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Project Newsletter

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CDNC, a significant networking opportunity for Digital Creatives in Cork

[Creative Digital Network Cork](#) is an enabling networking opportunity for companies, start-ups and academics engaged in Digital Media and Creative industries in the Cork region. CDNC was established after the [Cork Institute of Technology](#), through the Interreg IVC Medi@TIC project, concluded a detailed examination of the local industry in the area.



Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Chorcaí
Cork Institute of Technology

The analysis undertaken demonstrated that many strategic opportunities existed for local SME's in the digital and creative sectors. These included, a strengthening of networking and clustering and the potential for Cork to be Ireland's Creative City by heightening sectorial visibility. Through its early work during 2014, CDNC has especially focused on addressing both challenges.

Cork Institute of Technology has hosted 3 industry events with local stakeholders in order to assist local enterprises to improve networking and clustering activities across the Cork region. These meetings allowed sharing of ideas, research and business opportunities, with the aim of raising awareness, promoting business growth and collaboration among the Digital Creatives in the region.

Additionally, the [CDNC website](#) was recently developed aiming to serve as a showcase for all the Cork based digital and creatives companies and start-ups. It works as a directory geared to any person interested in hiring the skillsets and services of local creative enterprises. The website includes a variety of digital sectors such as web Development, Graphic design, apps development or video production.



So far CDNC has a database of around 120 members which includes established enterprises, academics, start-ups and public bodies specialised on the digital and creative sector in the region. The network is planning its next event which will take place early in the New Year at which the official launch of the new website will take place.

Anyone interested in this sector is welcome to register on the web site: www.cdnc.ie



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New path for the audiovisual sector in Genoa

From the SWOT Analysis undertaken by the Medi@TIC project it can be observed that there are 1143 companies working in the [audiovisual sector in Genoa](#), with more than 4000 employees. The number of enterprises directly connected to the production, post-production and distribution of cinema, video and TV programmes, music and audio recording changed from a total of 53 in 2010 to 83 in 2013, while also tripling employment levels. While many of the companies are very dynamic, their relative small size places them at a disadvantage within a strongly aggressive market, at a national and international level.

To overcome this situation and drawing from good practices and policies presented by the partners during the project lifetime, a Policies Implementation Plan to develop the sector has been prepared. A range of actions and policies were identified to raise competitiveness within enterprises and to better exploit the opportunities that new technologies can generate in the sector.

The plan specifically suggests an update in the Regional Law n. 10/2006, that is now considered obsolete; to support the Cornigliano Audiovisual Centre cluster; to create the Regional Media Library, with the digitalisation of all the Genoese audiovisual heritage; to exploit Crowdfunding and new methods of financing the audiovisual productions. It also recommends a University of Genoa training course for specialised professionals with the aim to address the lack of expertise in the sum of audiovisual companies and to stem the problem of unemployment.





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Derry City Council in the Medi@TIC project

As the Medi@TIC Project draws to a close, it is an opportunity for [Derry City Council](#) to reflect on the journey they have been on over the past few years with their European partners. It has been an exciting time for the City of Derry and particularly the audio-visual and digital sectors here. In 2013 Derry~Londonderry was the first UK City of Culture and the Medi@TIC partners visited the City during that time to learn about the exciting developments taking place in the City and to see first-hand how the creativity and culture of the city was being becoming truly digitised.

As we shared our 'best practice' the project partners saw presentations on:

- [the hosting of the EBN congress in Derry](#)
- the work at the new Digital Hub at the former Ebrington Barracks,
- the [City's Digital and Culture Festival](#)
- the [Nerve Centre](#)
- the [DANI awards](#) that took place in the City in 2013
- and other work that Derry City Council are doing to support the Digital Economy including the [Super Connected Cities project](#)

In 2014 we continued to learn from our project partners across Europe and in the last weeks of the project we are finalising on our Implementation Plan using the knowledge and perspective that we gained throughout the Medi@TIC project that will form the basis of our plan for the future of the Digital Sector in the region.



ERNACT, European Economic Interest Grouping

[ERNACT EEIG](#) is a secretariat established by Derry City Council in Northern Ireland as an EEIG (European Economic Interest Grouping) to enable both council areas to co-operate on the theme of communications technology and the emerging information society, ERNACT has since evolved into an European network of regions which also comprises San Sebastián and Cantabria (Spain), Vasternorrland (Sweden), West Region Romania) and Barnat (Serbia).

Apart from giving support to Derry City Council in the development of its implementation plan, ERNACT's participation in the Medi@TIC project has served to share experiences and look for new opportunities for the North West Irish region, in particular, some interesting models have been identified related to how to establish triple-helix collaborations involving stakeholders from the education, public and private sectors in the creative sector. The idea is to use the lessons learnt to launch new initiatives within the digital and creative sector in the region.

