Designing fashion through Social media using collective intelligence: The example of "Kuch Bhi" initiative by Neil Dantas

Abstract:

This paper draws attention to how collaborative intelligence in social media or social networking sites can be applied in fashion design process. Collaborative intelligence is a measure of the collaborative ability of a group or entity. This new form of open source peer production enables the designers to harvest external knowledge, resource and talent from the swarm or group. The five attributes of collaborative intelligence: Openness, peering, sharing, voting and acting globally (through social media, in this case) is an integral part of modern design process in fashion. Though the terms 'fashion' and 'clothing' tend to be used synonymously, but while fashion conveys a number of different social meaning, clothing is the generic raw materials of what the person wears(Yuniya Kawamura 2005). As defined in the New Oxford Dictionary on Historical Principles (published in 1901) the word "fashion" primarily denotes the action/ process of making, manner, a prevailing custom, a current usage, conventional usage in dress and mode of life. As 'the fashion', it is defined as the mode of dress, etiquette, furniture and style of speech adopted in society for the time being. Since, fashion is related to the prevalent social norms and etiquettes, this paper argues that in the design process the group / social swarms should be more involved to actively participate, contribute and vote to add various elements in design. The process suggested in this paper is more of web 2 (the "participatory" web) mode than the traditional (web1, a "non participatory" web) process usually followed in fashion design industry. A Web 2.0 site allows users to interact and collaborate with each other in a social media dialogue as creators (prosumers) of user-generated content in a virtual community, in contrast to websites where users (consumers) are limited to the passive viewing of content that was created for them. This paper also argues about the relevance of intellectual property rights and how the new models of collaboration are forcing a reexamination of intellectual property to affirm the new role of a fashion designer as an enabler rather than an inhibitor of co-creation and collaboration.

The second part applies these ideas to fashion design and examines the case of "Kuch Bhi" (meaning "anything", in Hindi), a collaborative project initiated by Neil Dantas at Facebook. Neil, is an Indian designer known for his design sensibility and inspirations from India and specially Mumbai as the soul while its beauty and decay, innocence and guilt become the visual fabric of his work. By extracting elements of the city, he creates icons which become poetic symbols and coded comments on the social, political and emotional issues of today's Mumbai. The Kuch Bhi movement is a fine example of collaborative intelligence, cool swarming and the contemporary role of a fashion designer as an enabler or catalyst in the design process.

Fashion, social involvement and prevalent fashion production system:

The Dictionnaire de la mode au XXe siècle (Remaury 1996) indicates that the French word for fashion, which meant the collective manner of dressing, first appeared in 1482. Fashion is a collaborative tool to display one's belonging to certain class, social group, culture or religious or political belief. Ted Polhemus (1987) mentioned that fashion is not the attire of any class group, but of those people who 'fall between' rather than within social groups. The fashionable are bound together only by a common language of arbitrary sign images which acquire meaning within the context of the overall structure of fashion system. Ross (1908) in his study discussed the contagions of collective behavior that results group action. As the adornment allows us to assert ourselves as individuals, it also allows us to identify ourselves as part of a social collective…dress and adornment may communicate 'I'm one of us' (Ted Polhemus & Lynn Procter, 1978).

According to Yuniya Kawamura (2005) Clothing production and fashion production are both collective activities which require large numbers of people to produce the finished product. While clothing production manufactures items of garments, fashion production perpetuates the belief in fashion. Therefore, the processes and institutions that they go through are separate. Clothing production involves the actual manufacturing process of material clothing. On the other hand, fashion production involves those who help construct the idea of fashion. Furthermore, treating fashion as a collective product is a broader task which refers to aspects of cultural production which do feature in the immediate making of the work. Although fashion is not about clothing, without it, fashion cannot exist. They are not mutually inclusive nor are they mutually exclusive. Roach-Higgins noted that awareness of change by members of a collective is a requisite for fashion (1985). Their collective recognition, acceptance and use of a particular form of dress, which they eventually replace with another form, makes it a fashion. Fashion is a social regulating system in its own right and differs from other regulating system (such as those of habit, custom, convention, morality, and the law) only in degree, not in essence (Roch-Higgins and Eicher 1973). Yuniya explained that non-Western ethnographical case studies of the way people dress often use term 'dress', 'cultural/ethnic dress' or 'costume', rather than 'fashion' because fashion is not only about change, but an institutionalized, systematic change produced by those who are authorized to implement it. That kind of fashion system is found, at least for now, only in the West. The French

fashion system consists of different organizations with a hierarchy among those who design cloths: Haute Couture, Pret-a-Porter for women and Pret-a-Porter for men. The more exclusive the inclusion becomes, the more valuable the membership it. The French fashion trade organization plays a pivotal role within this system and has been instrumental in creating institutions that control the mobilization process of fashion professionals and organize fashion events and activities in Paris. Bourdieu (1984) argues that the designers need to earn "symbolic capital" for their products for those consumers who wish to share that capital to differentiate themselves from those with whom they do not wish to identify.

In the above discussion, though it is clear that fashion is a social phenomenon and it is a tool for social conformity, but explains that the prevalent process of producing fashion is controlled by the institutions and the authorities or certain segment of the society involved in fashion business. In the whole process of fashion production, the consumers (the users of fashion products) are not actually "involved" in ideation, value addition or designing the product but for mare consumption of the end product/ dress/ clothing or for post-consumption evaluation (to analyze their post-decision behavior to ensure repeat purchase) .

Crowd sourcing and Web 2.0 phenomenon:

As Kurt W. Back (2007) mentioned, the complex position of fashion as an industry as well as cultural activity has made it extremely sensitive to technical changes, more than similar aesthetic products (Blumer 1960; Horne 1967). So, the open source and crowd sourcing in-fact has great influence in contemporary fashion process. Open source is a technique used in the development of computer code. It has evolved much further than just software and computer code and is the backbone of many Web 2.0 applications. Wikipedia for instance is an open source encyclopedia and dictionary that is not only constantly building better definitions but is also uploaded amazingly fast. Online tools have made it possible for youth to create their own unique support structures through interactions with friends. Generation Yers (those born between 1980 and 1996) around the world have 140 Facebook friends in average, compared to 91 among Gen Xers and 64 among Baby Boomers (Van Belleghem S, Van den Branden S, 2010).

In the book " Web 2.0- Concepts and Application" Gary B. Shelly & Mark Frydenberg defines Web 2.0 as a cluster of "interactive applications that allow users to participate in contributing, organizing, and creating their content, as a result overall quality of the site improves. They explains that the World Wide Web has evolved from a collection of Websites containing pages of static or infrequently changing text, images, and hyperlinks to support interactive Web applications for performing business transactions, sharing and viewing photos and videos, chatting and collaborating.Rachel Botsman and Roo Rogers (2011) argues that now a days, the internet is inherently democratic and decentralized.

Following the same pattern, the process for fashion production has to evolve into this same manner where the classic Web 1.0 format of fashion production should mutate into more interactive, inclusive, dynamic Web 2.0 pattern.

The tee shirt design community Threadless (http://www.threadless.com/) works on web2.0 phenomenon. By creating and voting, the community decides which products to sell, which means no guessing what customers want. No internal design team, either, and no sales force since both designers and community promote the items they love.

This process is usually called "crowd sourcing" rather than collaborative intelligence because here the wisdom of the crowd is utilized to source/ launch a product (or to seek their feedback) against a reward system (tangible or intangible) rather than overall collaboration to invent / create a new concept for a "common good".

Collective Intelligence, swarm and COIN:

Collective intelligence is the synergistic and cumulative channeling of the vast human and technical resources now available over the Internet (Malone and Klein, 2007). However, in a wider meaning, Collective intelligence or collaborative intelligence is a shared or group intelligence that arises from or is a capacity or characteristic of groups and other collective living systems. Collective intelligence appears in a wide variety of forms of consensus decision making in bacteria, animals, humans, and computer networks. The collective intelligence is termed as 'wikinomics' (based on the success of collective knowledge bank "Wikipedia") by Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams (2006) in their book (similarly named). They argued that 'wikinomics' is the new force that is bringing people together on online or offline platforms to create a giant brain. It has been shown that the use of cross-functional teams with diverse occupational and intellectual backgrounds increases the likelihood of combining knowledge in novel ways (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). In such teams, the amount and variety of information available to members is increased, enabling the creation and consequent evaluation of different ideas from a number of different perspectives (Brown and Eisenhardt, 1995).

