.

### 3.3 The In-Depth Case Study – Understanding the Internal Dynamics of an SAO

The in-depth case study on a particular type of an SAO is designed to further elaborate on understanding the internal dynamics of SAOs. While conducting Multiple Case Narrative research on 13 SAOs in Columbus, I selected one company among them, Available Light Theatre (AVLT), and conducted an in-depth case study on it. According to the categorization of SAOs that I developed, AVLT was an “Emerging Type.” I selected AVLT based on the following considerations. First, as an emerging SAO, AVLT showed the most intensive dynamism, allowing me to observe more meaningful changing issues of SAOs within a limited time.

Entrepreneurship and technology, the two internal factors that I believe can shift the balancing point of balance between the mission and money of SAOs, seems to be most obvious in the emerging type of SAOs. Indeed, an emerging type like AVLT was an excellent example to see how entrepreneurship is enhancing the SAO’s overall artistic creativity and financial sustainability. Second, AVLT was the most suitable case for the emerging type of an SAO. It is one of the most successful SAOs that has emerged in the local Columbus community in the last three years. The members of AVLT are enthusiastic to grow both in size and artistically, which makes the company a perfect
emerging type. Lastly, AVLT was the most accessible. During the first phase of my research, I succeeded in establishing rapport with several members of AVLT, ranging from an intern to the artistic director and board members. They fully understood and were supportive of my research. Especially the artistic director of AVLT was very cooperative, as he also wanted to provide any kind of written instructions (or text) regarding how an SAO can successfully maintain creative vitality, so that other SAOs do not make the same mistakes that he and they have made.

3.3.1 Non-Participant Observation and Semi-Structured Interviews

The main data collection approach adopted in this second-tier study was non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews (Yin, 2009). Non-participant observation is a method where researchers ‘stand to one side’ and view the experience or the environment. In this research, I, the observer, mainly used electronic equipment such as a voice recorder and a video camera to record the meetings among the participants and took fieldnotes during all of the events, including company member meetings, board member meetings, volunteer meetings, as well as production meetings and rehearsals, for over a year (March 2010 ~ June 2011). AVLT’s season starts every July; however, the research period was set to start in March to observe their seasonal transition. As non-participant observation cannot provide any kind of cognitive information to the participants such as attitudes, beliefs, motivation, or perceptions, this was overcome by conducting interviews with the participants subsequent to the observation.
More importantly, a semi-structured interview was conducted with individuals involved in the SAO separately. As the purpose of this in-depth case study was to understand the dynamic relationships among individuals regarding an SAO, the participants included not only company members or board members, but also various individuals in the support systems of the SAO, including guest artists, audiences, donors, volunteers, and individuals in public agencies and supporting companies.

There were two different kinds of interviews in terms of what questions to ask. First, the retrospective interviews mainly focused on rebuilding the history of the organization. This helped reconstruct what path an SAO has taken to achieve its current status. In the case of AVLT, its current status is a huge success in terms of financial stability and public relations. AVLT members have also overcome a significant failure that even resulted in putting an end to BlueForms Theatre, which was the (predecessor of Available Light Theatre) and creating a whole new company. The retrospective interviews with the participants offered a good chance to discuss the life and death of an SAO.

Next, the interviews were conducted to disclose the relationships and collaboration among the participants. In this phase, unstructured interviews such as casual conversations, as well as semi-structured interviews, were utilized. In addition to the interviews, documents and observations were actively incorporated as primary data to triangulate the data. Again, selection of the participants was not limited to the insiders, but rather, was open to individuals who are related to the target SAO in any way.
The interviewees were selected as deemed necessary, after direct observation. Some of the interviewees were selected using the snowball method, a nonprobability sampling method that is used when the participants are rare. The snowball method was helpful to overcome the difficulties of locating desired respondents by counting on referrals from the initial participants to generate additional participants. This method offered chances to find unobservable and unexpected relationships of the SAOs. Questions for the interviewees were mainly about their SAO or their relationship to other individuals involved in it. Questions were refined from the first-tier study and geared more toward examining the factors of entrepreneurship, technology, and support systems of the SAO.

### 3.3.2 Virtual Ethnography

Another important method used in this in-depth case study was virtual ethnography. Basically, the second-tier study is an ethnography of an SAO. Ethnography is “a branch of anthropology that deals with the scientific description of individual human societies” (Collins English Dictionary, 2009). Although it has been utilized in both a qualitative research process (one conducts an ethnography) and product (the outcome of this process is an ethnography) whose aim is cultural interpretation (Geertz, 1973), ethnography has been applied to any qualitative research project, where the purpose is to provide a detailed, in-depth description of everyday life and practice. By using the method of ethnography, the ethnographer creates descriptions of individual or collective subjectivities for the purpose of understanding different cultures (Rybas & Gajjala, 2007).
As an extended form of ethnography, in simple terms, virtual ethnography is the process of conducting and constructing an ethnography using the virtual, online environment as the site of the research, such as the company’s website and social media sites (Hine, 2000). In this paper, by exploring the virtual environment, I focus on the practice of entrepreneurship and use of new technology, and how these enhance the dynamic and creative nature of SAOs. Greschke (2007) stated that virtual ethnography should not be limited to “screen research.” The researcher must combine research on the Internet with physical observation of the participants to get a full sense of how the participants’ activities via the Internet are a part of their real lives. Therefore, I have actively combined virtual ethnography with in-person interviews and observations of the participants.

AVLT heavily depends on web-based applications to compensate for its lack of human and financial resources. For example, other than its established website, www.avltheatre.com, the SAO has two web-based project management tools, one only for company members (Basecamp.com) and the other for everyone related to AVLT in any way (Backpackit.com). Members of AVLT communicate via these web-based project management tools. They also have actively used various free web-based managerial applications, such as Doodle.com, to schedule their events and meetings. In addition, they use an online bookkeeping tool, Quickbook.com, and an online survey tool, Surveymonkey.com, and heavily utilize a wide range of social media, including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Flicker. As I requested permission and was allowed to have access to all of these websites, web-based applications and social media, I was able
to observe and analyze AVLT’s activities and records on these virtual realms. In addition, the organization-related emails between participants were included as part of the data collection in order to arrive at a picture of the collaboration both among members and with the community that was as detailed as possible. To do that, members of AVLT copied to me all of their email communications regarding AVLT, upon my request.

3.3.3 Complementary Quantitative Research Tools

To acquire a holistic understanding of the internal dynamics of an SAO, I also used quantitative data in order to complement the aforementioned qualitative research methods. For example, to understand how much time and effort members devoted to AVLT, I designed a “Workload Survey,” following *Real Managers* (1988) by Fred Luthans, Richard M. Yodgetts and Stuart A. Rosenkrantz. The basic tool was to check the calendar as seen in Figure 3.1. I asked company members to fill in, on a blank calendar, how much time they spent working for the company and briefly describe their activity during an eight-week period. Additionally, to encourage members’ commitment to the project and to confirm their entries, a supplementary phone (or Short Message Service when not responding to my call) survey was conducted with each participant twice a week during the same time period. In this supplementary survey, I basically asked members the following three questions: (1) What were you doing in the last 30 minutes? (2) How long had you been doing it? and (3) What are you going to do in the next 30 minutes?
Another complementary quantitative research method was an online survey designed to understand how audiences perceive certain programs and policies of AVLT. The survey was conducted through an online survey application, Surveymonkey.com, using AVLT’s own account. It was mainly comprised of questions asking about audience experiences of AVLT. These questions are provided in Appendix A.
3.4 Amalgamation of the Multiple Case Narrative and the In-Depth Case Study

The first-tier study, a Multiple Case Narrative, was designed to map the wide range of SAOs and the relationships among them, including their support systems; the second-tier study, an in-depth case study on an SAO, was incorporated to understand the dynamic relationship and collaborations among individuals involved in (or related to) an SAO. Thus, the first method was to understand the external factors of SAOs, and the second method was to understand the internal factors of an SAO. It can also be said that the first was to understand the wide spectrum of various SAOs, and the second was to understand the dynamics within an SAO. The research process of the two studies is shown in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 Visualization of the research process
Both studies were then cross-referenced and analyzed along the identified themes, mainly the entrepreneurship, the technology, and the support systems of the SAOs. As a widely used approach to qualitative analysis, the thematic analysis helped me gain a holistic understanding of the dynamic ecology of SAOs.

As the first step of the thematic analysis, I identified proto-themes by reviewing the data collected through both studies. I first identified current issues and needs of SAOs which differed from those of large- and midsized arts organizations. I also looked into the relationships among SAOs, with larger arts organizations, and with the local community, including with their audiences and support systems. I identified that an individual’s entrepreneurial practices in managing an SAO have a significant impact. I also identified adopting new technologies is a key to understanding the entrepreneurship and innovativeness of an SAO. Finally, I identified that the practice of entrepreneurship and use of new technology can be boosted by various support systems.

Along the three identified themes – (1) Leadership/Entrepreneurship, (2) Technology, and (3) Support Systems – as three key levers that move SAOs along the balancing point between their mission and their money(financial stability), I re-examined the data for each theme and attempted to find the missing elements in the ecology of SAOs. This led me to identify new approaches to supporting the creative vitality of SAOs.
CHAPTER 4

DEFINITIONS: HOW SMALL ARE SMALL ARTS ORGANIZATIONS?

In this chapter, as the first step toward establishing a theoretical foundation for a discussion of SAOs, I operationalize the definition of an SAO. The lack of studies on SAOs is basically owing to the fact that there is no consensus on the definition of an SAO. To be more precise, we do not know how small a small arts organization should be in order to qualify as an SAO. Therefore, with little consensus on how small is small, SAOs have been overlooked.

This chapter explores the various meanings and manifestations of “smallness” across the creative sector. The data are gathered through extensive personal communications with research managers, directors, and other administrators in arts agencies and national arts service associations, such as a state arts agency (Ohio Arts Council, OAC), a city arts agency (Greater Columbus Arts Council, GCAC), and national membership organizations such as Theatre Communications Group (TCG), League of American Orchestras (LAO), Dance USA, North American Performing Arts Managers and Agents (NAPAMA), Opera America (OA), and American Association of Museums (AAM).
4.1 How “Small” Is Small?

Among the rare literature on SAOs, in 2001, when the OAC conducted an extensive survey of arts organizations in the state of Ohio, it made a special effort to include SAOs, recognizing that “information about small arts organizations is essential to the blueprint” of the arts world. The agency categorized SAOs as those with an annual budget of less than $25,000. It also developed an extensive directory of more than four hundred SAOs listed by geographic region and specific art discipline (Ohio Arts Council, 2001c). According to OAC’s findings, many SAOs are driven by a single passionate and highly committed individual and most are nonprofit entities, although some are small for-profit businesses operating at a financial risk. The OAC also concluded that it is time consuming to build an audience, because initial interest in SAOs diminishes over time. Finally, the agency found that most SAOs promoted their events through word of mouth (Ohio Arts Council, 2001d).

Like OAC, many agencies and associations have tried to define SAOs. Although distinctions are made according to budget size, there is no generally agreed upon standard for defining SAOs across disciplines; sometimes there are even differences within a specific discipline. In the following discussion, I will explore various operational definitions of smallness across different sectors (for profit and non-profit) and arts disciplines.

A discrepancy can be found in the definition of SAOs in terms of budget size (revenue or receipt size), especially between the for-profit sector’s view articulated by the
US Small Business Administration (SBA) and the non-profit sector’s view used by state and local arts agencies. Significant variation is evident even within the non-profit sector. Moreover, the differences exhibited among the national associations representing different arts disciplines are even more pronounced.

4.1.1 The For-Profit Sector

The legislation that founded the US Small Business Administration (SBA) in 1953 provides an official definition of a small business. The Small Business Act of 1953 states that a small business is “one which is independently owned and operated and which is not dominant in its field of operation” (p. 6). To allow for industry differences, the exact numerical standard for “small” was later determined administratively by Small Business Size Regulations (13 CFR §121). The SBA established a table of size standards using numerical indicators such as the number of employees and average annual receipts of a business concern. According to the Small Business Act, the SBA can adjust the small business size standards based on the recommendations proposed by other Federal agencies. These numerical standards vary across all industries from one to forty million dollars and from five to 700 employees. If an arts organization fits the SBA standard of a small business, it can qualify for many programs administered by the SBA, including the loan program.

The SBA regulates and defines small businesses in arts industries as those organizations which have less than seven million dollars for their annual receipts. The SBA’s standards focus on for-profit businesses and are not designed for non-profit
organizations. Therefore, the relatively large receipt standard of up to seven million dollars is likely to include entertainment and media businesses and other copyright-based industries where large corporations can operate larger budgets.

4.1.2 The Non-Profit Sector

Many public arts agencies, at the state- or local levels, have recognized the significance of SAOs and have tried to classify and define them for programmatic and eligibility purposes. Nevertheless, many still do not have a concrete definition of SAOs and feel they are “grasping in the dark when it comes to small arts organizations” (Ruby Classen, personal communication, May 8, 2009). For example, the Greater Columbus Arts Council (GCAC) has offered a number of programs to support arts organizations in the Columbus metropolitan area regardless of size. SAOs have frequently taken advantage of these programs, often because they have few internal resources of their own and because these programs are mostly free of charge. Thus, GCAC serves SAOs even though the agency does not have a specific category for them (Robin Pfeil, March 19, 2009 & Ruby Classen, May 8, 2009, personal communication).

Although some arts agencies use budget size as a criterion for SAOs, this criterion varies considerably. According to the Director of Community Engagement and Strategic Initiatives at Fine Arts Fund (FAF) in Cincinnati, FAF does not have an explicit standard for SAOs, but considers arts organizations with annual budgets under $100,000 as SAOs (Vanessa White, personal communication, February 17, 2009). Similarly, the Los Angeles County Arts Commission (2004, p. 1) also classifies arts organizations with
annual budgets of less than $100,000 as SAOs. Alternatively, the Ohio Arts Council defines an SAO as (1) an organization with a budget of less than $30,000 (which was updated recently from $25,000) (Dan Katona, personal communication, May 8, 2009) that is (2) a non-profit (or “non-profit” in intent) arts organization, and (3) not part of a university or college.

![Diagram](image.png)

Figure 4.1 Examples of official definitions of SAOs in terms of budget

Figure 4.1 above compares the official definitions of SAOs according to SBA, OAC, FAF, and LACAC. By comparison, we can see that different public agencies have different standards for identifying SAOs. Note that these public agencies rely on receipts,
revenue, and budget to determine the financial size of an SAO. Strictly speaking, each of these measures is subtly different from one another. However, for our purposes, receipts, revenue, and budget are comparable enough to illustrate the discrepancy of size standards used in defining SAOs.

The issue regarding the official definitions of SAOs shown in Figure 4.1 is that these public agencies crudely bundle up the wide range of SAOs based only on a single standard, which does not reflect the variety of SAOs. This raises the need to explore definitions of SAOs across different disciplines.

4.2 SAOs Defined By Various Disciplines

National arts service associations have tried to define SAOs in their particular disciplines. They have also tried to protect the interest of both the public and member organizations. Similar to the Small Business Administration, Ohio Arts Council, Los Angeles County Arts Commission and Fine Arts Fund in Cincinnati, most national arts service associations also depend on a single variable (financial standing) to define SAOs. This section reviews the cases of various national arts service associations. These include the Theatre Communications Group (TCG) and the American Association of Community Theatres (AACT) for theatres, the League of American Orchestras (LAO) for orchestras, DanceUSA for dance companies, Opera America for opera companies, and the American Association of Museums (AAM) for museums.
4.2.1 Theatre

Historically, many concepts of small theatres have been introduced, such as “Little Theatre,” “Community Theatre,” and “Pro-am Theatre.” Rather than as administrative strategies that deal with issues and challenges of small theatres, these concepts were developed as part of experimental and civic theatre movements. For more administrative issues, Theatre Communications Group can be a good source. TCG represents approximately 500 nonprofit theatre organizations that range in size from budgets of $50,000 to more than $40 million. As the response to the member theatre’s specific needs, TCG categorizes them into six budget groups as listed in Table 4.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Budget Size</th>
<th>Number of Theatres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>$50,000-$499,999</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>$500,000-$999,999</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>$1,000,000-$2,999,999</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>$3,000,000-$4,999,999</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 5</td>
<td>$5,000,000-$9,999,999</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 6</td>
<td>$10,000,000 and above</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 Theatre company size groupings by TCG

As can be seen in Table 4.1, TCG identifies its member theatres with Group 1 representing theatres with the smallest budgets and Group 6 representing those with the largest budgets. Theatre Fact 2007, TCG’s annual report, shows that most of TCG’s
research includes an analysis of participants by these budget groups, which illuminates differences between the budget groups in terms of staffing, number of productions, etc. (Theatre Communication Group, 2008). While TCG does have grouping criteria that categorize theatres into six groups, TCG does not have a specific focus on small theatres and even excludes theatres with a budget less than $50,000. As can be seen in the membership eligibility page in the website of TCG, minimum operating expenses for members should be at least $50,000 in the most recently completed fiscal year. For a partial reason, the Management Programs Research Associate at TCG told me that there are many regional memberships which include small theatres with budgets less than $50,000 (Ilana Rose, personal communication, December 5, 2008).

The American Association of Community Theatres includes many smaller theatres that TCG does not include. According to the AACT website, AACT categorizes its members into seven groups based on the annual budget as listed in Table 4.2 (Julie Crawford, personal communication, May 22, 2009).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Budget</th>
<th>Number of Theatres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>under $10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$10,000-$24,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$25,000-$99,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$100,000-$249,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$250,000-$499,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$500,000-$999,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$1,000,000 and over</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 Community theatre size groupings by AACT
ACCT considers theatres with an annual budget under $100,000 to be small. However, although the association categorizes theatre size by the theatre’s annual budget as seen in its Membership Categories, there are other considerations such as how many shows the theatre produces per year or how many volunteers the theatre has. For example, a theatre with many volunteers can produce as much as one with a larger budget. Therefore, AACT considers a theatre that produces three shows or less per year as being “really small” (Julie Crawford, personal communication, May 22, 2009).

4.2.2 Orchestra

Like TCG and AACT, the League of American Orchestras categorizes its member orchestras using budget size. LAO encompasses nearly 1,000-member symphony-, chamber-, youth-, and collegiate orchestras of all sizes. It categorizes its member orchestras based on their annual budget, which determines League Meeting Groups so that orchestras may meet with their peer orchestras and share similar issues. In the fiscal year of 2006-07, LAO categorized its member organizations into eight groups as can be seen in Table 4.3 (Julie Crawford, personal communication, May 22, 2009).

Among the groups, LAO usually includes Groups 7 and 8 in the smaller budget orchestra category, which is still relative. LAO’s director of Knowledge Center explained to me that the meeting groups are more of an internal league categorization (Jan Wilson, personal communication, December 2, 2008). It is a way for them to group peer orchestras with each other for more specific issues and challenges. According to Wilson,
smaller orchestras are different from medium-size and large orchestras mainly in terms of resources that are available to them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Budget Size</th>
<th>Number of Orchestras</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group 1</td>
<td>$14,400,000 and greater</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 2</td>
<td>$6,000,000 to $14,399,000</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>$2,800,000 to $5,999,000</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>$1,820,000 to $2,799,000</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 5</td>
<td>$1,000,000 to $1,819,000</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 6</td>
<td>$500,000 to $999,000</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 7</td>
<td>$150,000 to $499,000</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 8</td>
<td>Less than $149,000</td>
<td>657</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 Orchestra size groupings by League of American Orchestras

Although not a specific discipline as TCG or LAO, North American Performing Arts Managers and Agents (NAPAMA) also lay out a category to group their members as organizations with annual contract fees under $250,000, $250,001 - $750,000, and over $750,000 as can be seen in Table 4.4 (NAPAMA website).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual Contract Fee</th>
<th>Membership Dues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under $250,000</td>
<td>$150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$250,001 - $750,000</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over $750,000</td>
<td>$400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 NAPAMA’s membership dues by annual contract fee
NAPAMA does not show specific interest in small organizations; however, it is interesting to note that it charges individual members and self-managed artists a membership fee of $150, which is the same as that for organizations with an annual contract fee under $250,000. That is, NAPAMA treats organizations with annual contract fees under $250,000 equally as individual members.

4.2.3 Opera

Opera America also categorizes its member opera companies by budget size. We can find the most recent attendance figures, operating budgets, trends in giving and public funding, and numbers of performances and productions in Opera America’s *Annual Field Report 2006*. The report identifies 56 US opera companies with budgets ranging from $183,000 to $62,000,000. These companies are then analyzed by “levels,” which are based on the operating expenses or unrestricted revenue for the year 2006, as seen in Table 4.5 (Opera America Annual Field Report, 2006).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Budget Size</th>
<th>No. of Companies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>$10,000,000 and above</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>$3,000,000 to $9,999,999</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>$1,000,000 to $2,999,999</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>Under $1,000,000</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 Opera company size groupings by Opera America
4.2.4 Dance

DanceUSA categorizes dance companies by budget size, as well. As can be seen in the membership page in the website of DanceUSA, members are categorized into eight groups based on the operating revenue as seen in Table 4.6. According to Kellee Edusei, the membership manager at DanceUSA, this categorization is more of practical use to manage the association’s membership (personal communication, May 22, 2009).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Operating Revenue Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Up to $100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$100,001 ~ 200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$200,001 ~ 400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$400,001 ~ 600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$600,000 ~ $999,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>$1,000,000 ~ $2,999,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>$3,000,000 ~ $7,999,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>$8,000,000 or more</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6 Dance company size groupings by DanceUSA

John Munger, the Director of Research and Information at DanceUSA, tried to qualify the dance companies in the US into small, medium, and large sizes. In his article, “Dancing with dollars in the millennium” (2001), he set different budget categorizations for ballet companies and modern dance companies. As can be seen in Table 4.7, large ballet companies have budgets in excess of $5 million and medium ballet companies have
budgets between $1 million and $5 million. According to Munger, small ballets have budgets under $1 million and generally take two forms, which can be classified as “semiprofessional” and “chamber ballets.” These have small casts of six to ten dancers and only two or three administrators (Munger, personal communication, May 29, 2009).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company Size</th>
<th>Budget Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>$5,000,000 and greater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>$1,000,000 ~$5,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Less than $1,000,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 Ballet company size groupings (Munger, 2001)

As for modern dance companies, Munger identifies large companies to have budgets in excess of $860,000 and medium companies to have budgets between $250,000 and $860,000, which automatically sets small companies to have budgets under $250,000. However, they do not have comprehensive data to address most small modern dance companies (Munger, personal communication, May 29, 2009). Table 4.8 below shows Munger’s (2001) size groupings for modern dance companies.
Table 4.8 Modern dance company size groupings (Munger, 2001)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company Size</th>
<th>Budget Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large</td>
<td>$860,000 and greater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>$250,000 ~ $860,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Less than $250,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Munger’s identifications, ballet dance companies in Levels 1 to 5 and modern dance companies in Levels 1, 2, and part of Level 3 would be considered small dance companies in DanceUSA. Munger shared his updated categorization of dance organizations in America using the following variables to categorize dance companies: (1) operating expense budget, (2) genre (e.g., ballet, modern/contemporary, tap, culturally specific, jazz, etc.), (3) number of dancers, (4) number of staff, (5) impact of individual donations, (6) impact of touring, (7) whether dancers are salaried employees or free-lance contractors, and (8) founding date (duration of company) (personal communication, May 29, 2009). Using these variables, Munger examined various dance companies and “sorted them into the near vicinity of category-separations that were used in the past. [His] experience has taught [him] for nearly two decades that it has been most useful in general to categorize dance companies by a combination of genre and expense budget” (personal communication, May 29, 2009). Table 4.9 shows the most updated (as of May, 2009) categories of American dance companies formulated by Munger.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company Size</th>
<th>Budget Size</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Notes by Munger (2009)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Large Companies</td>
<td>~ $15,000,000</td>
<td>Any Genre</td>
<td>There are only about seven or eight and they are all ballet except Alvin Ailey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Ballet</td>
<td>$14,9000,000 ~ $6,000,000</td>
<td>Ballet</td>
<td>The $6 million lower limit is now in question because of the large number of companies reducing their budgets as a result of the financial catastrophes of the 2000s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Modern</td>
<td>$6,000,000 ~ $1,500,000</td>
<td>Modern</td>
<td>Large Modern is “smaller” than “Large Ballet” and same as “Medium Ballet” in budget size.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Ballet</td>
<td>$6,000,000 ~ $1,500,000</td>
<td>Ballet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Ballet</td>
<td>$1,500,000 ~</td>
<td>Ballet</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Modern</td>
<td>$1,500,000 ~ $500,000</td>
<td>Modern</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Modern</td>
<td>$500,000 ~</td>
<td>Modern</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Culturally Specific</td>
<td>~ $500,000</td>
<td>Culturally Specific</td>
<td>Only a handful of the approximately 80 dance companies in the US with budgets over $1 million are genres other than ballet or modern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Culturally Specific</td>
<td>$499,000 ~ $100,000</td>
<td>Culturally Specific</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Small Companies</td>
<td>$100,000 ~</td>
<td>Any Genre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9 Updated dance company size groupings (Munger, 2009)
Munger admitted that “many exceptions occur in the process of categorization and [he makes] a judgment call based on general trends in that case. For example, ‘small ballet’ category is now under review.” Munger gave two reasons for this. One is that “so-called ‘Chamber Ballet’ companies have blossomed and are different from ‘traditional hierarchical’ ballet companies of the same budget size.” The other reason is that “there is an emerging category – or potential category – that is typically a school rather than a company, but that has serious performance capability using the most advanced students.” However, while Munger is developing other variables by which to categorize SAOs, DanceUSA continues to base its categorization of American dance companies based mainly on budget size and genre (personal communication, May 29, 2009).

