Innovative technological and digital solutions for the European creative industries

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The EU-funded CRE-AM project, which held its final conference in Brussels on 23 February 2016, has built a vital bridge between the European creative industries and the ICT sector to foster new technologies, tools and policy initiatives.

The project has provided a number of recommendations and roadmaps, and constructed several stakeholder-focused online platforms, that aim to encourage the EU's future ICT R&D agenda to develop new tools that support the creative industries. The project also hopes to facilitate the enhancement and improvement of existing tools and platforms.

CRE-AM roadmaps and online community platforms

To accurately ascertain the technological needs, both present and future, of the creative industries, the project undertook a series of surveys that included interviews with prominent thought leaders within each specific creative sector.

The roadmapping process was based on the 'Emerging Paradigm Method' that consists of three stages. The first involves a fundamental shift in how individuals think about a certain problem and how they consider solutions to that problem; the second stage concerns the search for effective techniques that can execute these solutions; and finally, to make those techniques available to a wider audience, often using a new or innovative technology to do so.

This process allowed for broad policy recommendations to be put forward by the project on how the ICT and digital industries could collaborate further with the creative sector. Separate and tailored roadmaps were created for the art, architecture, design, video gaming, and media and e-publishing industries.

In order to gather as much vital input as possible for the roadmaps from all interested stakeholders, and to support and encourage collaborative foresight activities, the project created a number of dedicated online platforms, one for each of the separate sectors studied. Participants were encouraged to openly debate and discuss the current and project future needs of the specific creative industry and how digital solutions could be used to meet them.

Examples from the video gaming and art sectors

During the final conference, it was highlighted that European video games developers are at a distinct disadvantage due to the fact that they are effectively locked out of new hardware solutions being developed in the United States and the Far East.

As such, the roadmap dedicated to the video games industry argues that it is crucially important for European technology firms to develop their own solutions and digital infrastructure, including Cloud Computing and the Internet of Things (IoT). This would allow the EU's gaming industry to better compete on the global stage.

The urgency for such solutions is due to the growing interest from consumers to be able to directly stream their video games, rather than physically possess a copy on their console. As games become more complex, integrating 3D graphics and Virtual Reality (VR) technology, it was emphasised that ICT infrastructure will have to be up-scaled to facilitate these advancements.

For the art sector, the project researchers emphasised a need to further develop 3D technology, such as holographic projectors and displays, touchable holograms, and technology that allows for the utilisation of all five human senses. This would give the general public a much richer and more memorable experience when engaging with cultural artifacts and innovative new art forms.

The project also concluded that there must be a strong, rigorous and technology-supported copyright and intellectual property regime that supports all of the creative industries. New technology solutions for the creative sectors should intrinsically detect copyright violations as they occur, and also be equipped to protect data from the increasing dangers of hacking and theft.

Next steps

The CRE-AM recommendations will contribute to current and future EU policy initiatives that aim to strengthen and support the European creative industries, which are estimated to contribute to at least 3 % of the EU's overall GDP.

The project has also made an important contribution through its comprehensive online communities that will continue to encourage and stimulate direct engagement and cooperation between ICT solution providers and the creative sector stakeholders who represent two of Europe's most vibrant and economically important sectors.

  More information: CRE-AM project website: www.cre-am.eu/

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