 Kathrine Bailey and Samantha Penney (2007) mentioned that New collaborative technologies such as wikis, blogs, vlogs (video blogs), podcasts, and discussion boards are beneficial because the new collaborative methods provide active and engaging content creation in asynchronous environments. Tapscott and Williams illuminate modern collaboration with the following, "The new art and science of Wikinomics is based upon four powerful new ideas: openness, peering, sharing, and acting globally." He is referring to openness as open source or collaborations where anyone can make contributions or edit content as well as referencing the trend of corporations opening up content for outside contributors (Tapscott and Williams). Peering is the abolition of hierarchy in favor or horizontal organization, all contributors have equal importance. Sharing in Tapscott and Williams' definition covers the sharing of created content and the release of that content

into collaborative environments for editing, contribution, and comment. Finally, acting globally in Tapscott and Williams' definition, ". . .has no physical or regional boundaries. It builds planetary ecosystems for designing, sourcing, assembling, and distributing products on a global basis." (Tapscott and Williams, 2008).

According to Peter Gloor (2006), like many other living beings, human also swarms around like-minded people, with whom they not only feel comfortable but also can collaborate to produce winning ideas. Gloor argues that people working together in swarm creativity exhibit many parallels with beehives, and the best swarm creativity is that which most closely replicates the behavior of bees. The collaboration of innovators as a swarm is the most effective settings for the development of new products, services, practices and methodologies.

The early twenty-first century brings the emergence of more flexible organizational forms such as communities of interest, communities of practice, and Collaborative Innovation Networks (COIN). COIN are self-organizing groups of highly motivated individuals working together towards a common goal not because of orders from their superiors, but because the members of a COIN share the same goal and are convinced of their common cause (Peter Gloor, 2006). COINs feature internal transparency and direct communication. Members of a COIN collaborate and share knowledge directly with each other, rather than through hierarchies. They come together with a shared vision because they are intrinsically motivated to do so and seek to collaborate in some way to advance an idea.

The five essential elements of collaborative innovation networks (what Gloor calls their "genetic code") are as follows:

1. Evolve from learning networks
2. Feature sound ethical principles
3. Based on trust and self-organization
4. Make knowledge accessible to everyone
5. Operate in internal honesty and transparency

In their paper "Ethical Issues in Collaborative Innovation Networks", Peter A. Gloor, Carey Heckman, Fillia Makedon described that COIN works in the below mentioned way:

A group of self-motivated people with a collective vision, enabled by the web collaborates in achieving a common goal by sharing ideas, information and work as a Collaborative Innovation Network (COIN).It takes a series of innovators who are ahead of their time to prepare the groundwork for the COIN. Their ideas are then picked up by COIN leaders excelling in collaborative skills to carry the innovation over the tipping point by assembling a team of dedicated experts. COIN combine 6 types of networks: work, social, knowledge, strategy, learning and innovation networks. The main "glue" that holds the network together is the shared vision and a bond of mutual trust.

The guiding principles of the ethical code for COIN allow an intelligent questioning of the rules. Members of COIN demonstrate a "feel" for their community, treating each other with dignity and esteem. Similarly, leaders of COIN interfere relatively little into the daily activities of their community, just letting it operate based on the shared code of ethics. A common "code of ethics" which members carry in their genes coordinates the working behavior of COIN affiliates. By living according to those mostly unwritten behavioral rules, COIN members are implicitly more sociable than many societies which live by a written rigorous law. As COIN members participate out of their free will and usually are not paid to work, they expect and exhibit fairness, compassion, and altruism. COIN members go out and help others because they expect others to do the same for them. An ethical code for COIN subsumes altruistic behavior, compassion for fellow COIN members, and moderation and humility of their leaders. An ethical code for a COIN can be summarized in four terms: reciprocity, transparency, consistency, and rationality.

COINs existed well before modern communication technology enabled their creation and development. People in COIN work together as a virtual team, to realize a shared goal and make their shared vision come true. COIN have been active well before the advent of the Internet. But by providing instantaneous global accessibility, the Internet has given them an immense boost in productivity. The Internet itself, the World Wide Web, and Linux are examples of innovations driven by COIN (Peter A. Gloor, Carey Heckman, Fillia Makedon).

Social Network sites, Cool farming and collaborative design :

Peter Gloor & Scott Cooper (2007) defined social networks are the relationships between groups of individuals. Danah M. Boyd and Nicole B. Ellison (2007) in their paper "Social Network Sites: Definition, History, and Scholarship" defined social network sites as web-based services that allow individuals to (1) construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, (2) articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and (3) view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may vary from site to site. They stated that the uniqueness of social network sites is not that they allow individuals to meet strangers, but rather that they enable users to articulate and make visible their social networks. This can result in connections between individuals that would not otherwise be made, but that is often not the goal, and these meetings are frequently between "latent ties" (Haythornthwaite, 2005) who share some offline connection.

FIGURE 1-2. Sample social network.
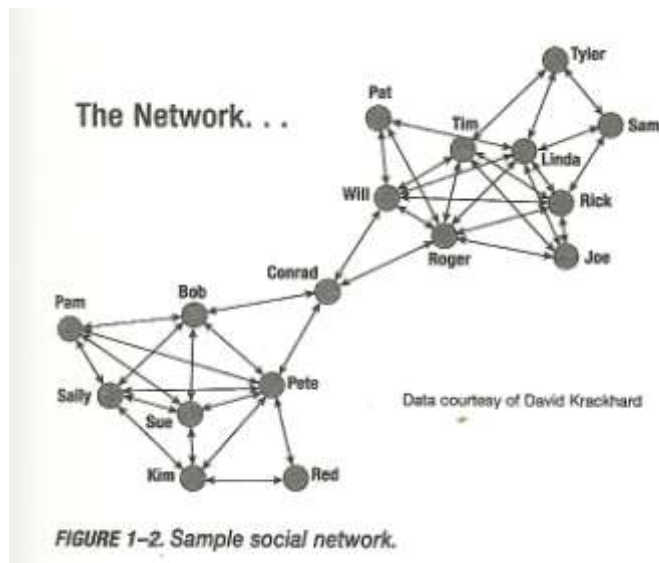
Source: Peter Gloor and Scott Cooper (2007) *Coolhunting: Chasing Down the Next Big Thing; Amacom(American Management Association)*

Facebook is one of the main filters for young people today. It delivers content that is almost always relevant and organizes many aspects of their lives: events, music, photos and communications. Of GenYers that are active on social networks, 4 out of 10 befriend brands, compared to 31 percent of Gen Xers and 27 percent of Baby Boomers (Joeri Van den Bergh and Mattias Behrer, 2011). Hence, SNSs are the fertile ground to engage young creative mind for collaborative idea generation, new product creation, and promotion through collaborating, peering and sharing.

According to the research report of nGenera Insight (2007), "N-Gen Global Research Study" only 10 percent of the consumers wouldn't be willing to collaborate on products they're interested in. 66 percent would be willing to participate in research. 61 percent would be willing to help design products and 37 percent would be willing to join a brand discussion group.

Gloor, Jonas S. Krauss, Stefan Nann(2009), defined "coolness" as a property combined of four characteristics. First, cool things are *fresh and new*. Second, cool things make us *part of a community*, they help us to be with "people like us" (McPherson et. al. 2001). As has been found by Aral et. al (2009), homophily, the tendency to bond with others like us is the best predictor for acceptance of new trends. To phrase it differently, we are much more likely to pick up a new trend if it is recommended by "people like us", i.e. people in the same community. Fourth, cool things *give meaning to our life*. Cool things make people happier and feel good. Owning a cool thing can become a goal all by itself, whether it is the new iPhone, the designer bag from Adidas, the car we always wanted, or joining an activist group fighting global warming.