4.2.5 Museum

When it comes to museums, there is unfortunately no absolute measure of “large” and “small,” not even if we focus on budget size (as opposed to physical size, number of visitors, collection size, or any other potential measure of size). For example, the American Association of Museums’ (AAM) Museum Assessment Program uses $125,000 as its smallest budget category. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), a federal agency, uses $250,000 as its smallest budget category. AAM's Small Museum Administrators Committee defines “small” as museums with budgets of $350,000 or less. The 1999 AAM Museum Financial Information Survey: A Report from the National Survey used subjective categories self-identified by each discipline. For example, zoos and science museums with a budget of under $1 million were regarded as
“small,” while art museums and children’s museums with budgets under $200,000 were considered “small” (American Association of Museums, 2000).

Philip Katz, Assistant Director for Research at AAM, discussed the recent efforts of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) to define small museums. AASLH has a Small Museum Committee, which has been trying to establish a definition of “small” on which AASLH, AAM and IMLS could all agree. To that end, the committee conducted a survey in 2007 and found that budget size is the main characteristic, with 80% of the 455 respondents agreeing that the defining budget is $250,000 or less. According to Katz, there was also considerable agreement about the other characteristics of a small museum: “0-3 paid staff, dependence on volunteers, physical size of the museum, collections size and scope” (personal communication, December 3, 2008). The AASLH Committee created a working definition that seems to have gained general agreement: “A small museum's characteristics vary, but they typically have an annual budget of less than $250,000, operate with a small staff with multiple responsibilities, and employ volunteers to perform key staff functions. Other characteristics such as the physical size of the museum, collections size and scope, etc. may further classify a museum as small” (Katz, personal communication, December 3, 2008).

4.3 Cross-discipline Comparison Of Size And “Smallness”

Many professionals in national arts service associations recognize that the issues and challenges surrounding arts organizations vary depending on the size of the
organization. It appears that national arts service associations are also trying to maintain an even distribution of their member organizations in each category in order to manage their members more effectively. As Munger pointed out, in the case of DanceUSA, the categories shown in the various national arts associations are “rather a political convenience within the membership” (personal communication, May 29, 2009).

![Small arts organizations defined by various disciplines](image)

**Figure 4.2** Small arts organizations defined by various disciplines

As I have illustrated above, different disciplines use different financial standards by which to define SAOs. This is shown in Figure 4.2. Furthermore, a comparison of Figures 4.1 and 4.2 shows us that the SAO standards of various national arts associations for budget size (from under $250,000 to under $1 million) allow a relatively larger budget than those of public arts agencies (from under $25,000 to under $100,000), yet
they allow a much smaller budget than that of the US Small Business Administration (under $7 million).

Perhaps it may not be that useful to explore the standards for SAOs across different sectors and disciplines because it is becoming more difficult to place many emerging SAOs in traditional sectors and arts disciplines. Due to SAOs’ flexible and experimental nature, it is not easy to tell which emerging SAO belongs to which discipline. In fact, there is an increasing number of new multidisciplinary SAOs. Furthermore, a considerable number of SAOs belong not only to the non-profit sector, but to the for-profit sector. As mentioned in the characteristics of SAOs along with OAC’s findings, some SAOs do not even realize that they are not non-profit organizations, but are for-profit businesses that are operating at a deficit. However, as the American Association for State and Local History recognized with regard to museums, a working definition is necessary in order to better respond to the needs of SAOs.

4.4 Operational Definition of a Small Arts Organization

Given the aim of this dissertation to find ways to support SAOs, I incorporated the multiple indicators of “smallness” more inclusively for the operational definition of an SAO. That is, in this dissertation, I considered as an “SAO” any arts organization that has fewer than five paid staff members (representing human resources) or an annual budget (representing financial resources) less than $100,000. The reason I incorporated only two variables (employee numbers and annual budget) to distinguish an SAO among the many other variables is that I believe the standards should be simple and easy to
measure; otherwise, they can be too exclusive and limiting. When amalgamating the two chosen variables, the result should be a combination of those variables, rather than their intersection. I also utilized the self-descriptions and peer descriptions of SAOs. These two factors were very useful and provided more validity to qualify an arts organization as an “SAO” because, after all, the perception of smallness is relative and subjective.

4.5 Summary

Thus far, as the first step toward establishing a foundation for discussing SAOs, I explored the various meanings and manifestations of “smallness” across the creative sector via extensive personal communications with research managers, directors, and other administrators in arts agencies and national arts service associations. I found that multiple indicators of “smallness” in arts organizations are necessary, which I discuss in detail in the next chapter. Among the indicators, the definition of an SAO has been operationalized as arts organizations that have less than five paid staff members or an annual budget less than $100,000.

In the next chapter, I explore the day-to-day management of SAOs and their issues and needs as I incorporate the method of the Multiple Case Narrative on SAOs in Columbus, Ohio. Along with this field research, I devise multiple indicators of “smallness” in arts organizations and utilize them to categorize SAOs into four types.
CHAPTER 5

RECOGNIZING THE DIVERSITY OF SMALL ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

As stated in the methodology section, the first-tier study of this research was intended to understand the dynamic relationships among SAOs as well as with their external environments, including their support systems. Toward that purpose, the study incorporated the method of the Multiple Case Narrative. The main utility of incorporating the narrative research approach is to describe and explain phenomena narrated by the participants, and to develop grounded theory regarding these phenomena (Shkedi, 2003, p. 34).

As addressed in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3), the Multiple Case Narrative mainly utilizes interviews; thus, the first-tier study includes several rounds of semi-structured interviews with arts administrators (or artists who are in charge of administration) in 13 selected small arts organizations in the Columbus area. The open-ended interview questions were developed based on the advice and feedback of my dissertation committee members and Connie De Jong, the CEO of the Global Gallery. The interview questions were continuously modified and updated during the rounds of interviews. They were also heavily adjusted for the unique situations of each SAO that
was identified through research before the interview. The interviews were then all fully transcribed and many parts were directly quoted to deliver the active voices of the field. The observations and documents were also utilized as secondary data. These documents have been mainly used to support the findings from the interviews.

5.1 A Brief Sketch of the Small Arts Organizations Included in this Research

Below is a brief sketch for each of the 13 small arts organizations where I interviewed anywhere from one to seven members at each organization. In addition to the in-person interviews, I held several follow-up interviews via telephone or email. Sometimes I also held more than one in-person interview, as it became necessary to further discuss a significant change in the organization, such as purchasing a new venue or change of its CEO. The sketches of these SAOs are given in alphabetical order.

5.1.1 Available Light Theatre

Available Light Theatre (AVLT) is one of the most successful SAOs in Columbus, Ohio in the last three years. The theatre company is literally emerging, as we speak. Indeed, it has grown dramatically in terms of budget size, number of productions, and especially in terms of its audience base. Founded about eight years ago (in 2002 when including BlueForms theatre, the former entity of the theatre) and newly incorporated as a 501c3 in 2009, the theatre now has a place in the major league of Columbus theatres. Its annual budget in 2009-2010 grew to approximately $100,000, from about $40,000 in 2008-2009. Before AVLT was incorporated as 501(c)3, it was
under the umbrella of an organization called Fractured Atlas for about a year and a half so that it could accept public contributions.

On its website, the company claims to be “a fellowship of artists dedicated to building a more conscious and compassionate world by creating a joyful and profound theatre.” It now has nine board members and ten company members (some of whom overlap with board members). Among them, Ryan Osborn is currently absent, working as an electrician at Dragone Macau Limited in Macau, China. Company members are paid stipends for their work, performance by performance. The artistic director, Matt Slaybaugh, receives a full-time salary without benefits. The director of Development & Patron Services, Emily Rhodes, the production manager, Dave Wallingford, and the graphic designer, Michelle Whited, are hired part time. Many other volunteers in addition to the company members help with marketing and organizing volunteers, and fund raising, etc.

AVLT members envision themselves “to engage their community by staging provocative works that examine our culture, expose its shortcomings, and reveal the beauty of humankind.” About half of the productions they produce are original shows; they write and create themselves from scratch with the work of local artists. The other half of their productions includes plays written by people outside Columbus.

The first interview with Matt Slaybaugh, the artistic director, took place in a coffeeshop called Luck Bros close to his home on November 20th, 2009. The coffeeshop is a usual work place for Slaybaugh. Since 2010, AVLT has used a small office in Riffe
Center in Columbus, where eight other SAOs in Columbus share facilities such as a conference room and rest rooms. Although his background is an artist in theatre, Slaybaugh recognizes the importance of administrative skills to run an SAO. In fact, he spends about two thirds of his time taking care of administrative matters and one third of his time doing creative work. He is involved in and works for almost every aspect of AVLT’s business, including the design and management of AVLT’s website, which is quite up-to-date and very interactive.

5.1.2 Columbus Landmarks Foundation

Columbus Landmarks Foundation is a dedicated group of people who are committed to preserving Columbus’s architectural heritage. It was founded in 1977 and now includes more than 600 individual members devoted to Landmarks’s mission and vision: “educating the community, encouraging responsible public and private sector enhancement of historic areas and structures, and promoting the highest standards in the design and construction of new buildings and spaces.” Although by name, the Landmarks Foundation is called a “foundation,” it is really a membership-based organization, whose major source of income is membership fees.

As of January, 2011, Landmarks has had 23 board members; its board of trustees consists of officers and regular members. Landmarks has one of the most well organized board of trustees, including specifically titled officers, committees, and sub-committees. Landmarks has no full-time staff, but three part-time staff members, including an executive director, associate director, and a field representative. During the research
period for this study, the associate director resigned and now Kathy Mast Kane has taken over the position and is working full time until the Foundation fills the position. In addition to these three part-time staff, Landmarks is heavily dependent on more than 100 volunteers for its events such as City Hop, a series of walking tours. There are also several key volunteers on a regular basis, who work about 5 hours a week. The huge membership and pool of volunteers are the strengths of Landmark Foundation.

The interviewee, Kathy Mast Kane, is part-time executive director of the Landmarks Foundation. She also works part time as a preservation consultant. The first interview was conducted in Kane’s office on September 10th, 2009. The annual budget of Landmark is approximately $230,000, which is rather big for a small arts organization. However, Kane considers her organization small, because it does not have any full-time employees. As an entrepreneur, as she believes everyone in this sector should be, she has benchmarked and applied the best practice of larger (or other) organizations to Landmarks’s management practices, especially in marketing. Landmarks is also very good at using social media via the Internet such as Facebook and Twitter.

Kane believes that the support system around Landmarks, such as Ohio Arts Council (OAC), Greater Columbus Arts Council (GCAC), and Columbus Foundation, has been helpful in general. Kane especially stated that the Capacity Building Initiative (CBI) that Landmarks was recently accepted into was phenomenal for them. CBI is a two-year program of a collaboration of funders, including the United Way of Central Ohio, The Columbus Foundation, Osteopathic Heritage Foundation, Franklin County, the Women's Fund, Grange Insurance, and White Castle. As a participant in CBI, Landmark
has been provided with an organizational assessment and professional assistance to undertake strategic planning, among other services. The program really helped Landmarks be well managed and experience no deficit in these economic hard times.

Kane also believes that Landmarks’s most immediate goal is to enhance its financial stability and workforce. To realize the stability of its workforce, it is necessary for the SAO to have full-time staff. However, just like many other SAOs, Landmarks cannot afford fixed expenditures on full-time staff. As Kane explained, this is why small arts organizations usually have two part-time staff members rather than one full-time staff, which I observed in many other SAOs.

5.1.3 Couchfire Collective

The Couchfire Collective is a group of artists who “share a common drive to progress as individual artists, develop as a collective, and to raise the profile of Columbus’s creative community.” Their mission is “to provide artists and art patrons with diverse opportunities to make connections and become active participants in the local arts scene.”

Couchfire was formed in 2006 as a way to band together individual artists and use their diversity of skills to promote the individual, small, grassroots arts community on a larger scale. That original partnership among initial members reached out to people of specialized service such as lawyers, financial experts, people in city agencies, and larger arts organizations to form a collective that could speak to greater audiences. The collective since then has developed, and now almost specifically, serves as an advocate
for the multitude of different grassroots organizations. Starting with nine members, the collective currently has 16 artist members. By positioning themselves as enthusiastic innovators, they work to promote awareness of the artistic community as an essential component of civic development.

The interviewee, Adam Brouillette, is the president and founding member of the collective. The first interview took place in the office of his other organization, Wonderland, where he serves as executive director on January 24th, 2011. As a 2002 graduate of Columbus College of Art and Design in printmaking and fine arts, he is currently involved in several organizations related to promoting artists, including Couchfire collective and Wonderland, a non-profit organization operating a formerly Wonderbread factory on North 4th Street as a mixed-use creative facility blending artist studios, musicians, retail spaces, commercial spaces, and restaurant spaces all in one building.

Brouillette wears many hats across many arts organizations in the local community, which was commonly observed in many other individuals involved in the ecology of small arts organizations. The day before our interview, Brouillette took the position of chair of the board at the Ohio Art League, a non-profit organization of artists and supporters of the arts in the state of Ohio. Interestingly, Couchfire Collective was deliberately incorporated as a for-profit entity for more artistic and entrepreneurial endeavors, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.
5.1.4 Cloudhaus

Cloudhaus is a group of artists and creative individuals gathered to support the community through the arts. The group promotes and facilitates the creation of art in order to give back whatever it can to the community. By creating an art community that undertakes activities such as producing a mural in an abandoned place, the group aims to foster a deeper appreciation of art in the city. It specifically plans, sponsors, and participates in community-building events that have humanitarian goals to raise money for specifically targeted local charities.

Including executive director, Jared Lindenau, there are seven members on the board of directors and three officers who are in charge of fundraising, outreach, and archives. They are also active members involved in creating the arts collectively or individually. Cloudhaus has about 20 volunteer members, although even the members themselves are not sure of the exact number. Members range from a business entrepreneur to a college student. Most of the special services such as accounting and legal works are supplied within the organization thanks to the diversity of the members’ backgrounds and occupations. Although Cloudhaus was one of the most flexible SAOs I researched in terms of its structure, it was incorporated as a non-profit entity, 501(c)3, in January 2011 after it was founded in 2010.

The interview with six members of Cloudhaus took place on April 4th, 2011 in the KOBO live music bar on High Street near the Ohio State University. The active members have weekly meetings every Monday in the service room freely provided by this bar. All
of the interview participants emphasized the same charitable goal via creating art and all were willing to devote their time and effort toward realizing that goal. They also pointed out that Jared Lindenau’s flexible and not-so-pushy leadership and skillful micro-management were crucial to the group’s being able to operate as a non-profit entity.

5.1.5 Dove Arts Project

Ulysses Dove was one of the most innovative contemporary American choreographers of the 20th century. His brother, Alfred Dove, whom I interviewed, is the president of Dove Arts Project. Dove Arts licenses Ulysses Dove’s works to dance companies and also produces new works of performing arts in homage to Ulysses Dove’s masterpieces. This makes it a unique SAO which already possesses works of art as its capital with which the organization can start off. This kind of SAO can be seen in many other countries in Europe or Asia, where the history of the arts is relatively long and where there are inherited traditional art forms that should (or are agreed to) be specially protected.

The first interview with Alfred Dove took place on December 1st, 2009 in a coffeeshop near Lincoln Theatre, called Urban-Spirit. Just like Luck Bros coffeeshop for AVLT, Urban-Spirit coffeeshop is the usual workplace for Alfred Dove. Dove Arts Project is currently not incorporated, but is under the umbrella of Obsidian Group, a fiscal agent. The Project is also a resident group of Lincoln Theater. A total of nine people are involved in the SAO and among them, three are board members. However, it
seems the SAO is operated basically and mostly by Alfred Dove, while others assist him. There are also occasional volunteers, who, most of time, are his parents.

The main income for Dove Arts is from contracts with ballet companies in other cities such as Bird Ballet in Cleveland, Ohio, Pacific Northwest Ballet in Seattle, Washington, and American Ballet Theater in New York. Alfred Dove contracts with these ballet companies as an administrator of Dove Arts Project. The SAO’s budget and that of Alfred Dove are not separate, which is a common phenomenon in many SAOs run by an individual.

Dove is an energetic entrepreneur who wants to grow his company. He is indeed very tech-savvy and has designed and runs Dove Arts’s webpage. He also occasionally uploads the SAO’s performances on YouTube. He wants “to put together a musical theater show that would be shown in casinos once they come to Columbus.” For this short-term goal, Dove would like to include his own works in addition to his brother’s; however, he wonders whether members of the SAO would be willing to perform them. The SAO’s long-term goal is to present more sophisticated dances; however, Dove thinks he might have to leave Columbus to realize that goal. He expressed his disappointment regarding the support systems for dance in Columbus saying “not my cup of tea.” He also said Columbus does not have a “marketing engine” for the dance community.

5.1.6 Glass Axis

Glass Axis is a membership-based glass-making arts organization. It was founded in 1987 by twelve graduates of The Ohio State University Glass program and has now
grown to have over 300 members with full glass-making facilities in a permanent place. At first, Glass Axis started with a portable glass blowing unit which was used to demonstrate glass art to the public. In 1992, Glass Axis’s 20 members established a studio in what is now called “the Arena District” in Columbus. Currently, the organization is housed in a former rubber factory which they rent from Goodyear Rubber for a reasonable price. The facility also functions as a warehouse that includes artists’ studios that are rented to individual glass artists. Most of those are about a hundred square feet each that resident artists rent to keep their tools and projects. In addition to their resident artists, Glass Axis has also hosted several maestro-level visiting artists, among them Davide Salvadore and William Gudenrath.

The core of Glass Axis consists of about 350 glass artist members, who pay a monthly membership fee to use the glass-making facilities. There are 3 grades for membership: student, individual, and family. They pay their membership fees and can rent and use studio equipment. Besides the members, there are students who take classes offered by Glass Axis in all phases of glass art, including hot, warm, and cold glass traditions & techniques. More than 800 students a year take courses offered by Glass Axis. Some of the class takers become members.

Among the members, there are about three-dozen active volunteers. Most people volunteer at fundraisers for Glass Axis; however, there are also some people who volunteer regularly like a few times a week, helping clean the facilities. Then, there are about 15 instructors who teach classes. These instructors are paid by the hour and
considered independent contractors. All of the instructors are also artist members or board members.

Glass Axis has 15 board members, who are elected by the members. Within the board of trustees, there are about six committees that oversee different issues of Glass Axis. For example, there are committees of fundraising, education, visiting artists, and facilities. There are also committees that form as needed, such as hiring committee and automation committee. The hiring committee makes decisions on recruitment.

Heidi Schmenk, whom I interviewed, is the studio director of Glass Axis who is the only full-time employee of the SAO. The first interview with Schmenk took place on December 2nd, 2009 in the office of Glass Axis that is attached to the glass making facilities. Based on Glass Axis’s annual budget in 2010, about $250,000, it may be difficult to categorize Glass Axis as a “small arts organization.” In fact, for a glass art studio, Glass Axis is one of the larger ones in the country. However, as Schmenk puts, Glass Axis is considered “small,” in that everybody knows everybody, it’s very easy to get involved, and they have a very small staff. There is a full-time studio director, a part-time office assistant, and a part-time studio technician who maintains the facilities. In other words, Heidi Schmenk defines “smallness” of an SAO as “accessibility.” If the organization is large, it is not so assessable to all the members. In addition, the SAO has been steadily growing and its structure reflects such a systematic way of putting all the participants’ efforts together that it can serve as a good benchmark for other SAOs.
5.1.7 Jared Mahone & J.A.M. Sessions

Jared Mahone is an independent recording artist from Columbus, Ohio. He promotes a band of musicians under his own name, Jared Mahone. The group has been a revolving door for many musicians and creative partners as he himself has been able to call upon various musicians to assemble many forms of the band. However, lately, he has settled for a group of six members that, as he puts it, “really make the soul and core of the band” and others have become fill-in players for those members.

In addition to the band Mahone has established an SAO called “J.A.M. Sessions.” As he puts it, J.A.M. is the core of the Jared Mahone band. Although the primary job that the SAO plans and directs is the Jared Mahone Band, it produces creative projects of other solo artists whose music matches “the soul” of the band. The annual budget of Jared Mahone and J.A.M. Sessions is not quite fixed and largely depends on the revenue stream brought in by touring. The SAO owns a small project studio at Mahone’s home and the bus, trailer, sound equipment and full production lights used in the tours. When asked, Mahone estimated the value of the SAO’s assets to be between $20,000 and $25,000.

I first met and had a conversation with Mahone’s manager and wife, Kara Mahone, in June 2010 at a concert at the Columbus Arts Festival. After several rounds of emails, I finally met in-person with Jared Mahone and his wife and interviewed them on April 25th, 2011 at North Market. I learned that they meet weekly with members of J.A.M. Sessions over dinner to discuss new ideas involving direction, promotion, and general decisions for the collective fate of the band, as well as to complete tasks both
small and large within the talents of the group. Mahone and members try to adjust their
efforts based on the resources available to them on a quarterly basis.

J.A.M. Sessions is incorporated as a limited liability company (LLC). In fact,
J.A.M. Sessions never pays Jared and Kara for what they do. Basically Kara works
outside of J.A.M. Sessions at a church and they consider it their main income, while they
keep the business of J.A.M. Sessions separate. Jared once thought about incorporating his
group as a non-profit organization; however, he did not because, as he put it, the way that
people in non-profit organizations would seek help from the state or other organizations,
in his perspective, is similar to asking for support from churches and he has an ethical
issue with that. I observed this perspective frequently especially in the music industry,
except the classical music sector.

5.1.8  Kiaca Gallery

KIACA (Kabye Impact African Contemporary Art) opened on December 5th,
2004 in the Short North, an arts district in Columbus. As can be seen on its website,
KIACA was founded to “establish a solid platform for the discovery and appreciation for
contemporary African art, and to bridge the gap between African, African-American, and
African Diaspora cultures.”

Talle Bamazi, the interviewee, is the founding president of KIACA. He is an
immigrant from Togo in Africa. The interview with Bamazi took place on November
17th, 2009 in his studio attached to KIACA gallery. The studio was a vacant lot between
the building of KIACA and a building next to it. Bamazi was an enthusiastic arts
administrator who fully understands and actually enjoys the multiple roles of an administrator of an SAO as he introduced himself as a president, founder, and chief curator, as well as an artist at this gallery.

