

Souillac II - Final Report - 1

Innovation Exchange Workshops: 1998 - 1999

This regular series of workshops brings together artists and artists' micro-enterprises with larger corporations in telecommunications, information technologies and content, to stimulate contractual and project-based co-operation. The proposal, based on the London prototype organised in May and the meeting during the second week of Souillac II, is to encourage short-term product development to long-term research, channelling the innovation flow from artists and micro-enterprises more effectively toward large corporations and to market.

In Souillac, representatives from the UK, France and the Netherlands agreed to pursue, co-ordinate and support an international programme of such meetings for 1998 - 1999, committing funds to three such meetings, one in each country, and to a common pool to assure international participation. Representatives from Spain, Germany and Canada expect to join during 1999. The conference participants highly recommended such meetings at local, national and international levels based on the following principals:

ART IS RESEARCH

Artistic experimentation is a form of research pushing the limits of any communications technology and it is important for industry to be informed of the work going on in that sphere.

ARTISTS AND ARTISTS' MICRO-ENTERPRISES

Small groups of innovative artists and engineers, communications and IT graduates, have formed and continue to form quasi- or fully-commercial associations to advance their objectives. They are essentially 'creative engineers', refuelling their creativity through artistic experimentation.

AREAS OF ACTIVITY

These small and micro-enterprises are concerned with visual / auditory perception, system architecture, interface development, algorithm development, new forms of content and use of platforms and network to support collaborative work.

AIMS OF THE WORKSHOPS

1. To provide a forum for project-based, focused discussion between artists, artists' SMEs and larger corporations in: infrastructure, equipment, software, content creation / publishing, network services and applications.
2. To provide access to new markets and to develop local-specific content, applications and platforms.

3. To generate understanding of management skills amongst creative practitioners: SMEs in digital media, interface design, application / service developers, small content creators / publishers, companies who develop products / uses for networked communications.

• **Collaboration with Intermediary Partners**

Souillac II confirmed the need for continuing collaboration with intermediary partners both in terms of organisation and support, and in terms of identifying relevant industry participants.

Arts Council of England

Ministries of Culture and of Education, France

Ministry of Culture, the Netherlands

International Telecommunication Union

European Commission

European Confederation of Young Entrepreneurs

CESAM, Centre d'Expertise et de Services en Applications Multimédias, Canada

SUGGESTED WORKSHOP PROGRAMME

General Topics:

Venture Capital and Culture

Artists as 'creative engineers'

Project-based:

Interactive content

Niche Applications

Software architecture

Network architecture

Human-computer interface

REPORT ON SOUILLAC II, WEEK 2

Artists presented projects and discussed them with industry participants. Industry participants noted that artists are preoccupied with similar problems as the engineers in industrial laboratories. They were seen as 'creative engineers' with equal technical skillsets as the engineer in the industry laboratory. Furthermore it was argued that artists do not necessarily start from a creative point but often from a technology-based enquiry.

Research into the oral, visual, aural and textual expression is an investigation between the scientific (linear) and the artistic (non-linear). Artists and scientists do however share the same fundamental preoccupations, although they may articulate them differently.

The results of artistic experimentation with, development of, and use of communications technologies is transferable to industry whether as short term products, network solutions

or software architecture. Results may be almost immediately applicable to market, identifying trends, or otherwise have value as long-term research with a 1 - 3 year horizon.

Areas of co-operation

It was agreed that co-operation on research and development should take place in specific areas such as:

- network management
- stimulating use of band-width
- niche (interactive) applications and services to fill increasing capacity
- evolution of band-width and asymmetrical use
- switching through light
- interface and platform design
- complementary technology such as speech recognition
- software architecture, programme language

Recommendations from industry

- Industry strongly recommended greater and more diverse forms of collaboration between artists as creative engineers and research and development laboratories.
- Forums for exchange and networking were seen as imperative in order to stimulate this relationship, which was seen as essential in researching the above technical categories.
- Artists and researchers should present work at (inter)national trade fairs such as Supercom '99 and Telecom '99.

An overall conclusion was that there is an urgent need for a permanent high-bandwidth network for artistic research and several of the participants agreed to work in that direction. (see Final Report on High Band-Width Network)

INDUSTRY PARTICIPANTS

The following companies either participated in the first meeting between artists and industry in London, during Souillac II, or have expressed an interest in future participation.

Souillac II

Telefonica
Bell Atlantic
CESAM
Lucent
Eutelsat

London

BT
Mitel
Cisco
BBC
Nortel

Future participants

France Telecom
CNET
Pearson
Cable & Wireless
Nokia
IBM
Philips

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