According to Gloor, Coolfarming is a process which enables the innovators to behave like bee keepers to nurture their exciting ideas and unleash their creative

swarm's output into next big thing. In his book "Coolfarming-Turn your great Idea into Next Big Thing", he featured real life examples from Linux to Twilight, from Procter & Gamble to Apple and explained on how coolfarming provide a fertile nurturing ground for developing original ideas, Determine what "cool" means for one's target group; and what attributes the next big thing should possess; how to convert creative dreams into real products by enlisting the help of a dedicated and passionate Collaborative Innovation Network (COIN); how to carry new ideas over the tipping point into widespread phenomena.

The swarm-based innovation process of developing "cool new things" happens in four steps: in step one the creator comes up with the cool idea, in step two the creator recruits additional members to form a Collaborative Innovation Network (COIN), in step three the COIN grows into a Collaborative Learning Network (CLN) by adding friends and family, in step four outsiders join, forming a Collaborative Interest Network (CIN) (Gloor 2005).

It's not just about bright colors of logos or the slickness of products or cool-looking hybrid cars…Designers can't only be concerned with making their distinctive, final mark; they must be engaged in an ongoing process of collaboration with not just users but other creators. Notably, the design of BIXI (self-service bicycle rental system launched in May 2009 in Montreal, Quebec, Canada) required the collaboration of six design firms with different skill sets: 8D Technologies created the solar –powered terminals; Michel Dallaire designed the physical bike components; Cycles Divinci manufactured the actual bikes; Robotics design created the bike dock; Michel Gourdeau suggested the name; and Morrow Communications developed the overall brand (Rachel Botsman and Roo Rogers, 2011). In Montreal, the system provided 3,000 bicycles and 300 stations located around Montreal's central core by June 2009, expanding to 5,000 bicycles and 400 stations later that summer. Bixi marked its one-millionth ride on October 26, 2009. Now BIXI is present at London, Washington D.C., Arlington, Minneapolis and Melbourne. To me, BIXI is a big change of mindset from "My cycle" to "Our cycle". As John Theckara writes in 'In the bubble', "Designers are having to evolve from being the individual authors of objects, or buildings, to being facilitators of change in large groups of people".

Traditional design process:

Typically, the fashion design process has been regarded as being phased, with the first stage as 'research', followed by 'design development' and 'manufacture' (Frings,1991; Drew, 1992; Carr and Pomeroy, 1992; Stecker, 1996). Jennifer Craik(2009), in her book "Fashion- The key concepts' noted that the process of fashion design involves a number of elements: having a conceptual idea of a garment or look and the ability to translate it into a form; choosing the most appropriate fabrics; making samples; building a seasonal collection, typically with a theme; outsourcing manufacture of preorders and likely sales; obtaining

exposure and marketing; retailing; evaluating success and financial earning; and beginning planning for the next season. She stated that the designer business is a relentless cycle of anticipating the future yet drawing on resonance of the past. This involves balancing the now with the future and the before. Potential clients may be frightened by trends that are too different from what they wear now but reject anything that looks old fashioned or out of fashion, so a careful balancing act is needed to predict newness that is exciting but still has some familiarity.

Tony Hines , Margaret Bruce and Pammi Sinha(2002), in the book "Fashion Marketing- Contemporary Issues) compared various individual fashion design process models and constructed a 'generic' model as illustrated below. In the generic model, each of the five generic phases of the process provided opportunities for the uptake of market information. The development of the styles was iterative, i.e. amendments continued until the style was deemed to be of appropriate fit, quality, size, etc. for manufacturer (Tony Hines, Margaret Bruce and Pammi Sinha, 2002).
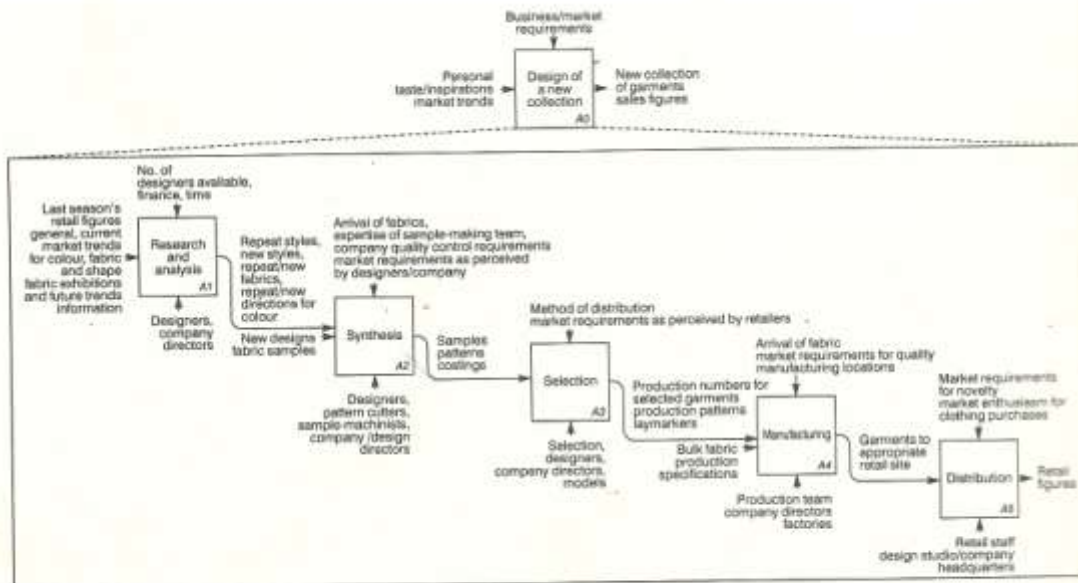

Figure 9.1 The generic fashion design process.

Source: Tony Hines, Margaret Bruce & Pammi Sinha (2001); Fashion Marketing: Contemporary Issues; Chapter: Mechanics of Fashion ; Butterworth Heiemann
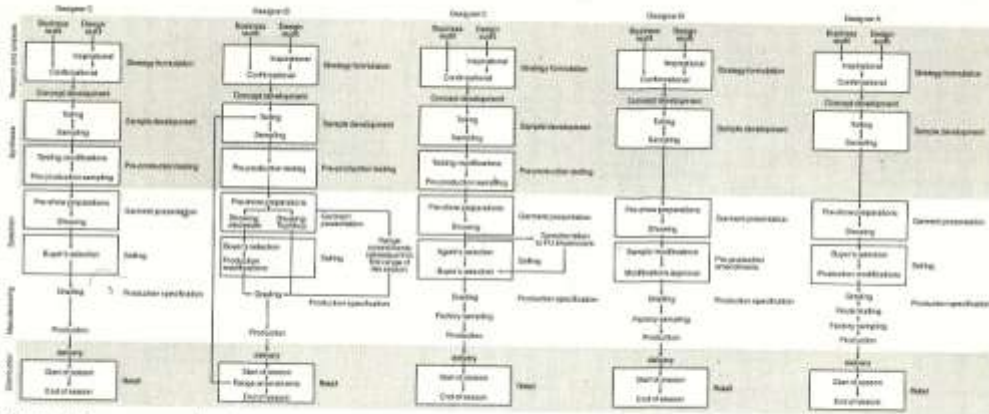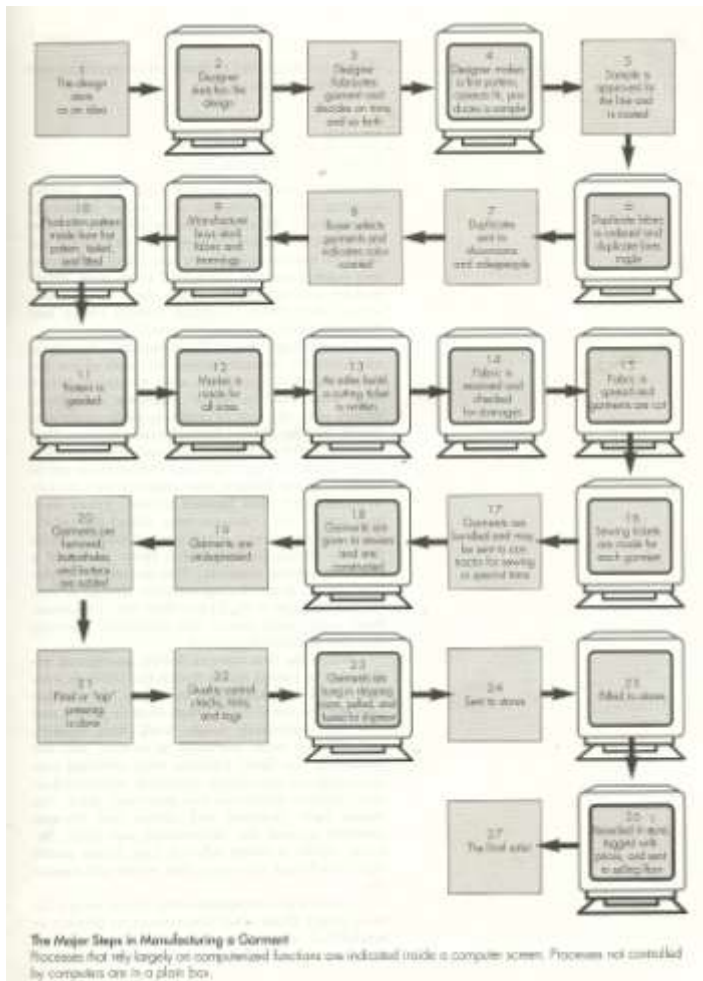
Figure 9.2 Summary comparison between the case study company design processes.