KIACA is a very good example of an SAO where an individual’s personality strongly affects the success of an organization. However, the gallery ceased its operation and was closed on December 31st, 2010, due to “decreased support from funding resources and a decrease in community donations” as the KIACA board stated on its Facebook. I suppose that the rental fee of the gallery was the big fixed expenditure that KIACA could not sustain; however, I was unable to contact Bamazi after the closing to learn more details.

KIACA was one of the most renowned galleries in the U.S. to focus on the contemporary African art. The gallery had a board of directors with 7 members and one part time staff. All others including the president himself were basically volunteers. The organization’s budget in 2009 was around $95,000 which has tripled from few years ago due to increased sales, grants from GCAC and OAC, and the dramatically increased donations from private individuals.

5.1.9 MadLab Theatre and Gallery

Since its inception in 1995, MadLab Theatre and Gallery is an independent arts organization in downtown Columbus, Ohio. In its website, MadLab claims to have been dedicated to the creation, experimentation, and presentation of new and original works of all disciplines from music to theatre, and from film to visual arts. In fact, the
organization’s main discipline was initially theatre, but it opened a gallery in its reception area to accommodate some independent artists who wanted to exhibit their artworks. The SAO also recently changed its name to MadLab Theatre and Gallery.

In early 2010, the company purchased a property located at 227 North 3rd Street in downtown Columbus, making it one of the few theatre companies in Columbus, Ohio to own its venue. They opened the doors of the new venue in mid-March, 2010. In the first interview, Barlup said that they need a safer, long-term facility whether it’s purchasing or a long-term lease arrangement of the space, and they achieved that goal during my research period. MadLab Theatre and Gallery was named one of 30 partner non-profit organizations in the 2010 Scion x-CHANGE program, which is a national network of local non-profits, artists, and community supporters in 30 U.S. cities. Total contributions from individual donations to MadLab and matches from Scion x-CHANGE totaled $17,030 (with more than $13,000 coming from Scion itself), which helped MadLab theatre cover the huge burden from the mortgage loan that was used for the purchase of the new venue.

MadLab has an ensemble of about 25 artist members who are in charge of producing plays. The SAO also has nine members in its board of directors who oversee the financial responsibilities of the company, and a separate committee in the board oversees the visual arts gallery. All board members and ensemble members are volunteers. MadLab is based on the voluntary work of its members; all administrative works are carried out by members themselves.
MadLab Theater and its members are a very good example of an SAO which exhibits high enthusiasm to be innovative and to grow with their passionate vision and mission. In terms of technology, they actively and extensively use the emerging Internet communication tools such as Twitter, MySpace, and Facebook, as well as e-mail newsletters to communicate with each other and with their audiences. They also utilize traditional ways such as mailings, sending out fliers or posting them around town. However, Barlup still thinks they are much more innovative on the artistic side than business-wise. She also believes they still need to diversify their funding more. About 60-75% of Madlab Theater’s income is earned, which is highly desirable; however, counting on a single source is not advisable for their long-term sustainability.

Jennifer Barlup, whom I interviewed at MadLab, is the chair of the company. She is also associate director at the Center Of Science and Industry (COSI) in Columbus. She works full time at COSI and is actually a volunteer at MadLab. The interview took place in a very small office theatre on August 20th, 2009. The second interview took place on January 26th, 2011 at their new theatre.

5.1.10 Phoenix Rising Printmaking Cooperative

Phoenix Rising Printmaking Cooperative in Columbus, Ohio, established in September 1998, is a cooperative organization of private printmaking artists. It provides a studio equipped with printmaking facilities (such as etching press and relief press) for artist members. As of May 10th, 2011, there are nine “core member” artists who pay
monthly membership fees at about $75 a month. In addition, there are eight associate members who pay a fee only when they use the press machines.

The Cooperative is equipped with useful printmaking facilities and has worked on many arts events regarding printmaking; at the same time, it has had problems obtaining the legal status of a nonprofit arts organization, 501(c)3, which made it difficult to receive funds from the public. Currently, the cooperative is incorporated as a limited liability company (LLC) and their equipment is registered as their assets. It seemed that members in the organization had difficulties coping with the situation. Davis described the situation as “Catch 22.”

The artists at Phoenix Rising offer various workshops and classes that introduce and highlight a variety of printmaking arts. Occasionally, they invite guest artists to give special presentations. They also offer outreach programs demonstrating and teaching the printmaking art through various venues, such as public and private schools, art groups, colleges, etc.

It was not easy to identify administrative staff and to determine who are the most responsible for the administration at Phoenix Rising, as artist members do the administrative jobs themselves. In fact, there are neither part-time nor full-time workers but all are volunteers. A founding core artist member, Anne Cushman, whom I first contacted, pointed out Cindy Davis as a responsible core artist member that I could speak with. We first met in the studio of the Cooperative on July 30th, 2009. Davis carries out a
lot of administrative jobs for her organization; she sees herself as an artist rather than an administrator. In fact, she was reluctant to see herself as an administrator.

5.1.11 Spirit Filled Productions

Spirit Filled Productions is a liturgical performing arts group that was formed in 1996. This company is a good example of a family-based arts organization where family members and friends comprise the key workforce of the organization. This company can also be an example of a religion-based community SAO that aims to realize the activities of their religious faith such as missionary work through the arts. The questions of budget and financial resources were meaningless because it seems that people involved in the SAO do not really keep track of these. After all, the family operates the company as a way of giving back to their community. The company’s main stage was at first churches around Columbus; then later they performed at King Arts Complex and Columbus Performing Arts Center (CPAC). Currently, the SAO mainly focuses on presenting its performing arts at nursing homes and assisted living centers in the local community.

Spirit Filled is currently filed as a non-profit organization and has four board members. Among them, two are friends of Sandra Rolland, the company’s founder, and the other two are her family members. In the production of its performances, many of her family members including her grandchildren get involved from acting in the plays to managing the concession stand. For example, Roland’s son is the photographer and videographer of the show and her daughter does many other production jobs such as stage
management and costume design. Her daughter also carries out administrative works such as marketing and fundraising.

I first met Rolland at AVLT’s “Attempts on her Life” show in March, 2010. Since then, I had many casual conversations with her regarding her company. I conducted one formal interview with her on January 11th, 2011 at the bookstore at Columbus College of Art & Design. In the interview, she devoted much of the time to explaining how she launched her company following a miraculous recovery from a serious health injury and getting a calling from God to do the arts. Having retired in 2006 from the City of Columbus after 32 years, she also works as a part-time house manager in CPAC. Although what Sandra Rolland was acting more like an artistic director, her title on her business card is CEO, a title that is rarely seen in other SAOs. She describes herself as a multi-disciplined artist including playwright, dancer, flagger, and singer. Like her, the company is producing multi-disciplinary performing arts, from dancing or flagging to acting and singing.

5.1.12 **Thiossane West African Dance Institute**

Thiossane West African Dance Institute is a professional performing arts company. The institute aims at preserving and presenting traditional West African dance, music, and culture by providing authentic performances. Thiossane provides community classes for both children and adults. It also hosts a range of educational programs in school and after school as well as a number of workshops and summer camps for children. Within these programs, it supports other agencies to do their arts programs.
The core individuals, Abdou Kounta and Suzan Bradford Kounta, are a married couple. Abdou Kounta, who is the musical director of Thiossane West African Dance Institute, is originally from Senegal, West Africa. In 1992, he relocated from Washington, D.C. to Columbus, where he founded Thiossane in 2000. He is now an artist in residence with the Ohio Arts Council. Suzan Bradford Kounta, the creative director of Thiossane, has a dance background. She is an adjunct faculty member in the dance department at the Ohio State University and is the first general manager of the newly renovated historic Lincoln Theater where Thiossane is one of the resident groups. The first interview with the couple took place on December 2nd, 2009 at the conference room in Lincoln Theatre.

The institution has five board members and several performing members who wear different hats. The performing members also do some graphics, teaching, representation, or marketing in addition to acting. However, the administrative works are led mainly by Susan; in fact most of the questions regarding the management of the SAO were answered by her. As can be easily expected from her background, a graduate of the business school, Suzan Kounta is fully aware of many of innovative administrative strategies and it seems that she can objectify the SAO as a general manager of Lincoln Center in order to position the SAO in the arts scene in Columbus. As spouses, they share the administrative tasks as well as mission and vision of the SAO and communicate with each other without any problems, which is a strength of the home-based arts organization.

However, Thiossane West African Dance Institute still has many issues due to its small size. In fact, the Kountas deem they are making many personal sacrifices for the
vitality of the arts and cultural scene. They think SAOs are very important in the arts world and their efforts should be supported by the public. However, they don’t want to grow their SAO, so that they can maintain their unique mission; they just want to keep their SAO “manageable.”

5.1.13 Westerville Symphony Orchestra

Westerville Symphony has almost a 50-year long history since the 1960s. The symphony was incorporated in 1983 and gained the legal status of 501(c)3, when there was a feasibility study sponsored by the League of American Orchestras back in the early 1980s that encouraged this informal group to start a formal orchestra. Now it has grown to include more than 100 musicians, including 30~40 students from Otterbein University who get credits for their participation. The SAO’s budget in 2010-2011 was about $196,000, which is large for small arts organizations. However, there is only one full-time employee, the executive director and the music director is one other part-time employee. Westerville Symphony currently has 25 board members (the largest number that a non-profit organization can have in the state of Ohio by law) including two ex-officio members: the executive director and the music director.

The first interview with Betsy Gillespie, the executive director then, took place at their conference room on August 31st, 2009. During the research period, she moved to Michigan due to her husband’s job. The current executive director of Westerville Symphony is Emily Hickman, whom I interviewed on March 1st, 2011 in her office. The building where the office and conference room were located was old but very well
maintained. The office was rather small but seemed enough to accommodate two staff members. The conference room was shared with other organizations.

Westerville Civic Symphony changed its name to Westerville Symphony publicly, although its registered name in IRS is still the same. As Emily Hickman put it when asked, the word “civic” has been taken off due its amateur connotation. Westerville Symphony has a significant relationship with its main partner, Otterbein University. Westerville Symphony receives financial support from Otterbein by serving as the performance ensemble for the students. Westerville also uses performance/rehearsal facilities and other business facilities such as computer rooms. Some board members are appointed by the university. To honor the support from Otterbein, the symphony spells out the name of the university in its official title, “Westerville Symphony at Otterbein University.” The symphony also maintains a good partnership with the city of Westerville and Westerville Public Library. The support from the community sometimes seems to hold them back artistically, as they don’t usually offer avant-garde repertoire on their schedule. Instead, it is focusing on the educational concerts and programs and wants to secure necessary funding to preserve its education programs in order to give back to the community. Westerville Symphony may be a good example to understand how a small arts organization can grow (or not grow) through a partnership with the local community.
5.2 Common Ground of SAOs

As can be seen in the previous section, the brief sketches of the 13 SAOs reveal the diversity in the ecology of small arts organizations. However, these SAOs also share a common ground in terms of their structure, workforce, and management, which are discussed in this section. This common ground is their flexibility, which can connote something negative, that is, a lack of structure, informal workforce, or disorganized management. However, it can also imply something positive, in that it enables the SAOs to be innovative, which is crucial for their creative vitality. The findings from both tier studies indicate discrepancies in the assumptions made about SAOs that have been mainly derived from observations of large arts organizations. In this section, I therefore particularly examine and discuss the common ground that many SAOs share in contrast to large arts organizations.

5.2.1 Formation of SAOs: Formal or Informal

The SAOs I studied were different from each other in terms of their organizational structure, so that it seemed almost impossible to identify a common formal structure. Except for the Westerville Symphony, all the SAOs in my research have a so-called “informal” organizational structure. In fact, as Byrnes (2009, p.169) noted, “every arts organization [large or small] has an informal organizational structure” within their traditional structure. In the case of small arts organizations, their organizational structures are mostly “informal” when viewed through the traditional lens, which inadvertently
leads to judging them as being disorganized and unstructured, and perceiving them as risky investments.

The example of Available Light Theatre is a case in point. In the spring of 2010, AVLT received a capacity assessment report prepared by graduate students researching capacity-building strategies of non-profit organizations. Although the small theatre was reputable not only in terms of artistic achievement but also financial success in the local community in recent years, it received a very poor grade, which made the theatre look like it was being managed poorly. The members of the theatre did not believe they could live up to the recommendations from the report because the criteria presented in the report were for large arts organizations, and not for SAOs.

At the same time, I have been amazed to witness the SAOs’ incredible dynamism and flexibility that allow for creativity. This has led me to believe that the flexible nature of SAOs may be their greatest asset. Along with the flexibility of SAOs, there is some common ground in terms of their structure. Although they appear “informal,” they are “formal” in their own way.

SAOs are a mixture of non-profit and for-profit entities. Although most of the SAOs participating in my study were (or wanted to be in the near future) incorporated as a 501(c)(3), a US tax-exempt, non-profit entity, not all of them have been incorporated as a 501(c)(3) organization. In the cases of Couchfire and J.A.M. Sessions, they purposefully became incorporated as a for-profit entity, a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC). Brouillette at Couchfire Collective believes that “[non-profits are] perceived
culturally as organizations that hold out their hand and say that they need money to operate and survive.” Consequently, Couchfire became incorporated as a for-profit entity to “make sure that the . . . business is viable by creating an income for [itself]” (Brouillette, personal communication, January 24, 2011). Mahone at J.A.M. Sessions said that he in fact has “an ethical issue” with making his band non-profit and asking the public, “Would you donate to ‘my thing’? Would you donate to ‘my music’?” (personal communication, April 25, 2011). It seems that in becoming incorporated as an LLC, SAOs perceive themselves (or recognize the public’s perception of themselves) as being more sustainable on their own, without begging for funding to do what they want to do.

In the case of Dove Arts Project, after years of gathering board members and filing documents, A. Dove seems to have lost interest in getting his organization incorporated. Meanwhile, he continues to operate Dove Arts, though outside of Columbus. Phoenix Rising Printmaking Cooperative applied to become a non-profit entity when it first opened in 1996, but was denied. Davis said that the cooperative was denied because it didn’t have a history of classes and public service. They plan to apply again in the near future. In the meantime, Phoenix Rising does not have enough funding to hire more staff members in order to expand its public service because it is not 501(c)(3). As Davis stated, “It’s difficult to get funding . . . when you are not a 501(c)(3). So it’s a Catch-22 as we say. . . .You’re stuck in the middle” (personal communication, July 30, 2009).

Whether non-profit or for-profit, all small arts organizations in my study have similar positions – administrative or artistic, paid or volunteer – to those found in large
arts organizations. However, the SAOs make no hard distinctions between administrative or artistic authority and they keep the line fuzzy between board members and company members. In addition, many SAOs are formed by friends and family, and members are mostly volunteers. This departure from large arts organizations makes SAOs appear administratively informal, which can be perceived as unprofessional. However, this does not take away from their artistic professionalism. Most individuals involved in small arts organizations have enough artistry and reputation to comprise quite an artistically professional organization. In addition, SAOs’ informality makes them flexible, thus enhancing their creative vitality.

5.2.2 Management of SAOs: Everybody Does Everything

Artistic or Administrative

In every arts organization, there is the artistic authority that pertains to matters directly involving production of the arts, and administrative authority that involves matters of sales and funding. Ideally, these two authorities, represented by the artistic director and the executive director respectively, have their own realms. One of the administrator’s tasks has been to secure a stable environment for the artists. However, on the whole, no hard distinctions are made between these two authorities in the case of SAOs. Everybody appears to be doing everything, sharing the work, whether artistic or administrative.

In many cases, administrative work is perceived as a set of chores carried out in addition to an individual’s artistic work. For example, members of Phoenix Rising
Printmaking Cooperative earn their income through selling their own artwork using the equipment in the SAO. None of the members are paid for the administrative work they do. As Davis said, “We volunteer . . . to teach classes, or to do administrative work, apply for grants or give informational talks about printmaking,” which take roughly ten hours a week per member (personal communication, July 30, 2009).

Interestingly, many individuals think much of their work is administrative, but they are reluctant to be called “arts administrators,” and prefer the title, “artist.” For example, though half of Slaybaugh’s job is to serve as executive director in AVLT, he always introduces himself as “artistic director.” Rolland, the CEO of Spirit Filled Productions, also puts artistic titles such as “writer,” “dancer,” and “artist” first, before “CEO,” in describing herself. Similarly, Barlup, who is the chair of the board in MadLab, introduces herself as “artist,” saying,

> It is very split in my role [in Madlab]. . . . I do see myself more as an administrator [in Madlab. However,] overall, I wouldn’t classify myself as that. If you met me on the street and said, “What do you do?” I would say, “I’m an actress.” (personal communication, August 20, 2009)

**Open Board**

I also found that the line is fuzzy between SAO board members and company members (both administrative and artistic).
The board members of all 13 organizations are basically volunteer-based, as required by law. Westerville Symphony has 19 board members including two ex-officio members, Gillespie herself and their music director. In the case of Phoenix Rising Printmaking Cooperative, all members are board members. In the case of Madlab Theater and Gallery, there are 18 board members. KIACA had 7 board members and Bamazi sits on the board as the founding president. Thiossane West African Dance Institute has 5 board members, including the Kountas.

In most SAOs, company members are also board members. And in many cases, the board members are in charge of administrative tasks. However, those board members usually work just like hired staff in large arts organizations, doing anything from planning marketing and PR strategies to executing them. Many whom I interviewed referred to this as “working board.” These working boards function as the administrative body of the SAOs and their sustainability is attributed to whether they have a working board or not.

Working boards serve as a benchmark for best practices for SAOs’ management. Particularly with regard to marketing, benchmarking of larger (or other) arts organizations is done through the marketing professionals who serve on the board of the SAO. In the case of Available Light Theatre, Alvarez, a senior account executive at Fahlgren, a major marketing and advertising firm, is in charge of the overall marketing plan and execution of AVLT. In Cloudhaus, Stith, a marketing specialist at McGraw Hill, a major educational publisher, serves as the marketing director. Landmark Foundations has a sub-committee in its board, which is in charge of overall marketing and public
relations: “It is chaired by a professional, and . . . the members of the committee are mostly professionals in marketing and communication” (Kathy Kane, personal communication, September 10, 2009).

The one thing we are going to change this year is having tickets available at Raisin Rack (local grocery store) and the CPA’s Office. . . . [We] know it is something that bigger organizations have done. (Betsy Gillespie, personal communication, August 31, 2009)

The common assumption is that the board members who volunteer as staff are often amateurs at the tasks they volunteer for. Interestingly, that was not always the case in the SAOs in this study.

All of the SAOs in my study heavily rely on interpersonal networks to recruit new blood and to gain specialized professionals. As Barlup noted, “It’s friends of friends. A board member’s cousin is a realtor, another board member’s best friend is a lawyer; so, they’re not on the board but they are working pro-bono for us right now, for a set” (personal communication, August 20, 2009).

Family and Friends

In forming the structure of SAOs, there are many family-based (or friend-based) organizations. For example, in the case of Thiossane West African Dance Institute, the artistic director Abdou Kounta and the creative director Suzan Bradford Kounta are married. At J.A.M. Sessions, Jared Mahone, the leader of the band and Kara Mahone, the
manager of the band are spouses. The tight family relationship even can be found in Available Light theatre which is relatively more structured among the SAOs selected for this research. Matt Slaybaugh, the artistic director, and Acacia Duncan, a company member, are married. Jordan Fehr and Eleni Parentoni just got married in June 2011. Ian Short and Michelle Whited, the company members are living together. Ron Weber, the former chair of AVLT’s board and Melissa Weber, a board member, are also married. The tightly knit family relationship definitely helps communications and enables cooperation within SAOs.

However, giving jobs to family and friends could become problematic when the organization grows larger, leading to a closed circuit, so to speak, that can result from nepotism. In turn, this could also lead to a lack of diversity, which might eventually spoil an SAOs’ creative vitality. This was evident in some SAOs in my study. For instance, at Dove Arts Project, the board members are friends of A. Dove and the volunteer staff consists mostly of his parents. Consequently, A. Dove was expressing his disappointment in trying to build his SAO in Columbus saying, “I don’t [have] that kind of access to the arts, I don’t have a network here” even after years of living in Columbus (personal communication, January 26, 2011).

In most cases, since much of the workforce of SAOs is based on volunteers and does not deal with “serious dollars,” nepotism does not pose a problem; rather, it is simply a convenience. Still, some SAOs make efforts to avoid such problems as they grow. They certainly understand that the diversity of their workforce and networking can enhance their creative vitality. So they develop unique ways to recruit their members. For
example, MadLab incorporates an ensemble system which is the artistic oversight of the theater company consisting of people who are committed to the company in addition to their artistic contributions. They work on three shows and volunteer outside of acting. Consequently, actors may also distribute fliers or work at the box office or they help build a set. After they have worked three shows and thus demonstrated their willingness to volunteer in addition to acting, they are qualified to be voted on to become an ensemble member.

Due to their small size, SAOs may appear not so internally diverse. However, as can be seen in MadLab above with its ensemble system, in which every member has a voice, the SAO attempts to remain as democratic as it can, so that anyone can join it, thus leading to a diverse culture. The ensemble model is used in other SAOs as well, like AVLT. In Glass Axis, all members who pay a membership fee get to vote on board members. As Schmenk shared with me, they have around 300 members, mostly artists, who elect 15 board members each year to serve for three years (personal communication, December 2, 2009). Some SAOs like Landmark Foundation care more about diversity within the SAO than larger arts organizations in recruiting people they need. As Kane at Landmarks shared during her interview,

We. . . have a great process for [recruiting board members]; we keep good track of the skills, the diversity . . . In terms of age, gender, race, we look really hard at trying to keep our board diverse, . . . providing what this organization needs in leadership. (Kathy Kane, personal communication, September 10, 2009)
When all is said and done, SAOs also create diversity collectively through their association with many other SAOs.

So far in this section, I have examined the flexibility in the formation of SAOs. That is, they make no clear distinctions between administrators and artists, or between board-and company members, and their workforce consists of friends and family. This flexible structure also affects SAOs’ finances, which will be explored in the next section.

**Financial Sustainability**

When I asked about their budget, many administrators in my study said it really fluctuates. Although they all perceive their organization as an SAO, their budget sizes vary: between $9,500 and $12,000 (Phoenix Rising Printmaking Cooperative), around $40,000 (Thiossane West African Dance Institute), about $40,000 (Couch Fire), approximately $95,000 (KIACA), $70,000–$100,000 (MadLab Theatre and Gallery), $100,000–$110,000 (Available Light Theatre), between $180,000 and $200,000 (Westerville Symphony), between $180,000 and $230,000 (Landmarks Foundation), and nearly $250,000 (Glass Axis).

For different reasons, the information regarding budget size was difficult to access from some interviewees. A. Dove at Dove Arts Project did not want to disclose the SAO’s budget size even in rough numbers, saying “it’s like asking somebody how much they make in their paycheck.” His somewhat irritated response may be actually true for many other SAOs (even those not included in this research), where the organization’s budget is not really separate from that of the individuals involved in it. In the case of
Spirit Filled Productions, Rolland, the CEO, said that she could not recall the approximate budget size because her SAO’s budget fluctuated so much. She added that she would check with her sister and get back to me, but she has not done so. In the case of Couch Fire, Brouillette, the interviewee disclosed the SAO’s approximate annual budget and said he would provide details later. However, he later emailed me saying that the SAO’s lawyer advised him not to provide any detailed documents for research (as an LLC).

My findings indicate that small arts organizations in general have been successful in coping with the global economic crisis. Despite the meltdown of the last year, all SAOs in my research (except for KIACA that closed in December 2010) experienced growing budgets and are even expecting to have larger budgets in 2011. Actually, KIACA also saw a dramatic budget increase before its breakdown and perhaps that was one of the reasons why the SAO “went south.”

