

Bringing open source cameras to the film-making industry

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What had started off as a handful of enthusiasts' bid to build the first open digital cinema, camera, AXIOM, from scratch has now become a platform for film-makers, creative industry professionals, artists and enthusiasts – and they have just received good news.

The APERTUS° [project](#)'s development of its AXIOM Gamma camera is now being backed by Horizon 2020 funding. The supported project will kick off in March 2015 and runs for 15 months. The knowledge they generate in the development of their camera system will be completely open. APERTUS° releases its software under the [GNU General Public License V3](#), their documentation under the [Creative Commons License](#) and the hardware under the [Cern Open Hardware License](#). 'All the things we learn on this path shall be shared and be available freely to anyone,'

explain the project team.

The AXIOM Gamma will become a full-featured shoulder camera that 'does it all' and will be ready for directors who just want to turn it on and start shooting. It will offer an alternative to film-makers who want to use devices and technology that are tailored to their needs.

The project plans to democratise camera technology and put the power back into the hands of the users. 'It is a self-liberation by creating high end tools that we ourselves love to work with - fully independent of any of the big, established camera corporations,' explains a member of the team.

But why do we need open source technology independent of established corporations? As those in the film industry know, the Digital Cinema Initiatives (DCI) is made up of six major US film studios: Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Paramount Pictures, Sony Pictures Entertainment, 20th Century Fox, Universal Studios, The Walt Disney Company and Warner Bros.

The project explains the DCI defines standards for digital film formats and projection. But they also develop anti-piracy measures. Cinemas only receive DCI certification if their equipment contains a Secure Media Box which communicates with the DCI servers and controls what film is shown, and when. Its equipment is expensive and most cinemas converting to digital get national grants to help with costs.

But smaller, independent cinemas showing arthouse films often do not meet funding criteria. Not everyone is accepting the situation. Smaller cinema owners, developers and [enthusiasts](#) from all around the world have teamed up to create an alternative system based on open source technology. The reaction to APERTUS°'s launch of AXIOM on the crowd-funding platform Indiegogo beating its target of EUR 100 000 by

EUR 74 520, in October 2014, shows the level of enthusiasm. Now the partners have secured EU funding for their project, they can focus entirely on developing their camera.

'All in all this EU grant means that the future of the AXIOM project is secured for the next couple of years – it means we are not required to search for additional investments that would take a bit of our independence away from us,' a member of the project team said.

More information: For further information please visit APERTUS° at www.apertus.org/about

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