Source: Tony Hines, Margaret Bruce & Pammi Sinha (2001); Fashion Marketing: Contemporary Issues; Chapter: Mechanics of Fashion ; Butterworth Heiemann

In the book "Inside Fashion Design", Sharon Lee Tate(2008) gave a flow chart as Major Steps in Manufacturing a Garment (shown below):

The Major Steps in Manufacturing a Garment
Processes that rely largely on computerized functions are indicated inside a computer screen. Processes not controlled by computers are in a plain box.

Source: Sharon Lee Tate (2008); Inside Fashion Design; Pearson Education

Though, it's labeled as "the generic fashion design process" but Tony Hines, Margaret Bruce and Pammi Sinha's model is more of clothing manufacturing process than fashion design. Sharon Lee Tate's model is clearly labeled as "Manufacturing a Garment" though the book title emphasizes on "Fashion Design".

None of the above models gives any emphasis on the idea generation process or concept development process which is the first and vital step for "designing a fashion product".

Dr. Joe S. Au, Ms. Gail Tailor, Mr. Edward. W. Newton (2004) In their paper, "Model of Design Process of Hong Kong Fashion Designers", described the design process for Hong Kong Fashion Designers as 'gathering ideas for inspiration by observing people's lifestyle, searching historical references from different periods and considering the esthetic quality of every design detail. They synthesize their collected ideas according to their own feelings and the main

theme of the collection, as well as the esthetic appearance of the new creations. Finally they evaluate the new designs in the light of the esthetic harmony of design elements. The new designs need to make the wearer feel confident about themselves." Interestingly, this process has no direct interaction with the consumer / wearer and remains as mare "observing the lifestyle". Though at the end it suggests that the design should "make the wearer feel confident about themselves".

In the paper "Collaborative Decision-making: Design Process towards Integrated Product Design" , NG, M. C. F. and WANG, Xueqin (Institute of Textiles and Clothing, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University); discussed how the Quality Function Deployment (QFD) model can be implemented in Textile and clothing industry to satisfy the customer and then translating the customer's demands into design targets and major quality assurance points to be used through out the production stage(Akao,1990). According to the paper, "This method is used in many design fields for various purposes (Chan and Wu, 2002), and it is used at the early investigation and later evaluation stages of a project in order to make more accurate decisions in terms of design quality and client's needs. QFD is capable to lead innovation product designs. An innovative product development process requires an understanding of continuously changing customer wants and needs. Hence, there is a need to study and develop procedures that can help a company or project team gain a profound knowledge of customer requirements (CR) and satisfaction, and then develop products with innovative features (Shen, Tan, and Xie, 2000). Four benefits of QFD for design research have been demonstrated by Dikmen, Talat Birgonul, and Kiziltas (2005), namely, precise collection and identification of client needs/expectations, better planning, enhanced communication and concurrency, and reduced uncertainty."

 The 4 steps of QFD is shown below. A four-phase approach is accomplished via a series of charts that guide activities of a product team by providing standard documentation during product and process development (Cohen, 1995):
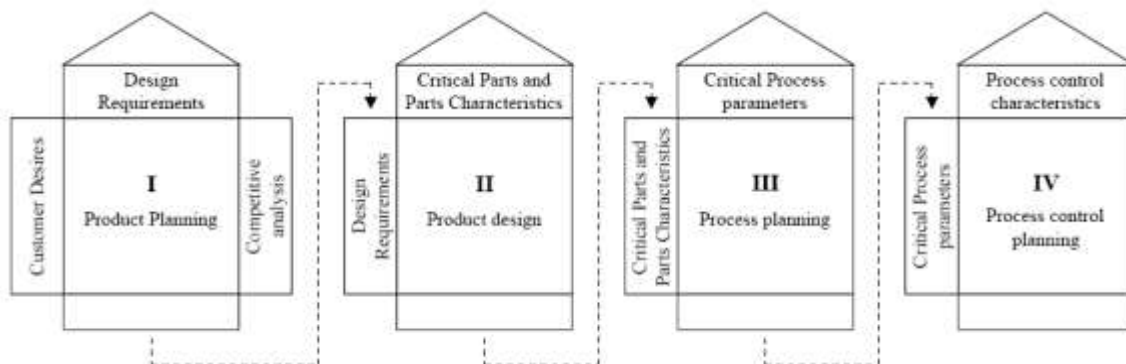
Source: NG, M. C. F. and WANG, Xueqin,(2007); Collaborative Decision-making: Design Process towards Integrated Product Design; Institute of Textiles and Clothing, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (International Association of Societies of Design Research)

The above model, if implied in fashion design process, addresses the need and requirement of clients to generate the idea, but its not a process which inspires and involves the consumers (or clients) in the process of developing the product or addresses any collaboration among common creative swarm.

As Cristopher Alexander said, at the beginning of 60's, the number of information needed to solve a problem is large and grows so fast that the designer is not able to collect the data neither to use them (Chiara Colombi, Giuliano Simonelli, 2005). It will become impossible for an individual designer to integrate, resolve, impliment the growing need of "involvement" of ever mutating consumers in his product and satisfy the demand with a "non-interactive" "one way" design.