I had mistakenly assumed that SAOs are the immediate victims of the economic crisis. Therefore, when preparing for the interviews, I initially divided the SAOs’ short-term organizational goals into three modes: survival, growth, or sustenance. However, when asked, none of the interviewees considered their SAO to be in survival mode as I had assumed. They said that their SAO was very flexible and was doing fairly well in terms of securing its financial stability. Surprisingly, except for Dove Arts Project and Spirit Filled Productions, all of the SAOs in my study were even seeing a steady growth of their budgets over the years, as Davis at Phoenix Rising and Gillespie at Westerville Symphony and many other interviewees testified.
[Our budget] is steadily growing. In recent years we have been applying for and [receiving] grant funding which increases our budget. (Cindy Davis, personal communication, July 30, 2009)

[Our budget] has grown steadily. . . . [It is currently] stable, definitely. We finished this last budget year in the black and we are not in any debt position. (Betsy Gillespie, personal communication, August 31st, 2009)

Some SAOs like KIACA and AVLT even saw a dramatic budget increase from 2009 to 2010. Bamazi at KIACA and Slaybaugh at AVLT shared the following:

We actually see it has significantly changed budget this year. It is three times greater because of sales; national endowment fund and a lot of people are interested in donations this year more than a few years ago. (Talle Bamazi, personal communication, November 17, 2009)

We’ve had a sudden growth spurt over the course of about the last 18 months . . . in terms of budget size, in terms of productions and especially in terms of the audience. (Matt Slaybaugh, personal communication, November 20, 2009)

Although financial stability has been their short-term goal, it may always be one of an SAO’s main goals, even after the economy recovers. It may be that their financial vulnerability has been so chronic that they have gotten used to it. As S. Kounta of Thiossane West African Dance Institute put it, “We [have] always [been] in economic
crisis!” (personal communication, December 2, 2009). In her tone was the implication that SAOs are known to have financial difficulties, and she seemed to be asking, what else was new?

Given SAOs’ chronic financial problems, their short-term goals mostly have to do with their financial stability one way or the other. Davis set Phoenix Rising’s short-term goal to become an official non-profit organization, 501(c)(3). Barlup mentioned two short-term goals for MadLab: one is to diversify their funding; the other, to secure their facility. Gillespie wanted to secure the funding that is necessary to preserve their education programs.

However, I found that none of the SAOs appeared to have given any serious thought to long-term goals. Part of the reason that SAOs have not thought about long-term goals may be that they are coping with many impending issues. Davis said that “looking beyond three years [was] impractical.” And she added, “I really [can’t] have those goals spelled out for you at this time” (personal communication, July 30, 2009). This problem of focusing only on short-term goals is further discussed in the section titled “Drawbacks of Bricolage” in the next chapter.

Perception of Smallness

The budget sizes of the SAOs significantly vary; however, all of the interviewees definitely believe their organizations are small. Kane of Landmark Foundation had a problem positioning her organization as a small arts organization, but her problem was with the word “arts” rather than “small.” As she shared, “There’s confusion about
preservation and design arts and where we fit in those standard categories of [the] arts” (personal communication, September 10, 2009).

Perhaps, for the self-perception of SAOs, we can refer to the definition of “artist” in the Pew Internet Report by Mary Madden, in which Madden refers to “artists” as “those who describe themselves as artists.” Madden’s approach to defining an artist may also be useful in defining small arts organizations, since smallness itself is a relative and subjective term. Self-perceptions of smallness usually come from a negative awareness of an SAO’s situation, such as weakness and vulnerability as opposed to a positive awareness, such as flexibility and promptitude. Perhaps, then, one way to support SAOs would be to focus on helping them shift their self-perception from negative to positive.

Their self-perception as SAOs and their varied budget sizes may indicate that budget size should not be the only deciding criterion of an SAO. However, the number of employees as a deciding criterion may also be problematic. Since many SAOs heavily depend on volunteers, most of the interviewees did not know “exactly” how many people are involved in their organizations and how many hours they spend there. Even regarding the active members, when asked about the number of “active” members, no one in Cloudhaus could come up with an exact number. This is because most of their workforce is on a volunteer basis. Therefore, Kane even suggested that “any organization that [does not] have a full-time director would think of itself as small” (personal communication, September 10, 2009). For all of these reasons, it would not make sense to calculate the number of people working for an SAO based only on the paid-staffs’ hours of work.
5.2.3 Workforce of SAOs

Individuals from a variety of professional backgrounds comprise the workforce of SAOs, bringing with them their expertise. In most cases, it was difficult to find people to interview, who were employed at an SAO fulltime with benefits. The only SAOs that offered full-time employment were Westerville Symphony and Glass Axis, the two biggest organizations in my study in terms of their budget size. However, even they provided only one full-time executive position each.

Portfolio of Individuals Involved in SAOs

Out of 13 executive directors (or a similar position) whom I interviewed, seven were female. However, in paid positions (both full-time and part-time), four out of five were female. An interviewee indicated there still is a social norm that men have to support their families and therefore a typical SAO is not a good workplace for men. As Katherine Tuttle (2006) observed the whole mid-level of arts administration (usually found in large arts organizations) is dominated by women. Likewise, small arts organizations are managed predominantly by women (even more so in paid positions). This gender inclination seems to be related to the insufficient compensation that SAOs are able to provide.

With regard to their educational background, many of the interviewees have higher education related to the disciplines of their organizations. For instance, Kane at Landmarks has a bachelor’s degree, with a double major in English and Anthropology. Brouillette at Couchfire is a 2002 graduate of Columbus College of Art and Design in
printmaking, fine arts. J. Mahone graduated from Alderson-Broaddus College with a major in Recreational Leadership. Schmenk at Glass Axis has a Bachelor of Fine Arts with a specialization in glass from the Ohio State University.

Some of the interviewees do not have a degree from a higher educational institution in the artistic discipline to which they belong; however, they all have professional training in various ways. In the case of S. Kounta at Thiossane, although she studied business in college, she had studied and learned dance and music in West Africa while traveling and attending different conferences throughout the country in the last 15-20 years. Davis at Phoenix Rising took post-high school art classes and studied etching with a private tutor in Italy.

The most important to note regarding common ground in educational background for individuals in SAOs is that most of them had early experience or (at least) exposure to the arts when they were very young. This early exposure to the arts leading to active participation in the arts was true for the board members, as well. When interviewed, all (literally all) board members of AVLT recalled their early childhood experience (or exposure) to the arts. This may be evidence that early education in the arts for individuals involved in small arts organizations is very important for the vitality of small arts organizations (and perhaps much more important than for larger arts organizations, where more specifically trained personnel tend to work) in the long run.

Most of the individuals involved in SAOs work elsewhere in addition to their SAO. Although most of them do not receive serious income (if any) from working in
SAOs, they do consider their work in SAOs to be their “main” job. The concept of “job” does not always indicate that they are earning money for the work that they do for SAOs. Rather, it is more of a “responsibility” or “anything a person is expected or obliged to do,” as the word is defined in *dictionary.com* (2011). For example, company members at Available Light Theatre call their work there a “night job.” As can be seen in Table 5.1, all AVLT company members also have a “day job.” In the table, I have used initials, rather than full names, to refer to the individuals. Although they all share the administrative work as examined in the previous section, half of the administrative jobs at AVLT are executed by Slaybaugh, the artistic director.

Many members of SAOs usually have additional jobs in a related field. For example, Kane works *independently* as a preservation consultant, while she also holds two part-time paid positions at Columbus Landmarks Foundation. For Barlup at Madlab Theater and Galley, the main source of her income is from COSI where she works as an associate producer, while she does not receive financial compensation from MadLab. These other or day jobs that many individuals in SAOs hold help them to build larger networks where they can mobilize useful and affordable resources. This is discussed further in the next chapter on entrepreneurship.

Many individuals involved in SAOs also teach in various educational institutions. A. Dove at Dove Arts Project has taught at Denison University and as of June, 2011 he has been teaching at Horizon Science Academy Columbus. S. Kountas of Thiossane West African Dance Institute serves as general manager of Lincoln Center in Columbus. She also has occasionally taught in many other local colleges and universities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Current Day Job</th>
<th>Past Day Job (within last 5 years)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Artistic Director, Company Member</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ER</td>
<td>Director of Development &amp; Patron Services</td>
<td>Client Manager at Resource Interactive</td>
<td>Business Strategist at COSI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>Company Member</td>
<td>Counter Manager at Estee Lauder in Macy's Department Store</td>
<td>Same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS</td>
<td>Company Member</td>
<td>Teacher at Broadway2LA (acting studio)</td>
<td>Actor at Phoenix Theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MW</td>
<td>Operations Manager, Company Member</td>
<td>Production Manager at Skreened (custom t-shirt shop)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP1</td>
<td>Company Member</td>
<td>Director of Theatre at The Wellington School</td>
<td>Visiting Assistant Professor of Theatre at Denison University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Company Member</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Actor/Educator at Phoenix Theatre for Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DW</td>
<td>Production Manager, Company Member</td>
<td>Freelance Sound Designer working for major performing arts organizations in Columbus</td>
<td>Same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JF</td>
<td>Company Member</td>
<td>Freelance Sound Design Contractor for Games and Film</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP2</td>
<td>Company Member</td>
<td>Venue Sales and Programming Assistant at CAPA</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1 Details of the day jobs of AVLT members

Those who do not have a paying job usually rely on support from their family. For example, Davis at Phoenix Rising Printmaking Cooperative is supported by her husband. Although Kane earns full-time payment from two part-time positions in Landmarks, her...
health insurance is covered by her husband’s health plan. Even J. Mahone who works for a for-profit entity, J.A.M. Sessions, relies on his wife’s income. As K. Mahone said, “I work outside of J.A.M. Sessions . . . at a church and . . . we consider that our personal income. . . . Basically, the business [from J.A.M. Sessions] never pays [us] for what we do” (Kara Mahone, personal communication, April 25, 2011).

**Workload Survey**

As explained in the methodology section, I designed a “Workload Survey,” a method to calculate the time invested in the operations of an SAO. I distributed this particular survey to company members of AVLT and asked them to record their activities in it for an eight week-period from July 19 to September 12, 2010. The members of AVLT filled in a blank calendar indicating how much time they spent working for the company, as can be seen in Figure 3.1 (p. 90) and described the activity they undertook during the survey period.

In addition, to encourage members’ commitment to the project and to confirm their entries, I conducted a supplementary phone survey with each participant twice a week during the same time period. In this supplementary survey, I basically asked the members the following three questions: (1) What were you doing in the last 30 minutes? (2) How long have you been doing that particular activity? and (3) What will you be doing in the next 30 minutes?. In order not to waste the members’ time, I was careful to be sure that the calls took less than three minutes each. If the members did not answer the phone, I used Short Message Service (SMS) via a mobile phone, so that the interviewees
could answer by text messaging. Refer to Appendix B for the details of the contact schedule for the survey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>ER</th>
<th>AD</th>
<th>IS</th>
<th>MW</th>
<th>EP</th>
<th>DW</th>
<th>JF</th>
<th>EP</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>55h 45m</td>
<td>43h</td>
<td>15h 30m</td>
<td>38h</td>
<td>31h 30m</td>
<td>11h 30m</td>
<td>6h 30m</td>
<td>1h 30m</td>
<td>11h 30m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>54h</td>
<td>38.25h</td>
<td>14h 30m</td>
<td>39h</td>
<td>33h 45m</td>
<td>6h 30m</td>
<td>17h</td>
<td>3h</td>
<td>24h 15m</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>60h 15m</td>
<td>14.75h</td>
<td>27h 30m</td>
<td>36h</td>
<td>46h 30m</td>
<td>12h 30m</td>
<td>34h</td>
<td>30m</td>
<td>17h</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>18.75h</td>
<td>21h</td>
<td>32.5h</td>
<td>53h 30m</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>84h</td>
<td>19h 15m</td>
<td>21h</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>47h 15m</td>
<td>46.5h</td>
<td>28h 30m</td>
<td>35h</td>
<td>45h 30m</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>58h 30m</td>
<td>33h</td>
<td>31h</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td>56h 15m</td>
<td>34.75h</td>
<td>19h 45m</td>
<td>26h 30m</td>
<td>32h 30m</td>
<td>46h 45m</td>
<td>3h</td>
<td>15m</td>
<td>19h 15m</td>
<td>24h 30m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7</td>
<td>48h 15m</td>
<td>26h</td>
<td>24h 15m</td>
<td>29h</td>
<td>34h</td>
<td>61h</td>
<td>30h</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>13h</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8</td>
<td>34h 15m</td>
<td>5.5h</td>
<td>12h</td>
<td>11h</td>
<td>39h 30m</td>
<td>45h 15m</td>
<td>13h</td>
<td>2h 30m</td>
<td>2h</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9</td>
<td>64h</td>
<td>34.25h</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>18h 15m</td>
<td>47h 45m</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>40h</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>420h</td>
<td>261h 45m</td>
<td>163h</td>
<td>265h 15m</td>
<td>362h 30m</td>
<td>266h 30m</td>
<td>286h 15m</td>
<td>79h</td>
<td>144h 15m</td>
<td>247h 54m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>52.5h</td>
<td>29.08h</td>
<td>20.38h</td>
<td>29.47h</td>
<td>40.28h</td>
<td>33.31h</td>
<td>31.81h</td>
<td>19.75h</td>
<td>18.03h</td>
<td>30.64h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.2 Time spent at AVLT by members

The findings from the survey show that members devote almost as much time and effort to AVLT as they do to their “day jobs,” even though they receive far less than the state’s minimum wage for their services, or often no wages at all. As can be seen in Figure 5.2, AVLT members spend on average 30 hours and 38 minutes per week working for the company. However, as can be seen in Table 5.2, the average income AVLT members earn for working 30h 38m work per week is $56, which means they earn $1.83/hour. Getting into specific key individuals of AVLT, during the survey period Matt Slaybaugh earned $5.71/hour, ER earned $3.86/hour, DW earned $3.14/hour, and MW
earned $1.24/hour. Considering that the Ohio Minimum Wage in 2010 was $7.30/hour (Ohio Department of Commerce, 2010), and that they put in almost full-time hours into the company, they were compensated far less than what they deserved.

Considering that AVLT is a professional and acclaimed theatre company, and its members are happy to support it in any way they can, these findings put into question scholarly definitions and interpretations of terms like “professionalism” and “volunteerism” where it comes to discussing SAOs, which may inadvertently lead to misjudging them.

It is true that in general, ‘small’ in SAOs is equivalent to ‘neglected,’ ‘ineligible,’ and ‘unprofessional.’ Here, professionalism can be a controversial concept. As defined in Random House Dictionary (2011), “professional” means “following an occupation as a means of livelihood or for gain.” However, as can be seen from the results of the AVLT workload survey, members earn far less than state minimum payment while putting in nearly full-time hours into their company. AVLT members and I had a conversation on the definition of “professional” after the company meeting on December 16, 2011. They are all aware that they do not have a consensus on the definition of the term. Some of them define the word according to whether or not an individual belongs to a union. Yet, most of the interviewees believed that they are professional at least in creating the arts, although they may not be professional in managing their SAOs. This divergence may tell us that we can think of two kinds of professionalism: managerial and artistic. In fact, when asked about innovation, many interviewees said that they are innovative artistically. If we think of innovation in the arts as an avant-garde type of activity, then Madlab
theatre was innovative, where the staff could experiment, which they did not have the opportunity to do in their main occupation.

Therefore, we also can think of categorizing SAOs with the two variables as in the Figure 5.1.

As mentioned earlier, many interviewees believe that they are artistically innovative and professional, which places their SAOs in A or B positions in the grid above. In fact, judging an individual or an organization and labeling them “artistically professional” or not is another big issue, which is beyond the scope of this dissertation.
Perhaps what support systems – including agencies at the national-, state-, and local levels – need to focus on is to help SAOs upgrade themselves from the A- to the B position. This will be further discussed and developed in the next chapter where SAOs’ balancing act between their mission and money – entrepreneurship – is discussed along with the Linking Mission to Money ® Grid.

**Benefits of Arts Administrators in SAOs**

Initially, I was not paying attention to the benefits that SAOs provide (or do not provide) individuals working for them. However, I had a personal experience that turned my attention to it. Two days before the last interview with Cathy Mast Kane of Landmark Foundation, I sprained my ankle. However, since I had not purchased the off-quarter student health insurance, I could not see a doctor until September 16th when my newly purchased student health insurance would become effective. This experience led me to realize that not having benefits can be very problematic, if not life-threatening, and it can interfere with arts administrators doing their jobs. After my direct experience with lack of health insurance, I began to ask interviewees about the health benefits offered by SAOs. Surprisingly, there was not a single SAO that offered health insurance in addition to financial compensation. Most of the interviewees purchased health insurance privately, or had health insurance through their family or spouses. In some cases, they had health insurance via their day jobs. Table 5.4 shows how the company members in AVLT are covered.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Health Insurance Provider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Artistic Director, Company Member</td>
<td>dependent on spouse’s plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ER</td>
<td>Director of Development &amp; Patron Services</td>
<td>from day job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>Company Member</td>
<td>from day job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS</td>
<td>Company Member</td>
<td>no health insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MW</td>
<td>Graphic Designer, Company Member</td>
<td>no health insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP1</td>
<td>Company Member</td>
<td>dependent on spouse’s plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS</td>
<td>Company Member</td>
<td>dependent on spouse’s plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DW</td>
<td>Production Manager, Company Member</td>
<td>no health insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JF</td>
<td>Company Member</td>
<td>no health insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EP2</td>
<td>Company Member</td>
<td>from day job</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.3 AVLT company members’ health benefits

As can be seen in Table 5.3, even in the most emerging SAO like AVLT, there was no possibility of offering benefits to any of the persons who worked in the SAO. I also found that the health benefit may be one of the main obstacles for SAOs to have fulltime employees. As Kane at Landmarks stated, “from an administrative perspective, one of the key advantages for a nonprofit organization in terms of hiring part-time people is that you don’t have the benefit expense that goes along with a full-time appointment” (personal communication, September 10, 2009).
It appears that the American health care system has failed small businesses, which has affected small arts organizations, as well. During the debates over President Obama’s health care reform bill, Americans for the Arts with 20 other national arts organizations released a statement to call on Congress to fully recognize the rights of individual artists and arts groups and to pass the health care reform bill (Americans for the Arts, 2009b). In the watered-down reform bill which was finally passed, however, the health care system for individual artists and arts groups left much to be desired.

5.3 Multidimensional Classification Scheme of SAOs and Four Types of SAOs

Using traditional standards that rely on a single variable to define small arts organizations makes it difficult to grasp the place of SAOs in the creative sector, that is, their dynamic interrelation with other organizations and individuals in and outside of several different sectors and disciplines. In fact, relying on budget size as the only variable may be misleading. Using different variables will lead to different conclusions regarding whether an SAO qualifies as “small.” Considering other variables and concepts would not only be useful, but is also necessary and would strengthen our understanding of SAOs.

Multiple indicators, such as human resources and community impact, as well as financial resources (e.g., receipts, revenue, budget) could be developed to define SAOs. Using the variable of the number of employees (human resources) would yield a different breakdown between small arts organizations versus larger arts organizations. For example, an arts organization may be categorized as mid-sized because its annual budget
is more than $100,000. However, this same organization may have zero employees because it is operated by volunteers. Thus, each indicator produces a different classification of size for the same organization.

Using the variable of the impact on the community would result in categorizing some SAOs with small budgets as “large” in terms of community impact. This impact may be measured in various ways. One may measure the number of people involved (including paid staff, volunteers, and audiences) and the hours that people commit to the organization. It is quite possible that some arts organizations are so small in terms of budget size, that they appear only online, yet reach many members of the community, perhaps more so than some traditional arts organizations with larger budgets. In this case, if categorized by their impact on the community, such organizations would be considered “large.”

Likewise, the physical size of the organization’s facility can also be used as a variable to determine whether the SAO is regarded as “small” or “large.” For instance, John Munger’s updated categorization of dance organizations in America uses multiple variables, such as number of artists and staff, genre, and impact of different organizational activities, in addition to budget size. Similarly, the Small Museum Committee of the AASLH, which incorporated multiple variables by which to establish an integrated definition of “small,” provides a useful model for identifying SAOs, as well.
In addition, my examination of SAOs and the various standards used to identify them led me to discover yet more ways of recognizing subtle but important differences among SAOs and their significance. As I tried to evaluate SAOs along the number of multiple indicators identified above, I realized that they can also be subdivided along the lines of their intention for future growth, forms of collaboration in which they engage, and their degree of community involvement.

For instance, it may be possible to categorize SAOs by their future aspirations to grow and become more professional (not just bigger) under the label of “Emerging.” Such SAOs have much possibility to grow to become larger arts organizations. Alternatively, we could categorize them as “entrepreneurial,” in the sense that they aim to both grow in terms of budget, personnel, and/or audience, or even in terms of their increasing professionalism.

Next, considering SAOs along their form of collaboration, many SAOs may be called either “Self-Subsidizing” or “Cooperatives.” The former includes SAOs whose members collaborate to subsidize a kind of work in which they are collectively interested, while the latter shares resources that are mainly used to support the work of individual member artists. Unlike the Emerging type, the Self-Subsidizing type is generally satisfied with its size. In actuality, the possibility of SAOs of this type to grow to be larger arts organizations may be limited due to their nature of being a volunteer-based organization. The Cooperative type SAO, in terms of its intention to grow, is more interested in developing and expanding the careers and artworks of individual member artists by
providing and sharing resources, facilities, and equipment, than in expanding their audiences (as Emerging type aspires to doing).

Finally, if we were to examine SAOs in terms of their degree of involvement in the local community, we could identify civic arts organizations that rely heavily on support from the local community in terms of both money and volunteer participation under the label of the “Civic Type.” Since their target audiences are usually more focused on the local community, this type of SAOs usually includes the name of the community in the organization’s name.

To sum up, based on my review of the literature and extensive communications with research managers, directors, and other administrators in arts agencies and national arts service associations, I have identified multiple indicators of “smallness” when defining “small” arts organizations: (1) intention for future growth, (2) form of collaboration in which SAOs engage, (3) degree of community involvement, (4) the number of paid staff, (5) volunteers operating key functions, (6) facility size, (7) annual budget, and (8) the size and scope of the collections and/or seasons.

If I evaluate the four possible types of SAOs mentioned above with these eight indicators, we can recognize the four types more clearly. For the “Emerging Type,” which wants and tries to grow and be more professional (not just big), all of the eight indicators would apply. A good example of this type of SAO would be Available Light Theatre.
For the “Self-Subsidizing” type, which has a specific mission and subsidizes itself, all of the eight indicators would apply. Unlike SAOs in the first type, Self-Subsidizing SAOs are generally satisfied with their size. Madlab Theater can be included in this type of SAOs.

For the “Cooperative” type, which supports individual development but not organizational growth itself, all of the eight indicators would apply. The “Cooperative Type” of SAOs is more interested in developing and supporting more member artists than developing and expanding their audiences. This type can be seen as a divergence of the second type of SAOs and can be called “shared cross subsidized organizations.” Phoenix Rising Printmaking Cooperative can be labeled as this type of an SAO.

Lastly, the “Civic” type arts organization is heavily based on the support of the local community. Since its target audience is generally the local community, this type of SAO usually uses the name of the community in its name and most of its members come from the community. The Landmark Foundation and the Westerville Civic Orchestra are good examples for this type of SAO.

So far in this chapter, brief sketches of the 13 SAOs were presented to reveal the diversity in the ecology of small arts organizations. Then, the common ground of SAOs within this diversity has been also analyzed, which was in short characterized as their flexibility. The flexibility that many SAOs share in contrast to large arts organizations was found in their various formations and management. Flexibility enables SAOs to be innovative, which is crucial for their creative vitality. Lastly in this chapter, four possible
types of SAOs along with combinations of eight variables were developed which enhance our ability to recognize both the uniqueness and the sub-categories of organizations that currently are all grouped into the single category of “small arts organizations.” Using multiple variables for determining the different variants of SAOs is likely to yield a more appropriate and precise definition of SAOs and a better understanding of their issues and needs. Indeed, this would be a worthwhile effort and a well-grounded starting point for acknowledging the importance of SAOs in the creative sector and in our local communities.
CHAPTER 6

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMALL ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

After the last show of the Stop Sign Language on September 26, 2010, the actors and staff of AVLT decided to add one more show starting at 9:15 p.m. because there were so many people who could not get in to see the show, who were willing to wait two more hours to see it if an additional show was available. Of course, the number of people willing to wait was enough to fill another show. This was just one incident among many other sold-out shows of AVLT in 2010.