Website: www.ernact.eu



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Regional Development Agency, Bielsko - Biala

Implementation of the Medi@TIC project in Poland contributed to identification of our main focus areas. These include a lack of adaptation and issues with financing and market development.

Investment is required for the wide promotion of ICT solutions among Polish citizens and improvements in the area of media education, which in Poland is carried out at an insufficient level. It is also necessary to consider enhanced financial support for infrastructure improvements and the wider introduction and improvement of audiovisual access to national, regional and local heritage

[Regional Development Agency in Bielsko - Biala](#) was an active member of the Medi@TIC project consortium. During implementation of the project in Poland, numerous activities were carried out. Tools elaborated by the project were introduced to the local stakeholders. Group of stakeholders to undertake further activities were identified and strong relations were built. The Medi@TIC project constitutes an important step in the support of development of media market in the area of ICT in Poland.



Medi@TIC project in Malta

In Malta the audiovisual and the digital sectors represent a pillar in the direction that our national government envisages for our Island. This project has enabled us to follow such a strategy, and reinforce it, by means of the collection of best practices already in place.

The importance of such sectors is represented in the setting up of the [Malta Digital Games Fund](#), whose two main priorities are:

- (a) transferring generic technical and high-level programming expertise from other IT areas into the games sector,
- (b) strengthening arts-related courses to secure a stream of talent that can contribute to games development.

This Fund is part of a multi-faceted strategy for building a games industry in Malta that can both attract inward investment and nurture an indigenous games sector.

The Culture and Audiovisual Unit within the Ministry for Tourism, Culture and the Environment is responsible for the administration of the [Malta Digital Games Fund \(MDGF\)](#) and will be implemented under the overall supervision of [Digital Games Malta](#) Working Group, which brings together key public stakeholders for the sector.

Another strategy that was recently launched in Malta is called "Gaming Malta" and this initiative aims at the creation of a "gaming academy" to bridge the gap between the skills of Maltese and foreign iGaming workers. The need for such an institution is required as a recent survey showed that 77% of local ICT, telecommunications and gaming companies don't think that the local market provides the skills they are looking for.

The Local Government Association aims to foster the work initiated by the Medi@TIC Project in the promotion of the sector in Malta by means of comprehensive cooperation with the national government and all the other main stakeholders involved in Malta.



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Medi@TIC dissemination event in Vidzeme

On December 5th [Vidzeme Planning Region](#) hosted a dissemination seminar for the Medi@TIC project at “Cesis” concert hall. Vidzeme was promoted as an excellent place for creative digital work in the attractive environment. The participants of the event agreed that Vidzeme has the potential and the necessary prerequisites for the development of the audiovisual sector. The event gathered approximately 50 participants who discussed the region’s potential to excel in entrepreneurship activity in the audiovisual sector and learned about successful audiovisual products and companies which have roots in the region.

Participation in Medi@TIC project was an excellent opportunity for Vidzeme Planning Region to evaluate the potential and development opportunities of digital and audiovisual sectors, and to define it as one of the potential economic areas of specialization. For Vidzeme it was an opportunity to learn other partners’ experience, establish close contact with local stakeholders through regular meetings, examine the current situation in the audiovisual sector and develop policy recommendations for developing it

Promotion of digital audiovisual sector is integrated now in the Vidzeme Region Development Programme of 2014 - 2020. Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences has introduced several new courses on its’ communication and media programmes to prepare more digitally skilled students to be ready to respond to the challenges of new digital and media markets. A school subject “Media” is being developed for secondary schools and will be offered starting from the Autumn 2015.



Kristiansand, a small but committed audiovisual business region

In the framework of the EU funded Medi@tic project, in late 2013 the [City of Kristiansand](#) commissioned a report on the film and media industry in the region. The report provided a broad business analysis, support programmes and a SWOT for each of the film/media sectors.

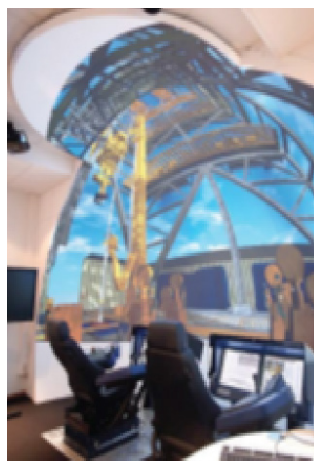
The report gave a comprehensive overview of the audiovisual industry in the Kristiansand region, the related local education and training opportunities, national aspects related to distribution, law and regulations, background industry information and, finally, an overview of Norway's position in the European audiovisual sector.