Jennifer Craik (2009), mentioned that fashion designers are usually not considered cultural workers by other cultural workers (e.g., artists), industry bureaucrats, or statisticians, even though they are creating cultural products and images. She wonders why this is the scenario, but states that perhaps designers believe that they are outside or above the realm of cultural workers and are dream weavers of a different order.
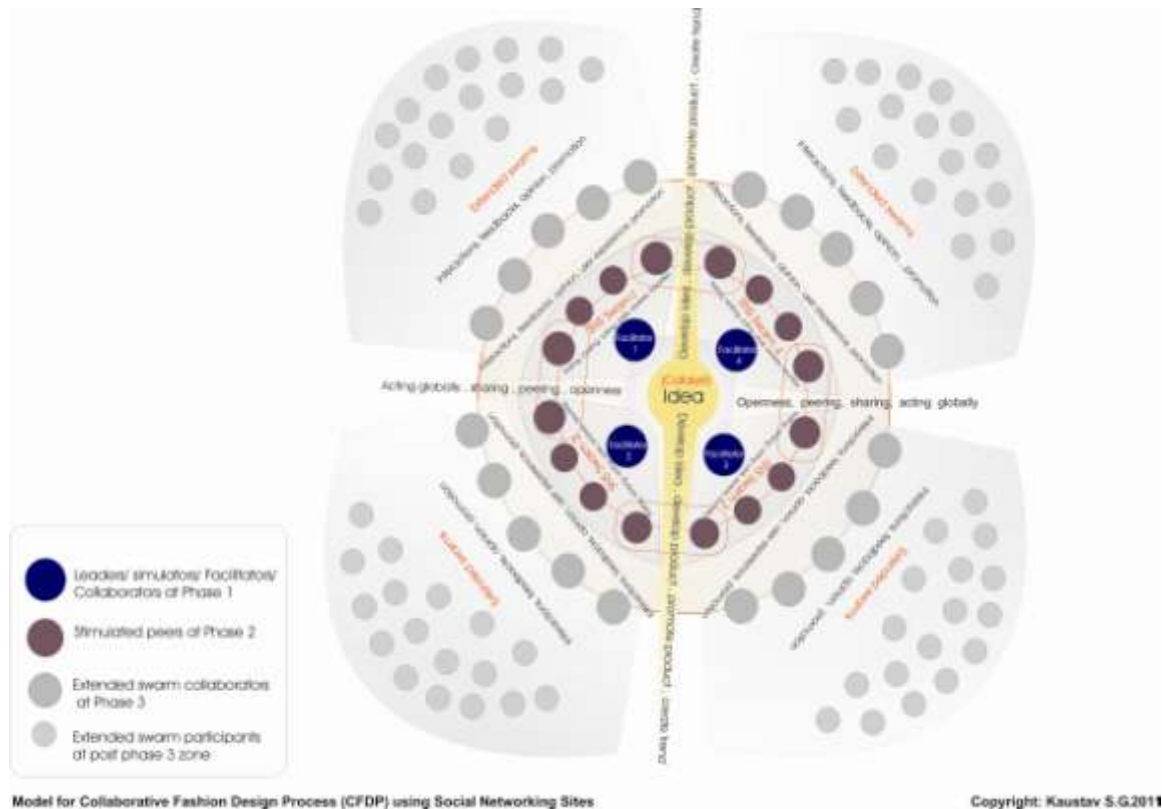
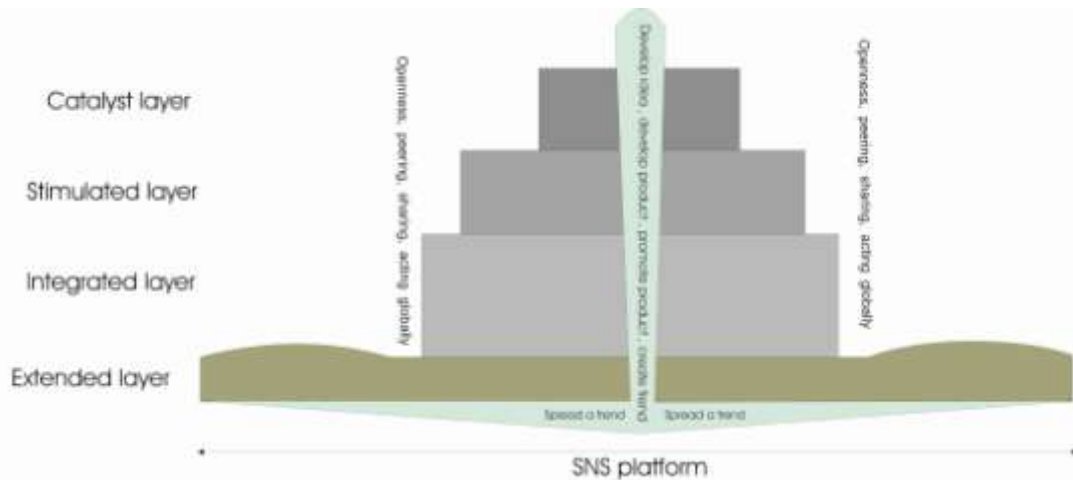## proposed [Web 2.0] Collaborative Fashion Design Process (CFDP) using Social Networking Sites:

In a world of collaboration and involvement, fashion designers no longer can remain as individual dream weavers but a facilitator to weave the dream of collaborative swarm. As John Theckara writes in 'In the bubble', "Designers are having to evolve from being the individual authors of objects, or buildings, to being facilitators of change in large groups of people". The fashion designer, a "facilitator of change" should bring in the power of openness, peering, sharing, and acting globally to involve swarm creativity through coolfarming in an ever evolving, interactive and receptive manner. The Social Network platform is a great ground for such involvement.

After scrutinizing the above models of the traditional fashion design process and noticing the lack of collaborative effort among the creative leaders and the swarm/ peers/ consumers in the process, the author proposes a three phase model or diagram for [Web.2.0] collaborative fashion design process (CFDP) with reference to the steps discussed in COIN and Coolfarming (Peter Gloor 2007), utilizing the power of Wikinomics (Don Tapscott and Anthony D. Williams 2006) and the case studies discussed as Collaborative Design in the book "What's mine is Yours" by Rachel Botsman & Roo Rogers(2011). The author would also like to remind that the CFDP is very different than crowd sourcing. In CFDP the creative individuals (with varied creative skills, knowledge and resource) collaborates to bring in individuals from their swarms through coolfarming and are involved intensely in the process of collaborative idea generation, product development, promotion and sell as "common goal for good" (ie. BIXI bike

sharing) rather than just putting up individual's idea to a common melting pot against certain reward systems (ie. www.inkfruit.com crowd sourcing).

The below CFDP diagram has 3 phases of interaction and collaboration in a collective swarm. The mentioned layers or phases are not in hierarchy basis for the position or status but due to the level of interaction, contribution and collaborative cohesiveness.

Model for Collaborative Fashion Design Process (CFDP) using Social Networking Sites

Catalyst layer

Stimulated layer

Integrated layer

Extended layer

SNS platform

CFDP model - Cross section view

Phases to build up the CFDP using the Social Networking Sites(SNS) are described below:

Phase one: Collaborating stimulators as leaders/ facilitator -the Catalyst layer

The fashion designers in CFDP are not designers in the conventional sense but are stimulators, facilitators and influencers. They do not govern or create their designs through traditional design method (by understanding the need of the client or creating an avant-garde dress of art), but rather provide guidance (to the swarm) and are completely integrated in the community as a peer through moderating and collaborating. The fashion designer, in a CFDP model will focus on giving power to the collaborative swarm who will in turn strengthen designer's position in a swarm. The best example of giving power to people is the Linux operating system which is developed and refined by the mass contributors but not the innovator of Linux. Linus Torvalds, the creator of Linux operating system stated that "While Linux has been my baby so far, I don't want to stand in the way if people want to make something better of it".

In an open source of powering the people, swarm or mass sets the fashion trend rather than individual designers. Various web initiatives are using the power of internet to enable mass set the trend. With 6.5 million monthly unique visitors,

Polyvore (http://www.polyvore.com) is one such community of tastemakers where people can discover their style and set trends around the world.

Hence, the fashion designers should build up the macro theme and initiate the "story" to set the cornerstones and the vision, but then let the swarm members take over and create a whole goodness around the story through peering, sharing, and acting globally. As DeannaZandt(June 2010) mentioned in her book 'Share This! How You Will Change the World with Social Networking' that "The fundamental building block common to every social movement is the power of the narrative. Your story… and your willingness to share others' stories with your networks… can mean the difference between progressive change and perpetuating the status quo. We need you here, building and mapping your relationships, sharing your experience and creating pipelines of empathy and trust that will change the world." So, the main role of the fashion designer or collaborating creatives in CFDP model will be to facilitate evolution of an idea into a story and to ensure a healthy growth of this story by the swarm for the "common good", using social network. Finally, the fluid story will get concentrated to evolve into a product.

Hence, the designers are the influencers and by default are the leaders, not because of their hierarchical capacity but because of their network reputation, peering capacity and unanimous acceptance of their existence and leadership by the swarm. Thus, the power of a fashion designer in CFDP is based on the collective respect of his swarm he has earned through.