Only four years ago, when members of AVLT had just started their new theatre company after BlueForms folded, they were having difficulty gathering an audience. In A/ThePostModernLoveStory (2006), there was one show when they performed in front of only four people, and even they were the parents or friends of company members. After the painful failure of BlueForms, there seemed to be no tangible hope for success, except for their passion to go on. However, the year 2010 turned out to be noteworthy not only in terms of AVLT’s financial success, but also its artistic success.
In 2010, AVLT’s show, Attempts on Her Life, received the 2010 GCAC Artistic Excellence Award from the Greater Columbus Arts Council. CATCO, the only equity theatre in Columbus, was among the competitors. In January 2011, AVLT was invited to the Critics Circle, which honored the theatre for its successful show of Merrily We Roll Along (2010). At the end of 2010, Jay Weitz, a theatre critic for the weekly paper* Columbus Alive*, selected ten best theatre shows and among them, four were AVLT’s productions, including Pride and Prejudice (2010), Attempts on Her Life (2010), Stop Sign [Language] (2010), and The Life and Death of Richard the Third (2010). Among the plays that were selected, Attempts on Her Life was chosen as Best Play and Stop Sign [Language] was chosen as Best New Work. Actor Ian Short was honored as Best Male Performance, actor Eleni Papaleonardos was awarded Best Female Performance, and the director of AVLT, Matt Slaybaugh, was honored with Best Direction (Weitz, 2010).

How did such a small and young theatre that once almost disappeared become one of the most successful, creatively vital theatres in the history of an average American city (not exactly NYC), Columbus, Ohio? As I discuss in this chapter, entrepreneurship is one of the three key levers that contribute to the success of emerging SAOs like AVLT. To discuss entrepreneurship, I explore AVLT in depth; in addition, I incorporate narratives from other SAOs, as needed. In terms of the levels of ecology, in this chapter, I mainly examine the microsystem-level where I focus on the effect of individuals’ entrepreneurship on the management of SAOs. However, I also consider the exosystem-level relationships such as the effect of the supporters’ entrepreneurial practices on the
experience of artists in SAOs and the macrosystem-level relationships such as how American culture of private donations drives the entrepreneurship of SAOs.

6.1 Entrepreneurship in SAOs

6.1.1 Awareness of the Concept

The concept of “entrepreneurship” is not quite so popular in the world of SAOs. For many individuals in SAOs whom I interviewed, the term connotes something that has more to do with business than with the arts, or something that applies to starting up a new organization. However, I was able to observe many practices in SAOs which can be explained by the term “entrepreneurship.” After all, SAOs are flexible and innovative enough to apply whatever they can to their management, to secure their sustainability and growth both artistically and financially. The fact that they are small allows them to be more flexible and innovative and enables them to take risks. As Barlup said, “We want to be a trailblazer, we want to think of the idea first, [and not the money]. . . We know we have to do it once we start to see it in the market” (personal communication, August 20, 2009).

We just don’t call it “entrepreneurship.” We are just trying to be the best that we can be and get the word out. . . . I think to [serve] in this economy all nonprofits need to be more innovative and continue to turn unturned stones. (Kathy Kane, personal communication, September 10, 2009)
Many interviewees linked the term “entrepreneurship” with their passion to take risks for whatever they believe is right. Some interviewees like members of Cloudhaus even understood that they would have to be crazy to undertake any kind of high-risk projects, but they actually appeared to be thriving on their reputation of being “crazy.” They think that being entrepreneurial or passionate is not only important for them to carry out their artistic endeavors, but it is also important for those who support them.

We just used to describe ourselves. [It is] passion . . . that brings us together. . . . Passion is a big thing about entrepreneurship. . . . You have to have passion; otherwise, people will see that and they will not support you. (Jeffery Aldridge, personal communication, April 4, 2011)

Cloudhaus is known not just for being crazy, but . . . crazy in a good way. [In this group,] everybody will think [various] artistic ideas, and . . . will be like, ‘Let’s do it!’ Like, we’re just going to do this and ‘Go for it.’ . . . it’s exciting and . . . it’s a result of the passion. (Kacy Stith, personal communication, April 4, 2011)

In fact, many of the individual supporters of AVLT that I interviewed told me that they were supporting AVLT especially because it is innovative both artistically and managerially. This perception of innovativeness could be easily linked to the SAO’s reputation for taking risks and always landing on its feet. Tim Dougherty, a guest actor who played the role of the sheriff in To Kill a Mockingbird (2010), pointed out that AVLT’s innovativeness attracts local artists. He stated in our interview:
Available Light has an excellent reputation locally as an innovative theatre [that] draws much of the highest quality local talent. It is really considered a big deal in the local theatre acting circles to be or have been associated with it as an actor. (Personal communication, July 9, 2011)

In many cases, similar to the public’s perception, the interviewees seemed to recognize avant-garde arts as “innovative.” Some interviewees stated that they are innovative more in an artistic way. As Barlup said, “Artistically, I think we are much more innovative than we are business-wise” (personal communication, August 20, 2009).

6.1.2 Bricolage: Creating with Anything Available at Hand

The SAOs’ reputation of taking risks and succeeding was emphasized even more, because their existing resources alone were not enough to get anything done. However, within the scarcity of resources, SAOs still realize their goal. As Brent Jones, a former BlueForms member and a big supporter of AVLT, said, “[AVLT] always gets the job done somehow” (personal communication, July 7, 2010). And this “somehow” can be captured in the term “bricolage.”

Bricolage is usually defined as “making do by applying combinations of the resources at hand to new problems and opportunities” (Baker & Nelson, 2005, p. 333). In their article, “Creating something from nothing: Resource construction through entrepreneurial bricolage,” Baker and Nelson borrow Levi-Stauss’s concept of “bricolage” to explain how entrepreneurs manage with very few resources, rather than accepting limitations.
Studies about bricolage have not been developed fully to create any deductive theory, and the relationship between bricolage and firm performance has not been systematically tested (Senyard, Baker & Davidson, 2009). However, as most research about bricolage has been qualitative and inductive (Garud & Karnoe, 2003), it has created a body of rich descriptions and interesting insights especially for business administration and entrepreneurship. The most important implication of bricolage is that entrepreneurs can create something out of nothing, which goes against an objective view of resources and suggests a “constructivist” approach.

The practice of bricolage can be seen frequently in the arts. For example, artists utilize various unusual objects as instruments, such as in the cases of saw playing. Stomp, the non-verbal musical, is a good example of bricolage in music and dance. To produce music, the actors in Stomp utilize everyday objects like trash cans and broomsticks. Just like Stomp, the South Korean hit non-verbal musical, Cookin’ Nanta (1997 ~ present), is also a good example of bricolage. Cookin’ Nanta is a popular Korean musical comedy that debuted in 1997 and has been running ever since. In Korean, the term “nanta” means “to batter”; in this show, it implies hitting anything at hand to make music. Incorporating traditional Korean drum beats, performers onstage as cooks in a kitchen preparing for a wedding banquet make use of pots, pans, knives, chopping boards, dishes and all sorts of everyday items as their percussion instruments to produce music.
Bricolage in Arts Making

Just like these bricolage practices, SAOs definitely use many everyday resources available to them in order to produce artworks. On June 16, 2011, I attended the Thursday Night Concert Series in McConnell Arts Center in Worthington, Ohio, where Jared Mahone and his band, J.A.M. Sessions, performed. During the concert, I marveled at how the percussionist Matt used Cajon, a wooden box with a hole. Players beat this box with their bare hands, which is another good example of bricolage. The percussionist also used various wooden and metal sticks to keep the beat for the band. Mahone, the band leader, used the looping pedal, a digital sampler built into an easy-to-use pedals to create looping layers of beat and melody. This looping pedal is a recent evolution of the tape loop which is a loop of prerecorded magnetic tape used to create repetitive, musical patterns or dense layers of sound.

The tape loop has been utilized by many contemporary composers and musicians and the looping pedal was devised to perform the tape loop in live performances. Mahone used the looping pedal to record his beat box and repeated guitar melody, which created a surprisingly rich band effect for such a small band. The looping pedal indicates that adopting an available new technology is important in the practice of bricolage. The next chapter discusses the uses of such new technologies by SAOs.

The looping pedal was also used in AVLT’s recent show, The Food Play (2011). In this play, the one-man band, Saturday Giant, used the looping pedal to create sonorous background music and ear-catching songs for the play during the whole show. Philip
Cogley, the sole member of Saturday Giant, literally stood alone at the corner of the multi-stage, while he performed not only the vocals, but also all of the instruments, including beat-boxing, guitar, keyboards, and percussions by himself. He said, “I use looping extensively. . . I might play a figure on the guitar, trigger a phrase sampler to replay that figure, and then I’ll add a bass line, a keyboard part or some beat-boxing – or all of the above. And then I sing, too. . . I’m pretty busy when I perform” (Joy, 2011).

In Skyscrapers of the Midwest (2011), Dave Wallingford, the production manager in AVLT was in charge of sounds during the show. He gave a live demonstration of bricolage as he made every kind of sound effect using daily items that were not necessarily designed for making sounds. For example, in the corner of the stage, he scrunched a handful of dried twigs to create the sound of the city on fire; or he hit the desk with his fist to imitate a giant robot’s footsteps.

**Bricolage across Artistic and Managerial Tasks**

In addition to using bricolage in creating the arts, I have observed that SAOs also practice bricolage in carrying out their managerial tasks. AVLT’s fundraiser shows are a good example. In early 2008, Emily Rhode, a board member of AVLT and an MBA student, contacted Artie Isaac, the founder of Young Isaac Inc., a Columbus marketing consultancy and advertising agency. At the time, Rhode was taking a class that Isaac taught at the OSU Fisher College of Business. Rhode had read a blog posting of Isaac’s, where he expressed his hope to be cast in the play, Our Town, by Thornton Wilder.
Rhode told Isaac that AVLT can help and she introduced him to Slaybaugh, the artistic director of AVLT. Isaac recalled:

I thought, ‘I’ve done this, I’ve done this for 18 years, it’s enough, I have no ambition . . . to invest more in my business.’ I was at that time preparing for my first theatrical performance in 25 years, the play Our Town by Thornton Wilder. . . . I told [Slaybaugh] my story about why I wanted to do the play. And he . . . [listened] and at the end of my description, he said, “Listen, I really respect your reason for wanting to do this, it is not the kind of show we do, but . . . if you would be kind enough to give me marketing strategy and consulting, I will . . . produce it for you.” And we leaped in together and that’s how it started. (Artie Isaac, personal communication, July 6, 2010, 2011)

This is how collaboration between AVLT and Young Isaac, and thereby the amalgamation of artistic skills-set and managerial skills-set, began. The resulting production became AVLT’s fundraiser show.

For the fundraiser show, AVLT engaged in bricolage utilizing both artistic and managerial resources. AVLT now had a marketing/managerial skills-set provided by Isaac that had been proven for the past 18 years. Slaybaugh and AVLT had artistic skills that were highly reputable in the local community. These skills were not the only resources they had; the company had more professional actors and actresses than they needed, all of whom were eager to be part of AVLT’s productions which are known for
their quality. There were also many amateur actors like Isaac, who wanted to participate in the theatre production process. In addition, there were many traditional plays to choose from, like Our Town, which did not require Available Light’s additional creative writing of the script. Slaybaugh decided to produce Our Town in particular because it would draw a wide audience.

AVLT tendency is to produce more contemporary and original plays that are usually provocative and sometimes even aggressive. However, being avant-garde limited AVLT’s ability to gather audiences. Therefore, Available Light made a compromise in its artistic preference in choosing to produce Our Town, which was a big hit. Soon after, Isaac became the first chair of AVLT’s board and the board decided to present this kind of fundraiser show annually so that AVLT could afford to produce the kinds of original works it preferred that unfortunately are money-losing productions. After Our Town, Available Light presented many more fundraiser shows, including The Odd Couple (2009), To Kill a Mockingbird (2010), Merrily We Roll Along (2010) and ConAm’s Annual Xmas Spectacular (2009, 2010) regularly in its season program.

By expanding the one-time fundraiser show into their regular program at the beginning of each season, AVLT was flush to start its season. In addition to managing to have stable cash flow, the theatre began to have more enthusiastic supporters by casting them in its shows. Among these supporters is Jim Coe, who works for WCBE, the local NPR radio station. He was cast in a minor role in Our Town in 2008 and ever since, he has been an avid supporter of Available Light. It seems that for Coe, who repeatedly described AVLT as “top-notch!” (personal communication, May 12, 2010), being part of
the artistic activities of a theatre that is known for producing contemporary plays – which connotes innovativeness – was something to be proud of. Coe shows up at almost every event of AVLT and even tries to display information about AVLT in WCBE’s fundraising events, although he has declined the invitation to be a board member of Available Light due to time constraints. AVLT thanked Coe by honoring him in its annual fundraiser, Feed Your Soul, in 2011. Available Light posted the following thank-you note to Coe on its website.

    Jim Coe is one of Available Light’s biggest fans. We know that because he’s told us so . . . He comes to almost every show, and always brings friends. . . . He shares his passionate and emotional responses with us . . .

    Jim gives monetarily, yes, and more importantly he's connected us with wonderful partners with simpatico beliefs, like Simply Living and WCBE. And if you thank him for his efforts . . . Jim is known to utter the most wonderful words, “Don’t thank me. I have to help. It’s my community.”

    (Available Light Theatre, 2011)

AVLT’s production of Our Town (2008), an avant-garde theatre company presenting a traditional but well-known play, had beneficial results: a wider audience and more enthusiastic supporters. The fundraiser show like Our Town is evidence of the successful use of bricolage.


**Bricolage in the Use of Space**

Flexibility in the use of space is another example of SAOs’ daily practice of bricolage using both artistic and managerial resources at hand. For example, AVLT utilized the kitchen and dining area of the North Market, the local farmers’ market in Columbus, as its venue for performing The Food Play. Members of AVLT actively used every corner of the kitchen and dining area to create a multi-stage. Or Spirit Filled Productions usually used places like vacant corners in hospitals, churches, nursing homes, and assisted living centers in the local community for its performances rather than the regular performing arts venues such as King Arts Complex and Columbus Performing Arts Center.

SAOs also practice bricolage by using various abandoned places as their space for their stages or studios. For example, Glass Axis transformed a tire factory that was no longer in use into its glass arts facility. Madlab Theatre purchased a vacant auto bodyshop and turned it into a unique and useful theatre and gallery. This kind of bricolage of turning abandoned spaces into arts venues has been supported and implemented as a revitalization strategy in many cities in response to concerns about the spreading of slums.

Regarding office space, many SAOs actually cannot afford to rent an office for their managerial work and meetings. However, they are usually flexible and mobile enough to use any place where there is a table and some chairs to serve as their office. A coffeeshop, for example, is often a good alternative for an office. AVLT was lucky to
recently (April of 2010) rent a small office space in the Riffe Center downtown for a minimal fee from the Columbus Association of Performing Arts. At the same time, it also continues to use its longtime office, Luck Bros, a local coffeeshop. Dove Arts Project also uses the Urban-Spirit coffeeshop as its office. For Cloudhaus, a big room behind KOBO, a local bar, serves as an office and meeting room.

Using such public spaces as their office provides SAOs with unexpected opportunities to connect them with their local communities. First of all, once the owner of the space gets to know the SAO, he or she often becomes a staunch supporter. For example, Andy Luck, the owner of Luck Bros coffeeshop where many local artists gather, supports many events of SAOs in Columbus by providing space and coffee for them. He is a certified barista which he believes is an artist. He told me that supporting SAOs is his way of sharing his passion.

I think passionate people group together. They find each other and the passions may not be the same [but] I see myself being very drawn to the theater or painting. . . . It’s the overlapping parts of passion [in which] we find common ground. (Andy Luck, personal communication, January 19, 2011)

Second, since those spaces like coffeeshops and bars are public spaces, SAOs have more chances to meet their audiences and receive live comments about themselves and their work. For example, on January 17, 2011, when I was conducting an interview with Sean Lewis, a guest artist of AVLT, we were constantly interrupted by admirers
who recognized him from his recent performance. Lewis was very flattered by this feedback. It made this Iowa-based artist appreciate the local Columbus community, saying, “This is what I love about Columbus!” (Sean Lewis, personal communication, January 17, 2011)

Bricolage in the Use of Human Resources

The most important practice of bricolage in SAOs is their creative use of human resources. Once SAOs realize an individual’s ability, they are very open to put him/her in charge of new tasks. In every SAO that I encountered, individuals were wearing many hats across the board. Not to mention Matt Slaybaugh who is a Jack of all trades in AVLT, Michelle Whited provides a good example of bricolage in the use of human resources. Prior to becoming company member and finally being hired as operations manager of AVLT, she was really not involved in theatre. She was just interested in theatre and had good skills at sewing and home decoration, enjoying them as a hobby. She joined AVLT accidentally when the SAO was desperate to find a costumer when it was preparing Dead City (2008), which required numerous costume changes and very specific costumes. She successfully completed her first costume designing and producing job for AVLT. After that, she expanded her work in AVLT to design the company’s brochures and posters. Whited then also started to appear in AVLT’s plays in minor roles and finally became stage manager in Stop [Sign Language] (2011). She stated:

I never really had any theatrical training. I was always interested in theater . . . but . . . I always had . . . a small role [in plays in high school
and in a community theatre] or a chorus person . . . but as a child . . . I learned to sew from [my mother] and so her sewing skills translated to costume design. . . . I’m one of those people who will . . . take on whatever responsibility is needed and I’m not afraid of challenges, not afraid to try new things. (Michelle Whited, personal communication, July 15, 2010)

Whited now has a day job of Production Manager at Skreened, a custom t-shirt shop, where she uses her designing skills that she even improved through working in AVLT. Currently, she is recognized as a professional in stage managing so much so that, in April 2011, she was asked by Phoenix Children’s Theatre in Columbus to be the stage manager for Charlotte’s Web (2011).

Another example that indicates a good effect of bricolage in SAO’s use of human resources for both the SAOs and the participating individuals is the case of Pam Welsh-Huggins. She joined AVLT as a music director in Merrily We Roll Along (2010), which was a big hit for AVLT. After the show, Welsh-Huggins was highly acclaimed by Michael Grossberg, one of the most influential theatre critics in Columbus, who is usually quite critical in his reviews. She now is a music director who enjoys high repute in Columbus’s theatre circles.

Surprisingly, Welsh-Huggins never had any formal music training. She has two master’s degrees: one from Brown University in English and another from Indiana University in American Studies and English. She has taught high-school English and
writes poetry. However, her music skills were self-taught. Most of her training was through various church choirs and community arts organizations with some additional private lessons. She shared,

I’m largely self-taught. I mean, in high school I took a lot of music classes, but really the bulk of my music education ended in about 1980. . . . I homeschooled my kids for thirteen years, and the short story . . . is that a friend of mine who is also a home-school mom heard me singing to my kids and she said, “You know, I’m a church choir director, I need a paid section leader soloist. You’ve got a nice voice, come and audition for me.” . . . and I started [a] caroling group [and] started doing music classes with [young people in Davis Center for Performing Arts and Phoenix Theatre for Children, as well as in private lessons]. . . . It started to grow on its own, very organically. . . . [At last,] Matt Slaybaugh asked me to music-direct [Merrily We Roll Along]. . . . I would say that everything I’ve been able to do here as a musician in Columbus arose out of the opportunity that I had to sing at St. Patrick’s Catholic Church downtown.
(Pam Welsh-Huggins, personal communication, January 14, 2010)

It seems that SAOs’ lack of financial resources to hire professionals leads to their practice of bricolage in human resources. Usually SAOs do so by creative and flexible use of human resources at hand or through personal networking. Whited, for example, was a close friend of Ian Short, a founding member of AVLT. When a person with just the right skills is not found within the organization or through personal networking,
mobilizing volunteers and interns is another option. AVLT currently has a webpage on the company’s website for anyone to easily apply for the volunteer and intern positions by filling in their information on the webpage. Xiaolu Chen, who was a graduate student at the Ohio State University from China, told me that through volunteering for many managerial tasks at AVLT, from ushering to marketing, he learned a lot about the management of American arts organizations (personal communication, January 14, 2010). He is now working as a project manager at Ullens Center for Contemporary Art located at 798 Art Zone (Dashanzi Art District) in Beijing, which is known worldwide for its contemporary arts productions. As can be seen in the case of Whited and Chen, SAOs function as the incubator of the arts world, providing on-the-job training.

_drawbacks of bricolage_

Engaging in bricolage opens many possibilities for SAOs. However, it can also lead SAOs to neglect to plan ahead, believing that they can solve any problems that come up with whatever resources they may have at hand. Indeed, being so accustomed to coping with emergencies, many SAOs lack a concrete long-term plan. Out of 13 selected SAOs in this study, less than half (AVLT, Columbus Landmark, Couchfire, Glass Axis, MadLab, Westerville Orchestra) had planned out the year ahead. For instance, AVLT, which had the most developed plan among the SAOs, struggled to prepare an actual program for the season of 2011-2012 until early July. And when I asked other SAOs where they see themselves in three years, none seemed to be able to come up with a long-term plan, either. Barlup exclaimed in the middle of our interview, “Gosh, we’re so focused on the short-term right now” (personal communication, August 20, 2009).
Actually, it may be especially because of their lack of resources that SAOs used bricolage as a last resort.

There were some cases that indicated too much bricolage prohibited SAOs from making any plans beyond their immediate projects. Some SAOs even seemed to be proud of how they got by on a shoestring. Balmazi at KIACA gallery counted on personality and networking to carry the company forward; however, these alone were not enough and his company folded one year after I interviewed him. Certainly, bricolage works when it is well-strategized, which is an oxymoron.

Baker and Nelson (2005) also pointed out that bricolage may be harmful if not used judiciously. The authors suggested that bricolage takes place in various domains such as physical input, labor, customers, or skills. They divided up firms that they studied into three evenly sized groups: (1) ‘parallel bricolage,’ which includes companies that practice bricolage in almost every domain; (2) ‘selective bricolage,’ which includes companies that use bricolage from time to time, but not as a core part of their management; and (3) ‘none,’ which includes groups that almost never engage in bricolage at all. Their findings suggest that companies engaged in selective bricolage tend to grow more while those engaged in parallel bricolage or none often find it more difficult to grow.

Likewise, SAOs that participated in this study have all engaged in some level of bricolage. The fact that they all lacked resources has driven them to resort to bricolage. However, some SAOs indicated that they were engaged in ‘parallel bricolage,’ without
much planning. These SAOs generally did not have a working board to manage their affairs. Without the board’s guidance, especially SAOs run only by families and friends, parallel bricolage reinforces the other domains to engage in bricolage in turn, in a domino effect. However, some SAOs that have a working board such as AVLT, Westerville Symphony, and MadLab theatre, took advantage of selective bricolage with the judicious lead of their board.

**Factors that Enable Bricolage**

Baker and Nelson (2005) suggested that bricolage is associated with a number of different elements that include: (1) a diverse trove of physical resources, (2) broad self-taught skills, (3) violation of norms, (4) a multiple network, and (5) multiply reinforcing use of bricolage. With these elements in mind, in this study, I observed and identified three factors – flexibility, close-knit personal networking, and use of IT – that enable individuals in SAOs to be bricoleurs, persons who engage in bricolage.

As discussed in the earlier section titled “Common Ground of SAOs,” flexibility is one characteristic that SAOs share. It enables them to adapt to fast-changing and uncertain situations. Flexibility is also associated with one of the elements of bricolage, which Baker and Nelson (2005) have labeled “violation of norms.” So it is a key factor which allows SAOs to practice bricolage. SAOs thus are able to be innovative, which is crucial for their creative vitality.