A key weakness related to the film sector was that the industry was characterized as fragmented and mostly consisting of self-employed individuals and tiny companies and lacking important and visible "locomotives". This situation, coupled with a difficult financial situation for many of the players, was found to hamper cooperation, mentoring, support and knowledge sharing. Some key strengths were found to include highly dedicated and committed individuals, the educational offerings, equipment and infrastructure in the region, a local film centre and the [Kilden Performing Arts Centre](#). The local computer game industry was unfortunately found to be marginal, also reflecting the national situation.

However, important competences from animation and 3D-modelling were found to have migrated to the advanced and important petroleum equipment industry.

The recommendations on strengthening the domestic industry included a better cooperation among small companies for larger projects, niche focus, mentoring / transfer to expertise and stronger focus on innovation and creativity. Creative Kristiansand included focus on skills needs, understanding of the International market, International high-level mentoring, improving digital and media literacy programmes. This specific part is now a part of a plan to establish a talent program in the city and region where film talents from whole of Norway can attend.

Finally, unlocking the potential included proactivity related to EU programmes, developing competence in funding mechanisms, aligning regional policy with the emerging EU policy, development of regional policy to assist local digital industry initiatives to develop, facilitate networking and expanding International contracts.



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Medi@TIC Journey & Policy Tool Kit

Further to almost 3 years of work and cooperation, the Medi@TIC project has created a number of different but interrelated elements, addressing:

- a) the exchange of experience and best practice relating to how the sector can be supported and
- b) the development and rollout of a creative observatory and repository and
- c) the preparation of local implementation plans to assist and promote the development of creative industries in each of the partner regions.

At the end of the project, [Fomento de San Sebastián](#) has developed a “Policy Tool Kit”, that summarizes the main outcomes of Component 3, providing a policy transfer document based on the lessons learned across the project and providing policy guidance to local and regional policy makers.

The document, that is currently being edited and will be available soon on the project homepage and Observatory, is structured as a report on local & regional measures and policies to develop the audio-visual/media sector in general, and the Information Society in the audio-visual/media sector in particular and includes both, Best Practices identified throughout the different Medi@TIC Working Groups and the new policies or measures to be implemented as recommended by the partners’ different local implementation plans.

Some of the project and Policy Tool Kit key conclusions

As stated in the composite report of the different local SWOT analyses carried out, while the partnership is very widely dispersed geographically within the European Union and Norway, the challenges and needs for supports to strengthen the sector are similar. There are many common denominators relating to the creative sector, most of which are a direct result of the phenomenal pace of change in technologies within the sector, coupled with the exponential demand for digital product throughout the world.

The Medi@TIC partnership was formed by a group of public institutions representing mostly peripheral regions, with different knowledge and competences, from local authorities to higher education, with most of them being involved in “local/regional economic development”. The “audiovisual”, “digital”, “media” sector is thus a shared field of interest for economic growth, but one that needs collective approaches in terms of competences, tools and specific knowledge.

During the process of collecting good practices in the framework of the different Working Groups, the partners showed that they needed to reinforce their knowledge by looking for practices outside of their own areas and organisations.

In parallel, while trying to implement the best practices identified – or other practices of interest -, it was clear that the Medi@TIC partners had to involve other local associate partners with specific complementary competences and who enjoyed closer relationships with the sector.

To maximise effectiveness in the implementation of new policies or measures for such a specific sector, it is necessary to work closely at local or regional level with all actors active in the audio-visual sector. The inter-regional/ international exchange of information was of great help to identify different initiatives and to motivate the teams, but the groundwork had to be also done at a local level.

The task of “policy-making” is complicated, especially from a legislative perspective, taking into account the various profiles of institutions participating in [Interreg IVC](#) projects. Although this is a key target of such EU programme, most of the institutions and staff involved are “executing bodies”, and thus only empowered to effect “executive measures”. Nonetheless, these institutions can be considered as proximate policy makers as very often they are closely connected with legislative fora and can strongly influence policy making, particularly at local and regional levels.

Therefore, the Medi@TIC partners have been able to identify a wide range of different kind of measures, being implemented or to be implemented in the future, covering most of the needs of the sector (skills, technological support, internationalization, clustering, infrastructures, etc.). In that sense, the project did not cover only the ICT related challenges, as originally planned, but also helped to tackle other key issues and challenges of interest and importance.

P.S.: Complementary information, full local reports, SWOT, Plans, Best Practices presentations, etc. are available in the [Medi@TIC online Observatory](#), developed by [Cork Institute of Technology](#) as one of the tangible outputs of the project to be maintained and updated including after the project life, in order to facilitate the transfer of good practices, policies & tools among stakeholders.

The Medi@TIC team