Linus Torvalds, inventor of Linux, is an exemplary creator. Torvalds says "… the fact that people trust you, gives you a lot of power over people. Having another person's trust is more powerful than all other management techniques put together. I have no legal or explicit power. I only have the power of having people's trust – but that's a lot of power." (Business Week, 2004). Therefore, key characteristics of creators are personal integrity, trustworthiness, and willingness to communicate transparently and honestly. As we know from Gloor's COIN model, Creators in a cohort are constantly learning and adapting from others. However, that does not mean conscious dissection and analysis of competitors but rather consumption and distribution of knowledge to the COIN. Creators profit from the ecosystem of COINs and CLNs – learning networks that filter information and knowledge, allowing the leader of the COIN to focus on the essentials. In order to grow their idea, COIN leaders have to be coolhunters (Gloor & Cooper 2006), continuously looking for new ideas to extend their original vision, and for new recruits to join them on their endeavor. The Identity of a design swarm is built by the leader's charisma through external symbols important to members of the swarm. However, most importantly will be the behavior of the leader. Leading by example, and as a role model, creators "coin" the swarm through their vision and style. They take life as being on a mission, twenty four by seven. Thus, successful creators have a sound self-esteem, well

grounded in reality however. Who is identifying and grooming new leaders for the swarm? Torvalds gives a description of how other leaders besides him in the Linux Kernel team are selected: "… the swarm picks the leaders. It's not me or any other leader who picks them. The programmers are very good at selecting leaders. There is no process for making somebody a leader. But somebody who gets things done, shows good taste, and has good qualities – people just start sending them suggestions and software updates. I didn't design it this way. This happens because this is the way people work. It's very natural." This means that it is the members of the swarm who choose the leader who is best for them. It is not the leader, who chooses the people working with him, but the people choose with and for whom they want to work. They do this based on the skills and personality of the leader. Based on the reputation of the leader people select with whom to collaborate. They are proud of the goals, of the leader, and foremost, of themselves working for the goals. Thus, every COIN member is also both coolfarmer and coolhunter (Gloor, 2006), continuously looking for cool ideas and cool people. Fashion designers with various skill sets can collaborate together with another creative influencer to widen the swarm with particular add on strength (to add value to the story or concept). The idea will then get more cornerstones set by the collaborating creative designers.

For example, a collaboration of fashion designer, tech-textile designer, mobile engineer, software developer and communities of fishermen can seed the idea of a low cost tee shirt with integrated communicator, GPS and weather indicator for the fishermen, which will not only forecast the climatic change but also will help them tracking the direction in the sea by using the solar energy.

Phase 2: collaborating stimulated peers as interactive swarm- the Stimulated layer

As Gloor mentioned, a group of people is smarter and more creative than the smartest and most creative individuals on their own. It is the main characteristic of most experts that they think they know the answer in their field of expertise. Yet, in fact, each expert only knows part of the answer. Her or his solution might have solved a particular problem in the past. But this does not mean that there are not better ways to solve the same problem. Only the creative combination of the solutions from multiple experts will lead to the best answer. Combining the collective intelligence of experts in a COIN leads to a group whose wisdom vastly exceeds the sum of each individual's expertise. The individuals in a swarm will be the peers who closely interacts with the collaborating fashion designers to participate in the ideation process and give timely feedback or adds values to the idea. The collaborating designers will work as seeders who will seed the idea in a swarm and let the swarm grow these ideas into a full grown product through story / concepts.

To understand the most suitable SNS and best peer clusters or swarm the collaborating fashion designers/ creative leaders should proceed step by step as mentioned below:

1. **Defining the participatory swarm:**
   - To understand the swarm and who all are included in it
   - To understand the best social network to address or involve the swarm
   - How to best reach the swarm to seed the idea

2. **Building the story/ concept through seeding the idea:**
   - To ensure that the idea is clearly understandable to the swarm
   - To ensure that the swarm is able to connect themselves with the idea
   - To ensure that the swarm is participating in building the story or concept around the idea

3. **Describing the process and "common good" to all participants:**
   - To ensure that the swarm understands the common good and relates to it with passion
   - To ensure that the common good is common to all, in the swarm
   - To ensure that the swarm feels the designer is only facilitating-leader but not the leader of   autocracy
   - To make them understand the contribution, selection and voting processes

As Gloor has mentioned, members of a swarm will be in full control to decide for themselves when they want to do what, because they are passionate about the vision, goals, and results of their collaborative effort, and not because they are ordered and paid to do it. Thus, COIN members are motivated intrinsically to reach the shared goal – be it the group of brain surgeons convened to battle the brain cancer of Senator Kennedy (NYT 2008), or programmers jointly
developing the next version of an open source computer program. In a COIN people's thinking is aligned like in a swarm. COIN members communicate their thoughts and ideas, then figure out the rights or wrongs together. They don't follow rules and regulations of what they should or should not do. Rather, they make the rules by themselves, for themselves. As the COIN expands its knowledge and skills, each individual member also grows in skills, knowledge, and personal maturity. An individual's success is realized through the success of the COIN, because the goal of the COIN is the goal of each COIN member. Strong goal alignment is a key feature of COINs. If a COIN works together really well, its output will be of superior quality, beating by far the output of groups managed by conventional project management principles, through command and control. In order to make COINs a success, creators have to look for the best possible individuals to join their team, even if the process of reaching their goal might take much more time by waiting for the right candidates to show up. Potential members should match the integrity of the existing COIN, be aligned

with the goals, and have an intrinsic incentive to work in the group. However, two main motivations, in the following order, can be considered to be major reasons why people join COINs. The first one is serving the greater good, wanting to make, in some way, the world a better place. The second is to obtain what open source programmers call "egoboo" (public recognition of voluntary work, (Raymond, 1999)). Selflessness and altruism are not just good for the environment, but also for the people showing the selfless behavior. Thus, searching for these two traits might identify potential candidates for the COIN. Leadership in COINs is changing continuously. At any given phase, there is a clear leader, but the leader is willing to pass on leadership to whoever is the most capable of reaching the goal of the next phase. This fluctuating leadership assures a continuous inflow of new ideas, and rapid adaptation to external change (Davis & Eisenhardt, 2008).

Phase 3: extending the swarm- Integrated layer and Extended layer

Once the members of level two in CFDP understands, participates and co-exists with the vision and goals of their swarm they tap into their network of friends and family to gain feedback, user experience on relevant products and promote the story/ concept/ product. The level two collaborators will constantly work to increase the level of commitment of level three members (extended swarms) to involve and commit for the cause of "common good".
In one successful case in retail, largest Swiss retailer Migros created a new low-cost product line called M-Budget, relying on a large-scale CLN (Collaborative Learning Network) to choose what products to put into M-Budget. The CLN was convened through dozens of M-Budget parties, rock concerts and sports events such as skate boarding competitions. There young consumers were acting as free trendsetters, telling Migros what products they wanted under the M-Budget label, such as M-Budget mobile phones, M-Budget car sharing, even bathing suits in the M-Budget design. According to the Swiss annual brand name rankings, in just a few years M-Budget rose to one of the most valuable brands in Switzerland (Gloor, 2006).