In addition to flexibility, SAOs’ intimate relationship with their constituencies such as audiences and supporters also enables them to engage in bricolage. Such
relationships tend to grow into “multiple networks,” which is one of the elements of bricolage that Baker and Nelson (2005) suggested. For example, AVLT has such an intimate relationship with its audiences and supporters that it seems to be able to find answers to any problems that come up through its close-knit personal networking. The company’s intimate relationship with its constituencies also relates to its active collaboration with other organizations. AVLT produced and presented The Food Play (2011), collaborating with small eateries, local farmers, and even membership associations to advocate those small businesses.

The Food Play was performed in the kitchen and dining areas of North Market. In each performance, participating local restaurants or farmers provided real food and even appeared in the show as a form of interview. The helpers, who served as both ushers and waiters, guided the audience to the seats and served the food that was provided. These helpers were to be mobilized by the association called Local Matters. However, a week before the first show, Local Matters notified AVLT that it could not gather enough volunteers. When Matt Slaybaugh was informed of this, he posted a request for volunteers on the company’s online site for its board members and company members, who found enough helpers through their personal networking in no time. This example of AVLT is evidence that in-depth personal networking is a crucial factor for an SAO to practice bricolage.

This in-depth personal networking is related to the use of technology. All of the SAOs in my study use at least one social media site to communicate with each other, as well as with supporters and audiences. The social media enhances SAOs’ communication
with their constituencies. This enhanced communication within and outside the SAO via the social media is further discussed in the next chapter.

SAOs’ use of Internet-based technologies or information technology invigorates their practice of bricolage. The low learning threshold of IT enables many individuals in SAOs to carry out many artistic and managerial tasks on the spur of the moment. IT indeed enhance “broad self-taught skills,” another element of bricolage that Baker and Nelson (2005) suggested. For example, many different photo-editing applications allow SAOs to print professional-looking documents such as posters, programs, and brochures without much effort. It was also observed that a majority of people in SAOs use Macintosh computers that have powerful but easy-to-use video-editing programs and photo-editing programs. All ten members of AVLT, for example, use Macintosh computers rather than a PC. Slaybaugh uses video-editing programs in Mac to produce a preview of AVLT’s plays. Dove also produces highlights of his dance production in Mac and uploads them in YouTube to share them with his peers. Mahone frequently uploads edited video clips of their rehearsals and concerts on their webpage.

Members’ degree of familiarity with IT affects the success of bricolage in the organization and collectively forms the SAO’s innovativeness. Research suggests that firm innovativeness may play an important role in shaping the outcomes of bricolage (Anderson, 2008). For example at AVLT, every member is familiar with IT to some extent, enough that no one is reluctant to use new applications available online. This allows them to use many free or affordable online tools. SAOs’ use of these applications reduces the time and energy required to carry out a particular task. For instance, when
they schedule rehearsal times or meetings, they use Doodle.com, which is a free Internet calendar tool for managing time and coordinating meetings. With an easy web-based information gathering platform, Doodle.com eliminates the hassle of scheduling a meeting for so many busy people and saves a lot of time and energy when people are trying to find the time for a majority of people to get together.

My observation of the three factors of bricolage – flexibility, close-knit personal networking, and use of IT – confirms the observation of the Institute for the Future (2008). Describing the new world of entrepreneurship of small businesses, the institute’s report, “The New Artisan Economy,” anticipates that small businesses will re-emerge in the next ten years as an economic force. The report places significant value on small organizations’ agility, flexibility, and deep customer knowledge and states that these factors can be made even more relevant by the use of IT. These characteristics identified in the institute’s report match the factors that I found to be true in the SAOs that I studied.

6.2 Significance of an Individual’s Entrepreneurship in Small Arts Organizations

6.2.1 Linking Mission to Money

According to Allen Proctor (2010), a nonprofit consultant in Columbus, in contrast to for-profit business, non-profit is willing to provide services that are unprofitable, if they correspond to their mission. Likewise, all the SAOs (both for- and non-profits) in this study have shown this willingness to serve the community through their arts. The problem is that SAOs cannot survive if they engage only in unprofitable services; they must be able to engage in profitable services to sustain their creative
vitality. Proctor argues that linking mission relevance and profitability is basic to setting the strategy of the nonprofits. This is true for the SAOs that I studied. Proctor visualizes the link between the mission relevance and profitability as illustrated in Figure 6.1. In the figure, the vertical axis measures how relatively important each activity is to the organization’s mission and the horizontal axis measures the profitability of the activity.

![Figure 6.1 Linking Mission to Money grid (Proctor, 2010)](image)

Proctor (2010) contends that whether nonprofit’s strategy is sound and properly links mission to money depends on the mission relevance of activities that are positioned in 1 and 3 in Figure 6.1. He sees that activity located on A is okay for nonprofits, even
though it loses a good deal of money because the mission score is high. He claims that activities along the line between 1 and 3 should strategically be distributed to sustain the organization’s vitality. In this study, I view the line as an SAO’s balancing line between mission and money and observe that entrepreneurship, technology, and support systems are the key levers that move the balancing line between mission and money from C to B, while maintaining the degree of the slope. Among the key levers, entrepreneurship is the most basic and direct lever that links the mission and money of the SAOs.

In the above figure, if the axis of profitability is switched to managerially professional and the axis of mission relevance is switched to artistically professional, we can also visualize how entrepreneurship enhances the creative vitality of SAOs (Figure 6.2) along the two different professionalism scales that I illustrated in Figure 5.1.

![Figure 6.2 Leveraging balancing line](image-url)

Figure 6.2 Leveraging balancing line
6.2.2 Arts Administrator as Superman

In 2001, the Ohio Arts Council (OAC) conducted an extensive survey of arts organizations in the state of Ohio. In the process, it made a special effort to include SAOs. The OAC found that “information about small arts organizations is essential to the blueprint” of the arts world (OAC) and developed an extensive directory of more than four hundred SAOs by geographic region and specific art discipline. Among their key findings regarding the characteristics of SAOs were that “many SAOs are driven by one person, and if that person leaves the group, the organization often ceases to exist. Similarly, individuals working in these organizations are highly committed” (Ohio Arts Council, 2001).

The findings from my research also indicate that one individual’s leadership is crucial for the performance of the SAO. Usually, most of the SAOs in my research were organized by a central individual and the individual’s personal network. In some cases such as that of Sandra Rolland in Spirit Field Production, Alfred Dove in Dove Project and Jared Mahone in Jared Mahone band, the individual shapes the organization. Even when an SAO claims to be an ensemble or a collective of artists, it usually operates around a key individual who shows exceptional leadership and entrepreneurship. For example, although AVLT claims to be “a fellowship of artists dedicated to building a more conscious and compassionate world by creating joyful and profound theatre” in its mission statement, Matt Slaybaugh, the artistic director, is the key individual who drives the company. Even though Jared Lindenau, the executive director of Cloudhaus, denies his significant role in the artist collective saying he is “not by any means . . . in charge of
anyone [in the company,]” (personal communication, April 4, 2011), everyone in the collective pointed out that it was his leadership that enabled organizing Cloudhaus into the organization it has become today. For members of Cloudhaus, the key leadership is that Lindenau seems to harmonize many different perspectives into action. As Jeffery Aldridge, a member of Cloudhaus, said, Lindenau can “effectively micromanage… not in the annoying like… I’m-over-your-shoulder-constantly way” (personal communication, April 4, 2011).

When the individual’s leadership/entrepreneurship is well worked out and fully supported, the SAO becomes sustainable. In Available Light Theatre (AVLT), Matt Slaybaugh, the artistic director, was the key individual in forming the company and Artie Isaac, a board member, understood Matt’s artistic vision; so he pledged his full support and catalyzed the company to dramatically grow. AVLT was first formed out of the former organization, Blue Forms Theatre, in early 2006, mostly with the personal connection of Slaybaugh. Slaybaugh later met Artie Isaac, who at the time was looking for a way to fulfill his artistic thirst after retiring from his own advertising agency. Isaac gathered together the board members and formed the Board of Trustees. AVLT was then incorporated in 2009 as 501(c)3. Fully understanding the significance of the leading individual’s leadership, AVLT clearly states in its by-laws that “board members must support the artistic direction of Matt Slaybaugh. As a board, it is our strategic policy to help Matt realize his artistic vision.” AVLT is currently the most active theatre in Columbus in terms of the number of original shows it presents. It is highly reputable, as indicated by the number of sold-out shows and number of favorable or controversial

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comments from the critics and audiences. At the end of 2010, when Columbus Alive, a local weekly news magazine, selected ten best plays in 2010 in Columbus, four of them were AVLT’s shows.

Although his background is an artist in theatre, Slaybaugh recognizes the importance of leadership and entrepreneurship to run an SAO. He is involved in and works for almost every aspect of AVLT’s business. He even designs and manages AVLT’s website which is quite up-to-date and very interactive. It seems that he actually enjoys these administrative tasks.

6.2.3 Burning Out Arts Administrators in SAOs

However, relying only on one individual’s super leadership cannot sustain the organization in the long run. If the superman or superwoman leaves, the SAO collapses. Or if the superman/woman is not super, the SAO usually does not fare well. OAC also found that many SAOs “fear the organization will not succeed if [the key individuals. . . ] leave it” (Ohio Arts Council, 2001). Artie Isaac, the AVLT board member points out, “We are asking in a small arts organization, way too much of one person. We’re asking [them . . .] to be all these things-entrepreneur, leader, creative innovator – that’s a lot to ask of anybody. It’s almost like nobody could possibly do it” (Artie Isaac, personal communication, February 24, 2011).

The discussion above implies that the point of the support for the SAOs should be to support the leadership and entrepreneurship of the individuals in the SAO. One of the powerful tools to enhance the leadership and entrepreneurship of individuals in the SAO
is technology. Among the various technologies that can support SAOs and the individuals in the SAOs, this paper especially focuses on the social media.

6.3 Need for Entrepreneurship in the Support System

In my research, I observed that SAOs can be bolstered by a strong support system that believes in them. All of the SAOs count on support from family and friends and from public arts agencies. For SAOs like Dove Arts Project, J.A.M. Sessions, Spirit Filled Productions and Thiossane West African Dance Institute, volunteering from their family members is crucial for their management. SAOs like AVLT and Madlab Theatre depend on personal relationships for both their artistic and managerial tasks. SAOs also always search for and receive grants from the public arts agencies such as Ohio Arts Council, Greater Columbus Arts Council and Columbus Foundations. This traditional type of support tends to come in the form of financial or human resources, along with much good will.

In addition to support from these individual and private donors, volunteers, and public arts agencies, SAOs receive support from other non-profits or businesses (arts or non-arts), or even from individuals that collaborate with them to realize a common goal. These supporters tend to have their own agenda, whether marketing or a collaborative project, while they provide support. I have observed a lot of entrepreneurship play out in this type of support and have concluded that, as much as SAOs need to be entrepreneurial to sustain their creative vitality, their support systems also need to be entrepreneurial.
Following are some examples of entrepreneurial support from other non-profit or for-profit and arts or non-arts organizations, or from individuals.

Westerville Symphony is mainly supported by a larger organization like Otterbein University. The SAO receives financial assistance in the form of a class enrolment fee from Otterbein by serving as the performance ensemble for the students who get credit by enrolling to perform in Westerville Symphony. Some board members are appointed by the university. In turn, Westerville is also supported by the university with physical facilities such as performance/rehearsal venues and other business amenities such as computer rooms. Thus it can be said that Otterbein University utilizes the local SAO to meet its needs by supporting it, which may be far more cost-effective than operating its own ensemble or orchestra.

Madlab obtained financial support from Scion, a subsidiary of Toyota. The SAO was selected as one of 30 partner non-profit organizations nationwide in the 2010 Scion x-CHANGE program and was awarded more than $13,000 which helped MadLab cover its expenses to purchase its new theatre and gallery venue. As stated in Scion’s (2010) press release, the program “is designed to harness the passion for preserving creative opportunities and elevate localized action into a national network of nonprofits, artists, retailers and activists” (p. 1). However, as stated by Steve Hatanaka, Scion auto shows and special events manager who is quoted in the press release, Scion wants to associate its brand with “independent thinking and originality,” which the company seems to have found in SAOs around the United States. By taking a risk in supporting these SAOs that have not quite proven themselves, Scion is practicing its entrepreneurship in marketing in
a new way. Hatanaka said, the program “recognizes that brand awareness can be more than purchasing ad space. It can be a catalyst for community support and artistic expression” (Scion Public Relations, 2010, p. 1).

AVLT was also provided a performing venue from North Market and received food and other implements from local businesses and farmers to produce its new play. North Market, the local farmers’ market in Columbus, offered the venue for AVLT’s The Food Play (2011), as the show’s content was intended to promote consuming the locally grown foods, which, in large, helps the North Market promote its own business. Local Matters, a non-profit advocate of the local food industry, was involved in the production of The Food Play, mainly connecting AVLT with local food suppliers such as farmers and restaurants because the show was clearly aligned with its mission. Local food businesses and farmers around Columbus such as Jeni’s Splendid Ice Creams and Snowville Creamery supported the show. They supplied food and appeared for interview scenes in the performance. Their participation and support of the show in turn helped them market their products at no monetary cost.

Trish Bishop, the partner of Backroom Coffee Roasters, met Ryan Morgan, a board member of AVLT, when she was looking for an opportunity to publicize her new coffee shop. As she told me in our interview, “we’re new and we have our products, our coffee in these markets and” (personal communication, January 22, 2011). Though she did not complete the thought, nor explicitly specify her purpose, the hand gesture she made implied that she was most likely looking for a marketing opportunity. Bishop told me that when Morgan spoke of AVLT to her, she thought AVLT sounded like a very
good organization to support. AVLT claimed to be an organically grown arts organization, whose mission would match her coffee shop being local and organic. Therefore, starting in January 2011, Bishop contracted with AVLT for one year to sell coffee on show nights. This in turn helped AVLT leave the trouble of managing the refreshments to Backroom Coffee Roasters.

Katzinger’s, a Columbus deli and catering business, provides food to many events of AVLT such as its annual fundraiser, Feed Your Soul, and events like Reun-Ian which was both a birthday party for Ian Short, an AVLT member, and a members-only reunion for free or at cost. AVLT also uses storage space provided by a local storage company, Morningstar Storage. The company set a stipulation that 5% of its storage space should go to non-profit organizations for free and it uses this contribution as an income tax exemption. Both Katzinger’s Deli and Morningstar Storage in turn get free publicity, as AVLT acknowledges their support and prints information about them in its programs.

This kind of support from local businesses comprises only a small percentage of their budget, while it makes an enormous difference in the survival of SAOs. Wolf Starr, the founder and CEO of Small Business Beanstalk (SBB), shared during our interview that he was at a Buckeye football game in September 2009 among thousands of fans clad in scarlet and gray when he realized how this mechanism works. It was then that he came up with the concept of the SBB. Starr’s idea at first was to provide professional services such as attorneys and accountants to multiple small businesses at a time. He saw that this way of grouping small businesses under the umbrella of SBB could enhance their buying power. He also saw this match-making and concierge service as a way to reduce the fees
to each small business. Then in January 2010, he expanded this idea and launched the SBB Community Card for member businesses. The card is distributed for free, and anyone using it can receive a discount. And once a business becomes a member, it can attract a larger number of consumers who have an SBB card.

This business model falls somewhere between the rewards card model of general retail stores, such as Kroger or CVS, and the social commerce model of IT companies, such as Groupon or Living Social, which have recently become a huge hit in the retail business world. Social commerce, which also has a significant effect on SAOs’ marketing, is discussed in the next chapter along with social media. In the SBB Community Card network, member businesses are usually small businesses in the local community, who pay an annual membership fee ($300 as of June 2011). Non-profit arts organizations, however, do not pay a membership fee; rather, they become partners. Starr, a musician himself, sees this as his way of supporting SAOs. And it is also his way of practicing entrepreneurship. He articulated his thoughts on entrepreneurship as follows:

Essentially, as an entrepreneur I’m more an artist than a businessman. . . . I’m creating something that never existed before; and I think that’s the difference between an entrepreneur and a businessman in my mind. . . . [As] a businessman, you use the tools which are in front of you to make commerce flow. As an entrepreneur, you create those tools. (Wolf Starr, personal communication, January 14, 2011)
Clearly, the SBB Community Card is the tool Starr created to support small businesses. From what he said during our interview, he sees those who support small businesses, including SAOs, can be more entrepreneurial as in the case of what he is doing.

Though not as systematic as Starr, other individual supporters of SAOs practice entrepreneurship, as well. The way guest artists work with AVLT is evidence of supporters’ entrepreneurship working out on a more personal level. For example, many local actors who consider themselves “professional” have acted for free in the fundraiser shows that AVLT presented, such as Our Town (2008), The Odd Couple (2009), To Kill a Mockingbird (2010), and Merrily We Roll Along (2010). Apparently, most of the artists who participated in these fundraiser shows told me that they support AVLT’s shows because they agree with the mission of the production which provides quality theatrical experience to many audiences at an affordable price, as per the Pay What You Want policy. However, as I see it, they actually invest their time and talents not only because of their good will, but also because it is a good opportunity for them to market themselves to wider audiences while following their life-long artistic aspirations. For example, Tony Auseon has always dreamed of creating puppets. After completing his MBA at Franklin University, he worked at Luck Bros coffeeshop part time while he continued to make puppets. While working there, he was introduced to AVLT. He passed the audition of the fundraiser show and had the opportunity to act in To Kill a Mockingbird (2010). Afterwards, he became the education director at Columbus Children’s Theatre. Another independent artist, Max Ink, who draws comic strips, donates his drawings for AVLT’s program covers and posters (Picture 6.1). AVLT then provides him a place to sell his
self-published comic books and drawings on show nights. As these examples illustrate, individual supporters of SAOs follow rather unique personal agendas as they practice entrepreneurship.

The traditional type of support, including donations and much good will from both private and public sectors, which I mentioned in the opening to this section, can also benefit from entrepreneurship. This is referred to as “social entrepreneurship,” which applies to any individual or organization that uses an entrepreneurial mindset and principles to generate social impact and profits. Aiming at public value, social entrepreneurship can also be used in the arts world.

Case in point is a matching fund which is sometimes set up to raise funds for SAOs. The matching fund is a very unique entrepreneurial fundraising method that has a long history in the United States. Barbara Fergus, a local businesswoman, who owns and operates Midwest Auto Group, announced a matching fund challenge at the end of AVLT’s members-only event on September 19, 2010. She dared nine more private donors to make a donation of $5,000 each, which she promised to match. Fergus shared in our interview:

I value [AVLT’s] art form. It’s unique and it’s well done and it’s appreciated by many people. . . . But if you’re trying to sustain yourself and get return for what you do monetarily, then it seems to me that unless there’s something that’s happened. . . . it ain’t gonna happen. . . . So I do that [the matching fund challenge] . . . you have to be flexible, you have to
allow yourself to come forward with whatever you have and my agenda needs to fit into that in order to help make everything rise. (personal communication, March 1, 2011)

AVLT proceeded to set a goal to meet Fergus’s challenge within a year. Surprisingly, within nine months, it finished the race on June 7, 2011 with nine pledgers among local businesses and is due to receive the $50,000 at the end of the year. Fergus must have known that what AVLT needs is just a tipping point to seek new financial opportunities. She said,

[AVLT is] like a little stem and because of the lack of funds [it is] not PRed or marketed in a way that will get enough people’s attention to sustain an operation on a long-term basis. And in order to get that done, you’ve got to either have an angel patron or you have to have some kind of dynamo that goes out and raises money for [AVLT]. (Barbara Fergus, personal communication, March 1, 2011)

The matching fund is a good example of entrepreneurship in the traditional type of support for the arts, that in turn makes SAOs entrepreneurial. This tradition encounters a new era with the advent of the social media, as discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 7

SOCIAL MEDIA AND SMALL ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

As reviewed in Chapter 2, technology became supersaturated in the arts, as evidenced in every discipline in the arts. For example, the dramatically increasing interest in new technologies amongst museum administrators is reflected in their use of multimedia devices in arts exhibitions. Most of the major museums are using information kiosks equipped with touch-screens to guide visitors. In addition, smart phones and their applications are used to support the interpretation of exhibits and to enhance visitors’ experience. Indeed, researchers have viewed these devices as important in facilitating museums’ role as educational venues from early 2000s (Fleck et al., 2002; Grinter et al., 2002). Museum administrators have also made rigorous efforts to digitize their collections. Utilizing various digital technologies, they have archived their collections and opened them to the public in the virtual world. These efforts have created unprecedented opportunities to make the collections and artistic resources of museums more accessible and usable to more audiences (Kotler et al., 2008; Mason, 2011).

Technology has also changed the ways in which administrators distribute their works of performing arts. For example, in December 2006, the Metropolitan Opera in
New York began to simulcast its opera performances on approximately 100 screens of commercial movie theatres in North America, Britain, and Japan. This experimental move has been a big success so far with many participant movie theaters reporting 90% capacity. In fact, National CineMedia reported that approximately 200,000 people attended the live simulcasts when the first series debuted (Nolan, 2008). Today, the Met simulcasts are seen in more than 600 theaters around the world. Stimulated by the success of the Metropolitan Opera, other operas, such as Milan's La Scala, the San Francisco Opera, and the UK's Royal Opera House also began to present series of high-definition broadcasts to be shown in North American cinemas in the spring of 2008 (CBC News, 2008).

Regardless of the astonishing accessibility of the opera simulcast in movie theaters, simulcasts still cannot compare to the rich ambience of immediate, live performances that one can observe at the Lincoln Center. However, simulcasting has an edge over a live performance, because it enables the audience to also hear and view some introductory comments and backstage interviews with the performers, which would be impossible at the Met. For example, subtitles in Japanese theaters are possible in simulcasting, which is a definite advantage. Another advantage of opera simulcasting in movie theaters is of course the more affordable ticket price.

Successful uses of technology such as these appear to promise a new future in arts administration. However, some applications of technology in arts administration pose problems. In the music industry, for example, new technologies have played a more dramatic role than in any other arts-related industries. On the one hand, digital
technologies have transformed music production processes as well as communication and distribution channels (Kretschmer et al., 2001). On the other hand, with the help of affordable or free software, any novice is able to compose and play his/her own piece of music whether deserving to be recorded and produced or not. More importantly, he or she can distribute the composition via the Internet without significant cost and without help from arts administrators. As the Internet provides new and affordable communication and distribution channels to all, it has unsettled the traditional structure of composing and producing music, which in turn threatens the traditional position of arts administrators.

This threat seems to be amplified for SAOs in contrast to major arts organizations. While major arts organizations proactively adopt new technologies and broaden their reach, one wonders whether SAOs will be able to afford to adopt the new technologies. If people can appreciate the masterpieces on the websites of major museums, can small local museums with relatively poor or highly specialized collections survive? Given the inundation of major performing arts organizations’ simulcasts in movie theatres, can small local performing arts organizations survive? As I see it, technologies have presented more opportunities than threats to SAOs. I observed that despite these concerns, recent uses of IT, such as websites, blogging, podcasting, and most importantly social media, have provided powerful, efficient, and affordable tools for SAOs to compete with larger arts organizations in terms of mobilizing resources, reaching audiences and supporters, as well as creating the arts.
7.1 IT and SAOs

IT covers many fields. The Information Technology Association of America (2007) aggregated definitions of IT from various authorities and comprehensively defined the term as “the study, design, development, implementation, support, or management of computer-based information systems, particularly software applications and computer hardware” (p. 30). In general, IT includes the use of computing technologies (both hardware and software) to create, convert, store, transmit, communicate, and access information. With the advent of the Internet in the early 1990s, IT became more recognizable than ever and in fact, it became “the technology of the Internet” in the public’s opinion, which is the definition of IT that I use in this study.

In this dissertation, my main focus is on social media, which is the tech du jour. I believe that social media represents the powerful interactive nature of IT, which enhances the relationships among various agents in the ecology of SAOs. In the following pages, I frame three approaches concerning the relationship between technology and the arts: (1) technology as environment, (2) technology as a tool, and (3) technology as art. In this chapter, I thematically analyze the impact of social media on SAOs largely using this frame. I also explore how the social media has enhanced the relationships across the level of ecology of SAOs from micro- to macrosystem.

Observably, all of the interviewees in the study recognize that use of Information Technology (IT) is critical in their management of SAOs. Except for Talle Bamazi at KIACA, all of the interviewees are at least “Early Majority” adopters in Roger’s (2003)
bell curve of Adopter categorization on the basis of innovativeness. Most of them are tech-savvy and actively used IT to deal with their lack of resources.

I don’t know how I would do this job without email and Facebook and voicemail and online ticketing and online credit cards; I don’t know how you would do it. (Betsy Gillespie, personal communication, August 31st, 2009)

Obviously, a lot goes through our website. Now, with all the new networking things online, you’ve got Facebook, you’ve got Twitter, you’ve got MySpace; we use those pages. (Jennifer Barlup, personal communication, August 20, 2009).

In fact, most of the SAOs that require a ticket reservation for their events used online ticketing sites. Usually the commission fee for using such a site is less than 5% of the ticket price which is well worth the money, to avoid the hassle of assigning dates and seats, fielding the phones, keeping a record of reservations, and even refunding or rescheduling as needed. In the case of AVLT, the micro payment system along with equipment attached to a mobile device was a big help when they accepted payment by credit card. By using the Square, a small equipment that can be attached to a laptop or even to a mobile phone, AVLT easily accepts a credit card at any spot, wherever there is an Internet connection.

Unfortunately, most SAOs do not have IT experts on their staff. As reviewed in Chapter 2, they seem to be limited in their use of technology by their personnel’s skills.
and knowledge of IT. However, I observed that IT provided an unprecedented low learning threshold so that many individuals in SAOs could adopt IT without a considerable amount of their time and effort. This was seen especially in the use of social media. Moreover, most of them manage to use IT well to do what they need to do, as they have “someone” around who is tech-savvy or they are in partnership with other institutions that can provide technical assistance when they encounter a challenge over their head. Westerville Orchestra’s partnership with Otterbein University may be a good example of an SAO that has access to IT support through partnership.

Fortunately, we are linked with [Otterbein University] so we are able to use a computer at the college’s library that has graphic design software on it. We don’t have that here, but we can go to the college and use theirs.

(Betsy Gillespie, personal communication, August 31st, 2009)

In addition to traditional networking, most SAOs have used the Internet including email listserve and job recruiting websites to gain human resources. As Gillespie exemplified, many SAOs also use online recruiting services such as Columbus Jobs (www.columbusjobs.com), Monster (www.monster.com) (personal communication, August 31st, 2009). SAOs already heavily use interactive social media to market themselves. They all at least recognize how important it is to use the Internet as social media. Among the various outlets of IT, the arts administrators whom I interviewed mentioned their use of social media when asked about their use of IT. As Kane said, “[We] market . . . all of our events and activities through social media.”
7.2 The Social Media and the Arts

Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein (2010) define social media as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content (UGC).” Examples of social media include Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Flickr, and Twitter. These outlets give their users free choice to interact or collaborate with one another in a dialogue as creators of UCC in a virtual institution, unlike in websites where users are restricted to the passive viewing of contents that are already created.

For arts organizations, social media became the most powerful tool for attracting more audiences. It also became an indicator of how wide an audience an arts organization has. For example, major arts organizations such as the Museum of Modern Art and the Brooklyn Museum in New York or the Tate Gallery in London currently have from 50,000 to 500,000 “followers” in Twitter and fans who “like” their sites in Facebook, although the numbers do not tell the level of engagement of any one person.

Most importantly, social media integrates technology into human behavior so seamlessly that people tend to equate the information gathered from social media with that from personal communication or word of mouth. For example, recent research by the Society of London Theatres (SOLT) in partnership with the market research agency Ipsos MORI in Britain reported that “word of mouth recommendation, including personal blogs, Twitter and social media websites, is the source of information most likely to encourage people to attend the theatre, with the figure almost doubling from 36% in 2003
to 65% in 2008,” while “two in five theatregoers are . . . members of Facebook” (Iqbal, 2010). As can be seen, social media unprecedentedly provided one of the best metrics of marketing and advertising in the arts world. However, there is still controversy whether these tools of IT are effective especially for local-based existing SAOs and long-term projects.

Especially because of its low entry level in terms of ease of use and low (almost free) cost of adoption, social media offers one of the best marketing tools especially for SAOs. Also, as many SAOs are young (usually within 10 years of their existence), many of them have “a thirst and appetite for technology” for them to be innovative and have the tendency to take the risk of adopting a new technology (Artie Isaac, personal communication, February 24, 2011). They naturally possess innovativeness in the sense that, as Rogers (2003) puts it, it is “the degree to which an individual (or other unit of adoption) is relatively earlier in adopting new ideas than other members of a system” (p. 267).

By April 2011, nine out of the 13 SAOs (about 69%, one SAO ceased to exist) who participated in my research were using at least one social media to reach out to the public. Since the participating SAOs in my research were not randomly selected, 69% is not an accurate representation of the number of SAOs using the social media. However, considering that 27% of small businesses use Facebook (Rockbridge Associates, 2011), we can surmise that many SAOs are Early Majority adopters that are actively using social media. In fact, many artists and managers involved in SAOs confirmed in their interviews
with me that social media is “the game changer for SAOs” (John Dranschak, personal communication, September 21, 2010).

7.3 SAOs Empowered by Social Media

Throughout the research, many interviewees were praising how the social media has opened a window of opportunity to reach out to larger audiences. In fact, because of the social media’s vivid representations, an increasing number of arts organizations have marketing (or public relations) staff in charge of managing various social media outlets. For example, OSU Urban Arts Space in Columbus even has a position titled “Resident Facebook Poster,” specifically designed for a person who communicates information of the Center to the public via Facebook.

The focus on social media in this chapter is through the “technology as a tool” approach. However, as social media enhances the relationships not only among the members within SAOs but also with their environment, social media as environment is also considered. Social media as art receives the least focus in this chapter, leaving room for future research, as “social media art,” which is another example of technology as art, is on the rise. Ben Davis (2011), an associate editor of Artnet Magazine, attempts to categorize the phenomena that can be called “social media art” using four parameters: art, non-art, social, and non-social. As Davis sees it, social media art is comprised of (1) art that uses social media, (2) new media art, (3) social art collaboration, and (4) art mods.
7.3.1 Powerful Marketing Tool to Pinpoint the Niche

Available Light Theatre (AVLT) on which I conducted a year-long case study showed that SAOs can benefit from utilizing the social media. In fact, Nick Tomashot, a board member of AVLT in charge of finances, attributes the theatre’s success to the use of the social media. As he said, “We have . . . technology and social networking savvy people, [which has . . .] been an important part of Available Light’s success” (personal communication, July 15, 2010).

Comparing AVLT’s present marketing strategies to his experiences at Red Herring, a small theatre in Columbus ten years ago, the current guest director of AVLT John Dranschak asserted that it is much easier to brand SAOs using the social media. He added,

If I wanted to send something out to 2,000 people, it was with postcards. . . . We . . . sent out 2-3,000 postcards [per] show at a cost of $1,100 in postage. . . . And just with the way Facebook and Twitter have exploded in really the last two years, . . . that has helped [. . . SAOs] tremendously [to market themselves]. You can get that message out and more importantly, it's allowing you to niche-market in a way that was really hard to do before. (Dranschak, personal communication, September 21, 2010)

Clearly, the social media has dramatically reduced SAOs’ budget for marketing and even allowed them to reach out to the public beyond their niche-market more easily. In fact, as Allen Proctor, a nonprofit consultant in Columbus, remarked, SAOs generally
allot a small portion of their budget to market their works of the arts. This limited SAOs’ ability to advertise. However, the social media has “enforced them” (Proctor, personal communication, April 11, 2011) to reach out to a wider audience with little cost and effort.

7.3.2 Enhanced Communication within SAOs

The social media has eased communications not only to reach people outside the SAOs, but also among members within the SAOs. AVLT has its own organizational Facebook site along with the personal sites of all its members. They actually share bits of their “lives” – such as what they do and what they eat and where they went out – which increases the information they have about each other, if not in-depth. The increased information may reduce any unnecessary misunderstanding, which is critical for an organization’s internal communications. Irene Alvarez, a board member who is in charge of marketing of AVLT, said, “That’s a huge part of my day job. . . . I’m using it every day, all day. . . I don’t know what we’d do without it, I would probably go crazy, especially with the amount of stuff that I have to post for marketing. It’s just nice to know that everybody [at AVLT] has it” (Alvarez, personal communication, November 1, 2010).

Because the number of people involved in SAOs is smaller, the internal communication is relatively easy compared to larger arts organizations. Moreover, I observed at AVLT that using the social media enhanced communications so much that it has even created a collective identity among its members. I also observed that by sharing
this kind of collective identity, many other SAOs in my study did not have issues regarding who represents the organization to the public, which is an issue for larger arts organizations. So the small size of an SAO is a strength for using the social media more efficiently and in turn can be more beneficial for the SAO.

7.3.3 Enhanced Involvement of Audiences with SAOs

The social media has also drastically changed the ways that audiences can participate in SAOs’ events. As I spoke with people who came to the shows of AVLT, it was not difficult to find those who had heard of the show through Facebook. In fact, many whom I interviewed had researched shows on AVLT’s website and on Facebook. Some of them had even gone through the personal sites of each company member. A guest on the first night of the performance “Attempts on Her Life” on May 13th, 2010 who did not want to disclose her name said,

I browsed Facebook pages to know more about people involved in Available Light. . . . I felt more attached to AVLT. . . . For small arts organizations, Facebook really works. [However,] I don't expect this kind of relationship [to work] for larger [arts] organizations. (personal communication, May 13, 2010)

Interestingly, this guest seemed to have built an intimate relationship with AVLT by seeing the Web presence of AVLT including Facebook, even though she was not comfortable revealing her name.
In general, uses of the social media are strongly related to the users’ age. There are many concerns about the digital divide ever since the Internet was introduced in the 1990s. However, some claim that the digital divide can be bridged by the social media. Beth Kanter (2010), a visiting scholar of Nonprofits and Social Media at David and Lucile Packard Foundation, pointed out that the social media can be used as a bridge between the top and the bottom of the pyramid of the digital gap. She believes that it can be especially valuable in connecting professionals working in the nonprofit field.

iStrategyLabs (2009), a social media marketing agency in Washington D.C., examined the demographics of Facebook users and found that more and more of Facebook’s users are older. Between January 4th and July 4th, 2009, the overall number of users between ages 18 and 24 has grown by only 5%; between ages 25 and 34, the number has grown by 61%. In contrast, the number of users between ages 35 and 54 has grown by 190% and the number of users older than 55 years has grown by a tremendous 514%. Remarkably, most of the users on Facebook belong to the 35–54 age group. This does not mean that the number of young users has declined; however, the stats clearly show that more people above 55 years old are adopting the social media faster than one would have expected.

Case in point, after the last performance of AVLT’s “Attempts on Her Life” on May 22nd, 2010, two grandmoms came to the reception desk of AVLT to request a call for a cab and I had a chance to talk to them. They told me that they had heard of the show through Facebook. It was interesting to me that while they found it difficult to look up the number for a cab, they had actively used Facebook, enough to learn about AVLT. This
example indicates the extent to which the social media such as Facebook has lowered the threshold in terms of users’ technological savvy.

As aforementioned, the social media has integrated technology into human behavior so seamlessly that people tend to confuse the information they gather from the social media with that from personal communication. In fact, many interviewees do not differentiate the message they receive via the social media from word of mouth. Melisa Weber, a board member of AVLT who is in charge of organizing fundraising events said, “How are we going to market this? . . . Because we have no budget, . . . it’s all word of mouth or Facebook” (Weber, personal communication, July 15, 2010).

7.3.4 Enhanced Involvement of Artists and Supporters with SAOs

The social media has also changed the way(s) artists get involved in SAOs. For example, many members of Cloudhaus, a small artist collective in Columbus, whose mission is to support the community with its works of art, have joined Cloudhaus by seeing its activities posted on Facebook. Cloudhaus is a loosely organized group composed of creative people in the local community who aim to involve the community through the arts, such as through drawing murals and installing artworks for fundraising toward various charities. For this type of an SAO, where the core of artists and volunteers is not clear, the role of the social media is more noticeable. Kacy Stith, a member of Cloudhaus who also works for a local educational publisher as a marketing specialist said, “Mostly through social media like Facebook . . . is how we get people to know about us.” During the weekly meeting of Cloudhaus on April 4th 2011, Lindsey
Lawrence, the financial director of Cloudhaus, told me that during a meeting of just one and a half hours, her mobile phone kept ringing, as new followers joined Cloudhaus through Twitter.

Sean Lewis, an Iowa-based artist who has collaborated with AVLT several times, talked about how the social media eased individual artists’ successful tours. He said,

When I go to different cities, Twitter and Facebook have been huge. . . . At the end of the show, . . . I always say, . . . “If you liked it, please post on Twitter or Facebook.” . . . Because I’m new in this city, I don’t know anybody. So having these people just put up, “Just saw this amazing show, here’s the link, you should go,” [. . . I] can see the audience grow . . . each time I go to another city. . . . If this was ten years ago, I’d “have” to be in New York and I’d “have” to have a booking agent . . . . Half the time I go to venues and [when they ask . . .] “who’s your booking agent?” They’re . . . stunned when [I say . . .] “I just don’t have one, I just work with me.” (Lewis, personal communication, January 17, 2011)

One of the significant benefits of the social media that allows SAOs to extend their marketing impact is to provide a convenient way to add additional personal networks that are not known to any individuals in the existing network. For example, if AVLT sets an event in Facebook and invites the fans (who indicated they “like” AVLT), the invited fans not only accept or reject the event, but also add more invitations to their own personal network of so-called “Friends.” Then the invited friends of the fans of
AVLT who might have never known of AVLT otherwise may get interested in AVLT’s events and may be able to participate in them and even add more invitations to their own “Friends.”

Likewise, Frank Lazar, vice president at Wells Fargo and a board member in AVLT, was first introduced to the SAO through Facebook. He said, “I saw [. . . AVLT] on the Facebook page [of a friend of mine] and it looked like something interesting, looked kind of gritty which I liked, it looked like something that was very thought-provoking and so I went to two or three shows, . . . and I was absolutely blown away by the quality” (Lazar, personal communication, February 11, 2010). Soon after, Lazar became a board member of AVLT. For many SAOs, one of the issues is to get board members who can help them in the management of SAOs. As can be seen in Lazar’s case, SAOs can get board members who have professional skills that are really needed for their successful management.

Together with advanced micropayment technology, social media also allows many SAOs to raise money from crowd funding. Crowd funding refers to the collective pooling of financial resources by networking on the Internet to support an initiative. It has received attention now that social media and its crowd users via micropayment technology eased the way for securing donations from a group of ordinary individuals (not necessarily millionaires) who are interested in supporting usually small-scale projects at a very low cost or even for free.
Examples of micropayment technology for crowd funding can be found easily on the Internet. For instance, Paypal is one of the most frequently used forms of micropayment. Facebook offers web-based applications for micropayment to raise funds and Google offers Google grant programs for non-profits using AdWords. Many of the SAOs that participated in this research actually practice crowd funding through their websites, applying various micropayment web-based tools. AVLT, MadLab, and Landmarks use Paypal to receive online donations through their websites. Glass Axis uses Google Checkout to get online donation through its website. Westerville Symphony has established its own micropayment system linked to its website through Otterbein University. However, to achieve crowd funding, they all use Facebook and Twitter to reach and persuade anonymous friends or followers to donate. Their social media sites have direct links to their websites for donations.

Another example of crowd funding is Kickstarter, an online threshold pledge system for funding especially “creative projects.” People apply to Kickstarter in order to have their projects posted on the site. The applicants or project owners choose a deadline and a target minimum of funds to raise. Then, via social media such as Facebook and Twitter, the project owner informs friends and followers that the project has been launched and asks them to make a donation. If interested, the friends and followers will pledge to donate a certain amount. If the chosen target is reached by the deadline, money pledged by donors is collected using Amazon Payments, another micropayment system provided by Amazon.com. However, if the target is not reached, no transactions take place.
As mentioned in the section of social entrepreneurship, the web-based social networking media is a key strategy to blend traditional models with innovations from entrepreneurship. Indeed, the rise of the social media has changed the way that donors donate their money to SAOs they care about. With the example of Kickstarter.com, Ogletree (2010) also discusses how social media encourage donors – especially young donors – to contribute to the projects or organizations that personally appeal to them.

The unique thing about Kickstarter is that the project owner can set rewards at different levels based on the amount of donations. The reward to the pledgers can be limited editions of the work, tickets to performances, or even a dinner out with the project owner. This reward system has been accused by some for not being purely charity oriented. However, it has been praised more for understanding human motivation for donations to creative projects by mixing altruism with self-interest. Another unique feature of Kickstarter is its ‘get all or nothing’ system, which may make pledgers in turn to want the project to succeed and therefore spread the word so the target can be reached.

Kickstarter has raised $40 million dollars for 7,500 projects in two years. Project success rate is about 45% (Nowotarski, 2011). There are many fascinating stories about SAOs that have received funds from anonymous sources and realized their goals through Kickstarter. However, the general characteristics of the successful projects in Kickstarter appear to be that it is short-term and low-cost (not many projects’ goals are more than $2,000).
Among the SAOs that participated in this study, J.A.M. Sessions launched a fundraising project on Kickstarter called “Making our Mixtape: Recording an Album with Jared Mahone” on June 26, 2011. The deadline for reaching the target of $10,000 was July 28, 2011 and they succeeded. Astonishingly, J.A.M. Session earned $12,000, far more than its target, which set a record in the Columbus area. As can be seen in the case of J.A.M. Sessions, social media has dramatically eased the way for donors to donate their money to SAOs they care about.

However, it is still not that easy to raise funds for SAOs to carry out their projects solely depending on crowd funding. As of April 2011, only 7,496 out of 20,371 launched projects (43%) have realized their goals through Kickstarter (Strickler, 2011). I also observed that successful projects tend to have a fancier introduction page created by the SAOs, perhaps because it is the first point of entry that anonymous funders will see.

Kickstarter is not the silver bullet for SAOs to solve their financial problems. For people who are not tech savvy enough to design a webpage with fancy movie clips and images, it may be a pie in the sky. Other than Kickstarter, donations that AVLT, MadLab, Landmarks, and Westerville Symphony receive through online micropayment systems is minimal. This limitation of crowd funding through social media is linked to the questions regarding a participatory culture for small arts organizations provided by social media. There also are remaining questions about whether or not the social media contributes to audience development in the long run.
7.4 Explosion of the Social Media

With the increasing number of organizations using the social media, the SAOs’ message may go unnoticed, which could hurt their marketing efforts. For example, some members of AVLT told me that two years ago when not many arts organizations were using Facebook, their messages including invitations to their events received immediate responses and they could tell the social media actually increased their audiences. This is why at the curtain call of every show, they make a point to ask, “Please tell your friends about us through Twitter and Facebook and keep the conversation going.” However, recently they noted that more and more messages are not getting a response. This is not surprising. I myself have noticed that I pay less attention to invitations these days, because I get too many invitations from too many “Friends,” to be able to keep up.

7.4.1 The Medium is Not the Message.

Marshall McLuhan’s (1964) famous aphorism, “the medium is the message,” has received renewed interest in this Internet era. He basically views the media’s role in society by its intrinsic characteristics, rather than by the content it delivers. When the social media was first introduced by the middle of the 2000s, the fact that AVLT was using Facebook or MySpace was telling that the company was very innovative. In this case, “the medium was the message.” AVLT, which has actively used the social media since 2004, even while the company was known under a different name, Blue Forms Theatre, has been characterized as technologically innovative by its peer SAOs. In fact, AVLT was introduced to me at first by Jennifer Barlup, the board chair at Madlab.
Theatre and Gallery in Columbus, who said, “There is one company that . . . blows us out of the water. . . . AVLT is . . . really, really good about Twitter and Facebook and MySpace. They use those resources really well” (Barlup, personal communication, August 20, 2009).

However, Artie Isaac, a board member of AVLT who has been involved in many other arts organizations in Columbus, sees the change in the social media. Himself a social media guru, he has co-founded SpeakerSite.com, which is the world’s largest social network of public speakers and event planners. He shared his concern saying,

The media was the message when we would all say, “Hey, come over! We’ll watch TV.” The message became the message when we said, “Hey, come over and we’re going to watch Seinfeld.” . . . I’m afraid if people think they can get their theater through the social [media]. . . . It isn’t the technology that’s the game changer, it’s the message; and we either have a message that people believe is life-changing rather than sort of game-changing; and if we have that, people will come to us. It goes back to the message. It goes back to the arts and not [the technology] (Isaac, personal communication, April 1, 2011).

Members of Claudhaus who have relied heavily on the social media for their communications also confirm that the social media is useful if it is supported by actual “groundwork.” Chris Hartley, an artist at Claudhaus, also said, “We’re actually on the ground a lot, so people see us. . . . so it’s social media plus reality.” As I see it, the social
media plays a role in society by its intrinsic characteristics even though it has expanded its realm beyond any other communications technology. Many people in SAOs still see the social media as having changed their personal and professional lives. As Emily Rhodes, the development director of AVLT put it, “I still believe our strength is in using the social media to reach out to our audiences” (Rhodes, personal communication, April 13, 2011). It appears that the social media made the communication technology more personal than ever before. Therefore, perhaps, the media itself is not at issue anymore, but the networking it provides.

### 7.4.2 Social Networking vs. Social Media

Neil McKenzie (2010), visiting professor at the Center for Innovation, has noticed a change in how the social media is referred to and how it is used. He pointed out in his article, “Social networking vs. social media,” that the social media was originally referred to as “networking” rather than “media.” He explains, “the idea was to build a network of contacts much in the same way as you would do it in person” (McKenzie, 2010). However, these days, many organizations and individuals employ the social media as just another kind of media. McKenzie also points out that “a large percentage of arts organizations . . . only engage in social media and not social networking” (McKenzie, 2010). His observation is that for them, the “social media is just a way to pump out endless pitches and announcements and not to build relationships with their followers, customers and benefactors” (McKenzie, 2010).
In fact, many arts organizations which now utilize the social media are missing the interactive networking factor of social media, which may be the most important characteristic of social media to consider. If you miss out on the interactive communication via social media, it becomes just another announcement board as what the organization had before. Therefore, maintaining vivid interactions should be the main goal of using social media. In fact, social media still needs time and effort to maintain those interactions. For that matter, social media is not completely free.
CHAPTER 8

NEW APPROACH TO SUPPORT
THE CREATIVE VITALITY OF SMALL ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Aiming to examine the dynamic ecology of SAOs with foci on Entrepreneurship and Technology, I conducted extensive personal communications with individuals in 13 selected small arts organizations in Columbus, Ohio and cross-referenced them with an in-depth case study on a small theatre, Available Light. My findings indicate that the size of arts organizations is a critical factor for their operation, as their issues and needs reflect their size. During my three years of research, I also observed and confirmed the dynamic and flexible nature of SAOs. My findings led me to conclude that it is neither useful nor fair to use labels such as “community arts organization,” “informal arts organization,” or “grassroots organization,” all of which stigmatize SAOs as being “not so professional.”

Smaller financial and human resources constrain SAOs’ performance. Conversely, their smaller constituencies encompassing board members and audiences can allow them to experiment with new, innovative, and sometimes controversial works. SAO products are also deeply related to the local community because they place significant value on their intimate relationship with their audiences, a relationship that
larger arts organizations can lose sight of, in favor of financial growth. Overall, the small size of SAOs is in fact a strength. Their managerial flexibility has allowed most to survive the economic difficulties in the late 2000s. They have managed to survive the harshest economic situation ever, when many larger arts organizations did not fare as well.