The extended swarm will spread the word through word-of-mouth marketing and will set the trend. The swarm members will become the carrier of the concept to set a trend and hence, in time the product will create a trend direction rather than following the trend. As Gloor (2006) mentioned in COIN levels, this community of people who believe into the new product will build up momentum and drive the new product to success. This members are experts in locating role models who are not just accepted, but admired by the target group. Ideally, the new product is considered a worthy cause that the admired people care deeply about, and will invest their reputation and energy to get it off the ground. Apple's Steve Jobs is a role model for this approach. He raised the buzz about Apple's new products until

his dedicated swarm of loyal Apple users could not wait to get their hands on the next iPhone, iPod, or MacBook.
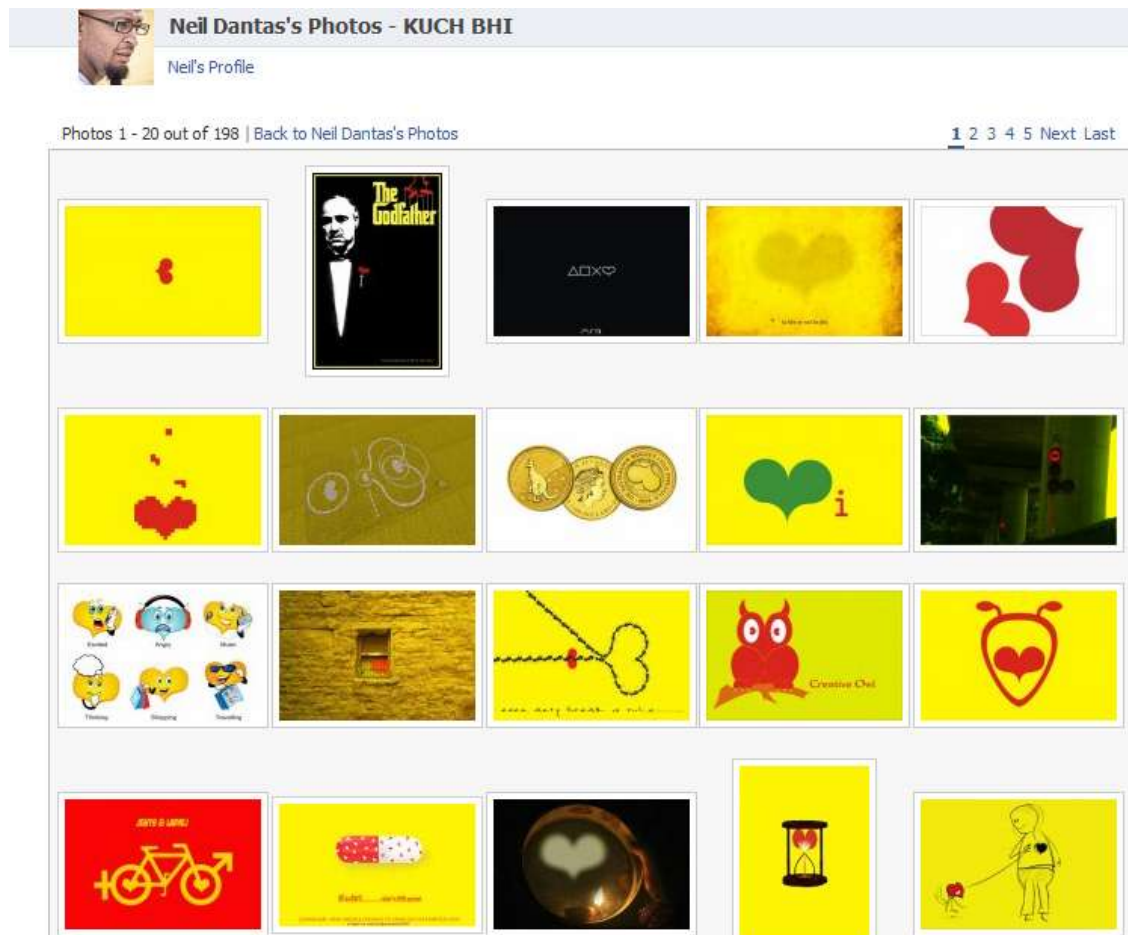
The above mentioned CFDP is not a new method. The "Khadi" revolution initiated by Mr. Gandhi, during the time of India's independence movement is an exemplary implication of CFDP. Mr. Gandhi seeded the idea of non violence and protest through the usage of "indigenous hand-woven textile and clothing through DIY method" as a symbolic protest by boycotting the "British made textiles". The swarm built up the movement as a "common good" through peering, sharing and shaping up the concept around it. Soon the "stereotype costumes" were introduced by various influential leaders to create the "common dress code for Indians" who wanted to "visually exhibit" their swarm identity and protest against the British Empire. The fabric and dresses were worn by the whole country to emerge as an identity of a nation of million countrymen. The hand-woven indigenous fabric known as Khadi is still in use by common men in India and now a "style statement" among celebrities, intellectuals and influential leaders, defying all the other fashion trend hypes for more than 60 years!

The "Kuch Bhi" initiative by Neil Dantas – An example of collaborative fashion design process through Social Networking Site:

Neil is a "socially active" designer from Mumbai, India. tshirtbaba (www.tshirtbaba.com) mentioned that "Neil was brought up in a multi cultural environment where he learned so many things about so many different types of people but one more thing which he learned was that people know a lot of things about themselves and talk about them but don't bother to go beyond what is known to them. Neil was way too curious to know beyond the conventional and it was the real issues which provoked him to do something for the society and thus that's what his designs are all about." Neil has the unique ability to create visual stories around an ideology and allows the story grow through swarm of peers in his Facebook page. Ultimately, the stories and ideas get converted into products by him or his peers and being sold through the swarm. This unique model of collaborative design is am exemplary case study for understanding the implication the larger collaboration through CFDP. The blogger "Wearabout" (www.wearabout.wordpress.com) wrote that About two years ago Neil posted a photo in a Facebook album – a red heart on a yellow background captioned as "kuch bhi" which means 'anything.' The caption further read, "Would you like to download this image and do 'anything' to it? It started as a direction to involve people, to put their heads together in making something (read: anything) for the love of creating something, that would take form as it grew. And it did. Two years down, and it's still on. About hundreds of artists and designers have contributed to the project. And now, there are about five hundred 'kuch bhi' designs." When the designer was initially asked about what he or his swarm wants to do with

these forms, he stated that "The kuch bhi graphics could go on – caps /saris /wallets/ tee shirts/ ties. A company could buy these designs from us. Maybe I will call "us" the "Kuch bhi group." The company could pay and credit that particular designer. If no one buys it, I want to turn top 300 designs in to a book – in a tearable postcard format. And each page would be the size of a postcard – it would have the design, a stamp area, and would carry the name of the designer. It could also be a collector's item or a coffee table book."

Business Standard (04,07.2011) reported that "…Dantas introduced a project on Facebook called 'Kuch Bhi', which has amassed a huge fan base. The project has nearly 1,000 followers, including approximately 300 who have started contributing with designs….Since social networking sites are all about user-generated content that acts as a testimonial, they help businesses build credibility…Product designers like Dantas, for instance, now supply t-shirts to several leading retail stores in Mumbai that got in touch with him after looking at his work on the web." Neil seeded "Kuch Bhi" at Facebook as multiple forms of one icon (the red heart sign of love in yellow background) and peers started adding new meaning through various ideologies and essences.

The first few "Kuch Bhi" forms seeded by Neil   Source: Facebook

Peer- swarms adding meaning to the form   Source: Facebook

The user generated and swarm created "Kuch Bhi" idea/ forms being actively promoted through Youtube videos, photo series at Flickr and through Facebook. Among all SNS in India, Facebook is one of the fastest growing one. Business Standard mentioend that "With 30 million Facebook users in India, it makes perfect sense for neighbourhood businesses to use the medium to endorse their work. Estimates from Nielsen Company and Absolute Data suggest that close to 45,000 Indians are likely to join social networking sites every day over the next six months…Dantas swears by Facebook's reach that made his work popular among the youngsters." Neil has more than 2000 peers in his friends list at Facebook. One of his friends (identified herself as "rebel") quoted in her blog www.livingbytrialanderror.blogspot.com that "Kuch Bhi initiative has become so successful that there are now 'Kuchi Bhi' bags and the profit from their sale goes to non-profit organizations."

In Flickr, the photos are uploaded in sync with the occasions and need. For example, in Valentines, a photo stream was loaded by "mangeshonline" (Flickr id of a peer of Neil who already contributed in Kuch Bhi swarm) under the heading of "deel wheel... pyaar vyaar..." (Love wheel) with a quote "a play with Heart on Valentines day! theme is.. heart goes any where.. :P ….KUCH BHI ! Actually this series is a contribution to my friend - Neil Dantas's KUCH BHI work."

Deel wheel…"Kuch Bhi" artwork by "mangeshonline"   Source: Flickr

The swarm took the ownership of Kuch Bhi and started inventing various new meaning from this simple "love sign" and even started expanding it through various offline medium including wall paintings / graffiti in Mumbai's otherwise dirty and fading walls.

"Kuch Bhi" Graphics in Mumbai Wall   Source: Facebook

The swarm started seeding "Kuch Bhi" with social awareness, religious icons, pop-art and various other ideologies through posters and cards. The sole selection of Kuch Bhi artworks are done through highest voting and being published at Neil's Kuch Bhi albums (segregated as per the number of votes received by individual displayed story-graphics of Kuchbhi).

Segmented KuchBhi albums as per the votes through "likes"   Source: Facebook

"Kuch Bhi" graphic to spread awareness on "save water"

Dhazm ho chahe KUCH BHI ...   ... fir bhi DIL hai Hindustani!

"Kuch Bhi" graphic promoting religious brotherhood among Indians

"Kuch Bhi" pop art

"Kuch Bhi" animation art

"Kuch Bhi" McArt !

pyar anda hota hai
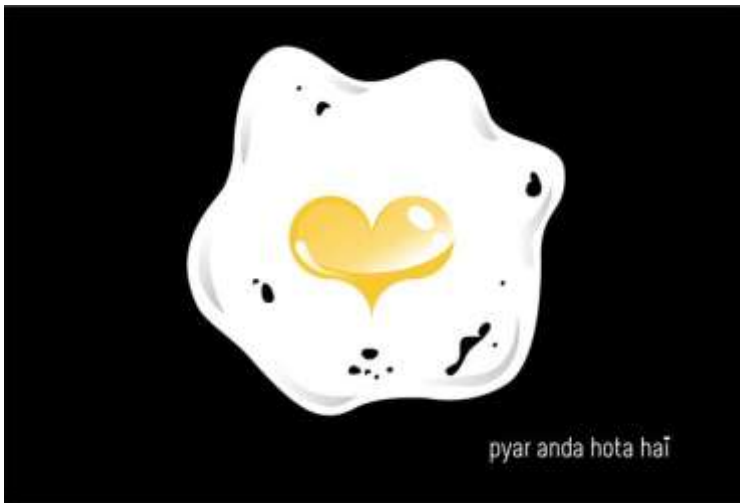
Kuch Bhi" with a theme "love is like an egg" !

Kuch bhi treatment ....!

Cartoon "Kuch Bhi"

"Kuch Bhi -Fight against corruption"

So, it can be seen, all the social values and zeitgeists are in resonance with "Kuch Bhi"s form mutation in new avatars and the swarm uploads a new "Kuch Bhi" as soon as a new social "sensation" arrives.

The most voted "Kuch Bhi"s are then converted into various products including bags, greetings cards, tee shirts etc. made mostly through various under privileged slum dwellers in Mumbai or NGOs.

View Photos of Neil (224)
View Videos of Neil (6)
Send Neil a Message
Poke Neil

...
I was manufactured
by injection moulding technique
by a Co. of 2 individuals
Alex Dantas & Rosy Dantas [my
parents]
on the 5th of November 1978
exactly after 9 months they said
"I DO" (doers they were)

But not gOOd plaNNers (no negativi

Information

Relationship Status:
Single

Birthday:
November 5, 1978

Mutual Friends

6 friends in common   See All

Write something...

Attach: ▼   **Share**

🔍 Filters

Neil Dantas KUCH BHI - by Jayant Kumar

description:
Dil Hi To Jalati Hai... Hoton Ke Karib To AAti Hai

Kuch Bhi - MOST VOTED

53 minutes ago · Comment · Like · Share

👍 10 people like this.

💬 View all 12 comments

Neil Dantas i agrEE 2U reniSSa~
53 minutes ago · Like

Niyati Bane vote:jayant kumar (6)
52 minutes ago · Like

Write a comment...

The voting process of one "Kuch Bhi"   Source: Facebook

Photo 2 of 25   Back to Album · Neil's Photos · Neil's Profile   Previous Next

Shubhi Sachan
KUCH BHI

KUCH BHI
Tote Bag [vertical format]

Finally the Kuch Bhi is come out with a product
designed by Shubhi Sachan. She is getting these bags
stitched by a womens organization in Dharavi, mumbai.
Shes planning to make 200 bags to start with.
100 in the vertical format & a 100 horizontal.
She feels by this small initiative, she could give some work to these women.

From the album:
Bags~ by Neil Dantas

Share
Tag This Photo
Report This Photo

KUCH BHI
Tote Bag [horizontal format]

Finally the Kuch Bhi is come out with a product
designed by Shubhi Sachan. She is getting these bags
stitched by a womens organization in Dharavi, mumbai.
Shes planning to make 200 bags to start with.
100 in the vertical format & a 100 horizontal.
She feels by this small initiative, she could give some work to these women.
And if this works out weLL,
it would encourage her to make more...
...

From the album:
Bags~ by Neil Dantas

Share
Tag This Photo
Report This Photo

"Kuch Bhi" bags promoted via Facebook album   Source: Facebook

The products are being promoted through Facebook and various other SNS. They are sold at various underground/ alternative stores at Mumbai, Bangalore and other cities or through the art fairs like "Kala Ghoda", Mumbai. The "Kuch Bhi" graphics are copyright free and the contributors, peers, well wishers are free to use them at any form keeping the essence of "Kuch Bhi" intact and sell them to the swarm or others.

The author took a personal interview of Neil to understand the concept of "Kuch Bhi" in-depth. As per Neil 'Kuch Bhi' means 'Any Thing'. He stated that "I used to believe, anything is possible...and the idea of Kuch Bhi is in my mind since i was a kid. Similarly knew that all have this ideology in their mind… Many people want to do many things but are not able to do due to many reasons...I wanted to encourage them to do anything [whatever] that they want to do in their own ways... Thus using Kuch Bhi I want to give a 'form' to them to do anything they wants to do with it…my friends talk about various issues….that they want to do something with these issues & can come out through some initial form… when i realized that everyone has something or the other in their mind, like me and they have to begin somewhere, i began what i wanted to do, [kuch Bhi] & you wont believe, i got connected with many people even though i don't have any money to put up an ad in magazines… but Kuch Bhi is spreading everywhere…." The author noted that Kuch Bhi is spreading in viral mode through the swarm of Neil to other similar / like minded creative swarms. Today, Kuch Bhi is also inspiring the musicians, amateur film makers and writers. The peering, sharing and openness of the designer Neil Dantas is spreading the "story" and his unique ability to give power to people (through allowing them to work on his concept,

adding values, creating products with "Kuch Bhi" forms, selecting the best Kuch Bhis through voting) is what is basically required to create the base of CFDP. Neil seeks further collaboration of other creative swarms so that 'Kuch Bhi' can evolve into a form of "common good" contributed to the mankind and world.

Discussion:

According to Torvalds (2001), people will be motivated by three factors, namely "survival", "social life", and "entertainment." Entertainment not only means playing computer games, but also more serious endeavors like working out a way of going to the moon. Joining a COIN is normally not done for survival, but for "entertainment" in the Torvalds' sense, to get meaning and purpose in life. To be together with other likeminded people also includes the second motivational factor of Linus Torvalds, the "social life." Working together with others to create something new as a group plays a fundamental motivational role for COIN members. Coolfarmers also exhibit an ethical code based on meritocracy and transparency (Gloor, 2005). Leaders of COINs are forced to ethical and transparent behavior, otherwise they will loose the members of their COIN. Even more, COIN members are strongly motivated by altruism, having recognized that the best way to reach their personal goals is to put the goals of their swarm ahead of their own. In the end, just like it was for the inventions of Edison, Linux, LEGO, and Apple, this approach will be most beneficial for each individual member of the swarm.

Bill McKibben commented in 'Deep Economy' that the Collaborative lifestyle requires you to "shade a certain amount of your hyper-individualism and replace it with a certain amount of neighbourliness… if we let go a bit of our individualism (at the moment, we have plenty to spare), we recover something we have been missing". Lets become "human" again, and like other species in this world let's consider "us" as a hive to include the whole swarm into creative process of fashion design by using the same computer, Web and Social Network which are second home to most of the Gen Next *Homo Sapiens*.

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