In conclusion, my findings indicate that size consideration for arts organizations is of utmost importance for the creative vitality of SAOs. It can enable various arts advocates, including arts agencies, to develop more implementable and effective support programs and cultural policy especially designed for SAOs. Like larger arts organizations, SAOs are trying to find a balance between their mission and their money. In this dissertation, I discussed how individual entrepreneurship and the effective use of technology can stabilize that balance and strengthen SAOs’ overall operations, thus, enhancing their creative vitality. Finally, support systems, including cultural policy, public grant programs, and even private supporters need to take into consideration both entrepreneurship and use of technology in SAOs to balance their mission and their money.

8.1 Entrepreneurship in SAOs

My findings indicate that a single individual’s entrepreneurship are crucial for the performance of an SAO and the SAO grows when this is well worked out and fully supported. At Available Light Theatre, a successful small arts organization, it was Matt Slaybaugh who made a difference. Although his background is in theatre, he is involved
in and works on almost every aspect of AVLT’s business needs. He even designs and manages AVLT’s website, which he makes sure to keep up to date and to maintain its communications. It seems that Slaybaugh actually enjoys these administrative tasks. By observing him plan the avant-garde shows that will inevitably lose money and plan the “fundraiser shows” to compensate for the loss, it is apparent that he is a risk-taker. Entrepreneurs like Slaybaugh, although many do not self-describe as one, play a major role in the success of SAOs.

At the same time, it is also certain that there is a limit to relying on a single individual’s entrepreneurship. Doing so for an extended period of time creates so-called “entrepreneurial fatigue” and finally fails the SAO, as can be seen in the closing of BlueForms Theatre (predecessor of Available Light Theatre). Only one individual’s super leadership cannot sustain the organization. If the superman leaves, the SAO collapses; or if the superman is not super, the SAO usually does not fare well.

I also found that to successfully support an individual’s efforts to lead the SAO, other members should be entrepreneurial enough to at least appreciate the individual’s leadership and entrepreneurship. Slaybaugh was able to assert his innovative artistic works because he was lucky enough to have an entrepreneurial supporter in Artie Isaac who became the first board member of AVLT. As can be seen in the cases of Wolf Starr who created and introduced Small Business Beanstalk and Barbara Fergus who challenged AVLT to match her donation of $5,000, the support systems also need to be entrepreneurial. As observed, an entrepreneurial support system like Isaac, Starr, and
Fergus is crucial for the creative vitality of SAOs and this is one point that we have to pay attention to when creating new cultural policy for SAOs.

### 8.2 Social Media: The Opportunity to Connect

Among the intervention points to enhance the entrepreneurship of individuals in SAOs, I found that social media provides powerful, efficient, and affordable tools for SAOs in order to compete with larger arts organizations. SAOs actively use social media to mobilize their resources, to reach their audiences and supporters, as well as to create the arts. I also found that the social media has dramatically eased and therefore enhanced the involvement of audiences with SAOs. Furthermore, it has facilitated painless ways for individual supporters/advocates of the arts to engage in the activities of SAOs. Therefore, it can be said that the social media has been the game changer that has enabled many SAOs to gain their competitive edge.

However, as the social media seems to have diffused widely enough for even Laggards to adopt it, its Early Adopters no longer enjoy the prestige of the media just by using it. In fact, many arts organizations feel compelled to use the social media without a clear strategy, which can lead them to employ old media tactics without interactions with their target audience, while incurring added costs.

This turns our attention back to the message itself that is delivered by the social media and to the passion to engage the social media even more interactively to keep spreading the SAO’s message. When asked what the social media means, Slaybaugh at AVLT answered, “the social media is the opportunity to connect” (personal
communication, April 13, 2011). In other words, the social media is not just another communications technology of the day, but the opportunity that allows SAOs to share their passion for the arts with their “Friends.”

8.3 Support Systems and SAOs

Support systems play a significant role in the ecology of small arts organizations. Although support systems are generally divided into two basic categories, public and private, with multi-layered dynamic relationships between them. As examined in chapters 6, 7 and 8, these relationships are more visible and often it makes no sense to distinguish the private from the public. This was explained in Wyszomirski and Galligan’s (2009) the pond model of the support system for the arts. (Figure 2.1)

With their pond model regarding the Columbus local consideration, Ohio Arts Council (OAC) and Greater Columbus Arts Council (GCAC) can be the Subgovernment, depicted as the lotus leaf. National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) and Americans for the Arts (AFTA), National Assembly of Local Arts Agencies (NALAA), Ohio Citizen’s for the Arts (OCA) and Ohio Alliance for Arts Education (OAAE) are the advocacy coalition, depicted as the lotus root. Staffs and offices in Columbus Foundation can be part of the fish which was the metaphor for the Policy Community, which, in this case, specifically focus on the philanthropy to the local arts. SAOs (and individuals within SAOs) surely compose the Grassroots Movements, depicted as the frog, representing engagement from the individual or community level. (Wyszomirski & Galligan, 2009)
SAOs and their interactions are included in the Policy Community and Grassroots Movement. Wyszomirksi and Galligan (2009) called the types of interactions that the Policy Community and Grassroots Movement “informal communication” and “informal movement,” respectively. As I see it, by using the term “informal,” they also recognized that the variety of network linkages of individuals in this realm cannot be captured perfectly in a single term.

8.3.1 Perceptions of Cultural Policy

Although the breakdown of income varies by organization, OAC, GCAC, and Columbus Foundation were the main funding agencies of local SAOs in Columbus. The interviewees recognized that these agencies play a role in stabilizing their income, although some had legitimate complaints. In particular, many interviewees said that programs to support the administrative work of SAOs such as Technical Assistance grants from GCAC and Capacity Building Initiative from OAC were very successful and would be necessary in the future.

I think the biggest [support] . . . utilized by the small arts [organization] is the technical assistance grants. . . . I think those are really critical to small arts organizations where it is hard to just go and pay a consultant or go and pay someone to help you solve a problem. (Barlup, personal communication, August 20, 2009)

It appears that the ideal support system for small arts organizations would be in the administrative line, such as helping with “bookkeeping and tax preparation and IT and
kind of labor and expertise intensive” (Gillespie, personal communication, August 31st, 2009). Kane added,

We recently participated in what was called The Capacity Building Initiative. . . . That was phenomenal for us. It is actually what paid for our strategic planning. (Kane, personal communication, September 10, 2009)

Understandably, the participants were hesitant to speak harsh words about their supporting agencies. However, although many interviewees do appreciate the support of OAC, GCAC, and Columbus Foundation, they still expressed that they feel somewhat neglected by them. Davis cautiously stated,

[OAC, GCAC, and Columbus Foundation] have been helpful; they just don’t have as many programs for [an organization] like [ours]. (Davis, personal communication, July 30, 2009)

It seems that those available support systems’ review processes for SAOs were too rigid to appreciate the SAOs’ flexibility and vulnerability. Some arts administrators in SAOs like Barlup at Madlab expressed their concerns over the peer review system of the grant providers. The peer review has been adopted by many public arts agencies. However, the problem is that there are many chances that peers from the arts community cannot fully understand the various cases of SAOs, each of which is inimitable in its unique situation. Barlup said,
The way the panel reviews were done [in GCAC recently], I feel we are pigeonholed more by the arts community than we are by the community at large. [Panels from the arts community] judge us against organizations that are far larger. . . . How [can] we compete with them?” (Personal communication, August 20, 2009)

The issue here is that current cultural policies apply and impose upon SAOs many administration skills, strategies, and assessment tools that were designed for large arts organizations. This creates a problem when applied to SAOs.

The example of Available Light Theatre is another case in point. In spring of 2010, Available Light Theatre received a capacity assessment report prepared by graduate students researching capacity-building strategies of non-profit organizations. Although the small theatre was reputable not only in terms of its artistic achievement, but also financial success in the local community in recent years, it received a very poor grade, which made the theatre look like it was being managed poorly. The company and board members of the theatre did not believe they could live up to the recommendations from the report because the criteria presented in the report were not for SAOs, but for large arts organizations. They rightly complained: “Many of the comments, recommendations and resources have not been particularly helpful or new to us” (Rhodes, personal communication, June 28, 2011). “We will soon be closed down, if we follow all of the suggestions we received from the assessment” (Weber, personal communication, July 8, 2011).
This was also seen in the PowerPhilanthropy which is provided by Columbus Foundation. It is basically a web-based matching program between philanthropic donors and non-profit organizations. It has been acclaimed to be an innovative way to link funders and non-profit organizations in need of funds; however, there still are some limitations. One is that the funders’ donation should start from $10,000, which restricts small donors; and the other is that PowerPhilanthropy disregards any size considerations of organizations, which leaves out SAOs. As Barlup continued,

PowerPhilanthropy . . . puts everyone out there equally and . . . it’s really hard to classify about small arts [organizations]. (Barlup, personal communication, August 20, 2009)

The most basic limitation of the current assessment processes of SAOs is that they are always quantified when they are not quantifiable. In the example of AVLT’s capacity-building assessment, there are numerous variables that should be valued between 0 and 5; however, most of them were non-quantifiable values. In fact, many public arts agencies have developed their own assessment tools to verify whether an organization is worth funding. However, again, almost all of variables that they use are subjective to the assessors. Most do not even disclose their assessment variables or how exactly they are weighted. To compensate for this, these assessment processes have been developed containing as many items as possible to count the values they seek, which in turn complicates the process. For example, many individuals I interviewed felt that when applying for grants from public arts agencies, the bureaucratic process of public agencies can be restrictive, costing too much time and effort. They believe that the bureaucracy of
public agencies can be too controlling, involving too much red tape. As Slaybaugh grumbled, “Many times, grants from public agencies are not worth the time and effort” (personal communication, August 27, 2010).

Interestingly, some interviewees mentioned the necessity of a hub (whether it is online or off-line) for SAOs in Columbus, where they can get together and share information. Davis and Gillespie said respectively:

A lot of cities of this size have an arts center that allows small arts organizations to have a place and workspace. We don’t have anything like that. [...] the scattered feeling of the little arts centers all over the city makes it difficult to bring them together. (Davis, personal communication, July 30, 2009)

There isn’t that one-stop place for small organizations to go to, to find guidance. I do feel that small organizations would have more success if they knew that ‘so and so organization’ was the blanket source of guidance for someone like that. (Gillespie, personal communication, August 31st, 2009)

I view the hub or one-stop place that my interviewees mentioned as the need for a broader network. I therefore suggest that such a network is the key to “supporting” the support systems to cultivate SAOs.
8.3.3 Support Systems to Cultivate SAOs

Throughout this dissertation, I have investigated the relationships of individuals in SAOs across the levels of SAOs’ ecology. With two key terms, entrepreneurship focusing on bricolage and technology focusing on social media, I have laid out the various narratives to identify and negotiate the strengths and weaknesses in the interrelational processes among agents in their ecology.

Among the types of support systems that Wyszomirski et al. (2002) categorized, I also found that they mostly benefit from the social support system which entails financial- as well as professional support. The social support system which involves human resources, such as audience participation and voluntary action, is possible by SAOs’ close-knit relationships. Among the SAOs that I studied, the more creatively vital (as defined in 2.2.2) SAOs like AVLT are, the more intricate relationships they maintain. This close-knit relationship that SAOs show can be enhanced by the entrepreneurism of individuals within the SAOs. In turn, the enhanced relationship enables the entrepreneurial practices of SAOs. The social media also eased the way people in SAOs establish and manage relationships with their constituencies. With the help of social media, SAOs are able to reach more human resources like experts in using IT and other new technologies. Therefore public arts agencies need to pay attention to the close-knit relationships that individuals in SAOs maintain.

However, current cultural policy does not pay enough attention to these relationships. Almost all the grant programs and funding programs available for SAOs
either focus on the individual artists or the organizations. The problem is that since these programs do not pay enough attention to the relationships, they can only look for the end-result of what an individual or an organization has accomplished so far. This results in evaluating and qualifying an SAO as if it were a miniature of a large arts organization and leads to misjudging the SAO as less organized and as not responding to the needs of the community. In fact, as can be seen in the capacity-building assessment of AVLT by graduate students, newly formed small arts organizations have always had problems proving themselves not only to the community but also to their arts community peers, given their short organizational history and untraditional, innovative (sometimes too much so) programs. If we disregard the individuals involved in an SAO and their dynamic relationships among them and their relationship with the community, we will fail to appreciate the huge potential of SAOs. Therefore, I suggest that when writing cultural policy or designing a grant program for SAOs, it is necessary to consider these dynamic relationships of SAOs.

8.4 Recommendations

As for the recommendations for future cultural policy, I suggest developing programs custom tailored for SAOs by empowering their social support systems with special attention to establishing and enhancing their relationships. Current cultural policy has paid the most attention to financial- and professional support systems, i.e., grants and technical assistance programs, respectively. As I discovered, these two support systems can be well established by having sound social support – from audiences, peers, and volunteers. As can be seen in AVLT’s case, once the social support system was soundly
established through having entrepreneurs like Artie Isaac and other enthusiastic supporters, the SAO managed to set up financial- and professional support systems with its entrepreneurial practices and use of technology.

Therefore, the new cultural policy custom tailored for SAOs needs to develop programs that link SAOs to the social support system at the individual level. Subgovernment agencies like OAC and GCAC can learn from the successful practices of entrepreneurs in the private sector, like Wolf Starr’s Small Business Beanstalk and Barbara Fergus’s matching funds challenge. In fact, as can be seen in the J.A.M. Session’s successful fundraising through Kickstarter.com, there are many – yet to be discovered – prospective individual supporters of SAOs who would be willing to at least volunteer their time. If public arts agencies can match the needs of small arts organizations and the possible supporters’ resources, SAOs can manage to sustain their creative vitality without further support.

Hypothetically, a specific program can be established out of the current GCAC’s artist fellowship program. GCAC gathers individual artists’ information through an online registration process and the registered artists receive funds as GCAC is able to afford it. I imagine that by incorporating the idea of social media and PowerPhilanthropy provided by Columbus Foundation, GCAC could design a web-based program in which both artists and individual supporters would register. Both could fill in their interest area and indicate what they could offer to do. An important feature that this program should have is one that would enable registered artists or individual supporters to recommend,
from their own personal networks, other possible entrants, so that the pool of artists and individual supporters would grow.

The kind of matching program that I am suggesting, which focuses on the relationships in the ecology of SAOs, can also have a ripple effect of unburdening the financial constraints of public agencies. If only focusing on financial- and professional support systems, public agencies may not have enough resources to support small arts organizations on a long-term basis. Furthermore, even if public agencies can afford to support SAOs for the time being, if the pool of recipients grows, they cannot afford to fund more. Kathy Fox, a long-time supporter of AVLT and executive director of Ohio Cultural Facilities Commission, has pointed out this difficulty as a leader of one of the public agencies that supports the arts.

The trickiest part about an arts organization is the more you produce, the more subsidies you need, unlike a manufacturing business, where if you get a lot of volume, you can get more efficient and you can make more money. When it is art and it involves people being creative, you don’t get efficiency by being bigger necessarily, it just means that you need more subsidies. You can get some efficiency out of some things, but [for] the production of art and creation of art, nothing gets more efficient. (Kathy Fox, personal communication, May 12, 2010)

The key is to help SAOs to grow (or sustain their present status) not only by funding them more, but by linking them to bigger networks.
As for the recommendation to develop more efficient and feasible management strategies for small arts organizations, I would suggest that the “artisanal model” be adopted when considering SAOs. In September 2010, I took a research trip to an organic farm with AVLT company members as part of my research. I was inspired by the farm’s innovative practices and began to contemplate the possibility of applying their method of artisanal economy to the arts. Located in Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley, Polyface, Inc. is a family-owned organic farm targeted to the local market. The farm has been in the spotlight recently with its innovative, yet sustainable and profitable farming.

I was there as part of Available Light Theatre’s preparation for its upcoming show, “The Food Play” (2011). Available Light members and I were given a two-hour tour guided by a well-informed staff member. The guide shared with us their findings from decades of experimental farming, such as how much more profitable and sustainable it is in the long run to rely on nature rather than using chemicals. He also talked about how this remarkable practice was hurt by the government’s favoring large-scale farms. We learned from him that Polyface farm follows six guiding principles to maintain the farm: (1) Transparency, (2) Grass-Based, (3) Individuality, (4) Community, (5) Nature’s Template, and (6) Soil health enhancement using earthworms. In these guiding principles, it is important to understand how the lives of poultry and livestock they raise are related to nature and how to rely on (or repair if broken) the natural relationships. These guiding principles gave me ideas on how to design cultural policy that particularly supports SAOs.

At one level, the status quo of small-scale organic farms versus industrial farming conglomerates and even the United States Department of Agriculture hint at a pessimistic
future of the arts world if we don’t take small arts organizations seriously. Joel Salatin, the owner of Polyface, has authored many books about his decades dedicated to establishing a sustainable organic farm. In *Everything I Want to Do is Illegal: War Stories from the Local Food Front* (2007), he speaks of how he had to constantly swim against an overwhelming tide of flawed regulations that discriminate against small farms in favor of mega-operations, putting him in the position of having to justify his innovative practices. It is ironic that mankind has moved so far from nature, that natural and intuitive farming practices have to be referred to today as “innovative” or “experimental.”

Similar to Salatin’s discussion of how U.S. regulatory barriers are keeping small producers out of the business of food production, I in turn see how bureaucratic regulations are keeping small arts organizations from becoming productive members of the arts world. Like Salatin, who wants to protect the entrepreneurial organic farmer, I would like to find ways to support and protect SAOs. I believe the answer lies in policymaking that is tailored to SAOs, focusing on the relationships within their ecology.

At another level, the way small-scale organic farms grow the food we eat can provide a model for writing cultural policy for SAOs. Organic food production can inform us about how we can cultivate and support the arts. Michael Pollan, in his bestselling book, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (2007), explains how Salatin’s organic farm is more sustainable and profitable than bigger, industrialized farms. He refers to a discussion he had with Salatin about how “artisanal” production methods must not adapt to “industrial” production models. By appropriating
the term, “Artisanal Economics,” Pollan points out that the “artisanal model works only so long as it does not attempt to imitate the industrial model in any respect” (p. 249) because when the industrial model is allowed to seep into the organic model, it tends to take over. He writes,

[The artisanal model] must not try to replace skilled labor with capital; it must not grow for the sake of growth; it should not strive for uniformity in its products, but rather make a virtue of variation and seasonality; it shouldn’t invest capital to reach national markets, but rather should focus on local markets, relying on reputation and word of mouth rather than on advertising. (Pollan, 2007, p. 249)

I believe that Pollan’s above arguments also apply to the arts, especially to small arts organizations. That is, SAOs should not simply mimic the conventional “industrial model” of large arts organizations that have to always expand their market to survive. Instead, they need to use the so-called “artisanal model” in which they would not sacrifice their unique artworks produced by skilled artists in favor of mass-produced artifacts; nor would they achieve financial growth for the sake of growth; most importantly, they would rely on local communities, as well as on their reputation and word-of-mouth, to reach their audiences.

The key of the organic farming model is to understand the relationships in nature that enable livestock and poultry to grow and to focus on enriching them by using related agents that already exist in nature. That is why organic farmers focus on learning from
nature’s template by using earthworms, by not removing weeds, or rotating the pastures where cows graze, among other practices. We can similarly support the creative vitality of small arts organizations by focusing on and taking care of the intricate relationships of SAOs with other agents in their ecology.

To design appropriate support programs, subgovernment agencies and policy makers that aim to support the arts must both appreciate the importance of SAOs and their artisanal economics, and seek crucial information on the ecology of SAOs. I deem this dissertation as a starting point of a long scholarly journey of many studies to come, on SAOs. Beyond this dissertation, I recommend conducting more grounded studies on small arts organizations, to offer a deeper understanding of their ecology in different settings. For subgovernment agencies at the national, state, and city levels, such as NEA, OAC, and GCAC respectively, findings from these grounded studies will serve as a critical springboard, as they will provide information about the complex and dynamic relationships of SAOs. Findings of such studies will inform supporting agencies about the essential links between small arts organizations and their various constituencies, and will help strengthen, repair, or create those links.

Available Light Theater holds a fundraising event every year, “Feed Your Soul,” believing that the arts are feeding our souls. If you can say, food is for our body and the arts are for our soul, then there is much common ground between cultivating food and the arts. In the same sense, I would not want to feed my soul only with mass-produced arts. This is why I strongly believe that more research is needed on the creative vitality of small art organizations.
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APPENDIX A

Set of Questions and Guidelines

1. Face Sheets of Interviewee
   a. May I ask your name?
   b. What is your gender?
   c. What is your discipline in the arts?
   d. What is your occupation? Do you have any other occupation or part-time job other than this?
   e. And your locale is? Where do you live? Where do you work?
   d. What is your educational background?
   e. What is your source of income? Is there any other source of income?

2. Face Sheets of SAOs
   a. Tell me about your organization. What does your organization do?
   b. What is your organization’s legal status? For example, is your organization incorporated as 501c3? For how many years?
   c. Do you have a Board of Directors? How many board members do you have? Are any of your board members paid or reimbursed for their services (quasi staff)?
   d. Tell me about the people in your organization. How many people are involved in your organization? Among them, how many are there full time, how many are there part time, and how many are volunteers?
   e. What is your organizations’ annual budget? Has the annual budget significantly changed over the years?

3. Goals and Issues of SAOs
   a. What is your short-term organizational goal?
   b. What are the recent and ongoing issues that you are facing to achieve your short-term goals?
   c. Are you currently gaining advances on these short-term goals? How? What is most necessary for you to accomplish your short-term goal?
d. Where would you like your organization to be in five years? What steps are you likely to take to get there? How do you intend to get there?
e. What are your long-term organizational goals?
f. What issues do you have in achieving your long-term goals? What is most necessary for you to accomplish your long-term goals?
g. How will you acquire what is most necessary to achieve long term goals?

4. The Management of SAOs.
a. How and where do you get financial resources? For example, earned income (from sales of what?), donation (cash or in-kind), fundraising or grants.
b. In the last year, what were your financial resources?
c. Is there significant variation from year to year of where your resources come from?
d. How do you plan on gaining resources? (apart from things that you have mentioned?)
e. How do you recruit your staff? How do you recruit your Board members? How do you get volunteers? How do you get any specialized services such as volunteer lawyers?
c. How do you market yourself (your SAO)? How do you communicate with your audience? How do you gather public feedback? Do you have any specific plans to reach a new audience? What would you like to do to improve communication or feedback?

5. Entrepreneurship in SAOs
a. These days, entrepreneurship is a kind of buzz word when describing new or small business. What does the word, entrepreneurship mean to you?
b. Do you utilize (or have you utilized) the concept of entrepreneurship in your administration?
c. What do you mean by “innovative?” Have you felt or experienced that you need to be more innovative?

6. SAOs’ Perception of the Existing Support Systems
a. Are you aware of any resources available to support SAOs like yours? For example, do you aware of services from OAC, GCAC, or Columbus Foundation?
b. If so, where do you get the information about those resources? Where do you usually go to find information about these kinds of resources? What other resources have you found?
c. Generally speaking, do you find it easy to access any support systems? Would you share your experiences regarding any support that you have received or benefited from?
d. Are you satisfied with what you accomplished by using the available resources? If not, why not? What do you find dissatisfactory?
e. If you are the Director of OAC or GCAC (or in any other position to support SAOs), what program or services would you develop for SAOs?

7. IT and Support Systems
   a. I want to talk about your use of technology. What technology do you use to manage your organization? For example, do you use email, the Internet, cell phone or MP3 players?
   b. When and why do you use technology? For example, how do you use your webpage?
   c. How comfortable are you with using technology? How about your staff and volunteers? Do you feel any gaps among your staff in terms of technology? Do you think you (or your staff) need any support for using technology?
   d. Does your use of technology affect your achieving your goals and accomplishments? How?
   e. What technology (if any) would you like to have access to or be able to use in achieving both short term and long term goals?

8. Feedback from SAOs
   a. Did you find this question confusing? If yes, do you have any suggestions that might help clear any confusion?
   b. Did you find any of these questions to be irrelevant? If yes, why?
   c. Were there any questions that made you uncomfortable?
   d. Do you have any suggestions for me to conduct this research better?
# Contact Schedule of Supplementary Phone Survey

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Phone = via phone  SMS = via short message service  obsv. = observation  ○ = response received  X = response not received