

Non paper: WHAT ARE EUROPE'S PRIORITIES FOR NETWORKED ELECTRONIC MEDIA RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT?

It has been recognized for many years that a principle barrier to European success in networked electronic media is a lack of research, expertise, and industry itself in 'media services' - the media content itself, its means of production, and the creative ideas of which it is made up.

European research has rightly been focussed on networking technology, and has created a firm basis of distribution network technology, and knowledge for media delivery. We are technically ready for the broadband, wireless, and digital broadcasting age. But we may not be able to do justice to this fine work without content. We may suffer from what Prof Bruch calls the 'empty pipe syndrome'.

Europe does not have a substantial media services industry, nor is able to make and provide the means of production of content. European initiatives must include the objective of creating a vibrant media services and content industry. In the current world, most of the equipment for making content and programmes is made in Japan, and most of the content and content services themselves are made in the United States. This has to change if Europe is to be successful.

In content production and content generation equipment we would face the world in competition, so the task will not be easy. Innovation is more than only technology. It can be technology, but in the media business it can also be a business model or the content itself. This does not mean that we should change R & D overnight - technology is important, but more flexible instruments are needed to respond to these blurring borders off innovation.

This is important for everyone. Content itself can be a technology driver. In those parts of the world, where content is made, broadband technologies and computer hardware can follow the needs deriving from content. It is this relationship which keeps technology development there 'on the move' - a synergy of content and network.

What Europe needs now from the IST is:

- Lines aimed at encouraging and developing innovative interactive media content and services, including synergies between different delivery platforms, and synergies between media forms such as games and linear content, means to make and convert media content which can be used on multiple delivery platforms
- Lines aimed at encouraging and stimulating European know how in cameras, recorders, production equipment, and displays. These are the 'vanished sciences' for Europe.
- Lines aimed at the production of virtual content (linear and interactive) in form of middleware, production tools.
- Lines aimed at bridging the gap between the live action and the virtual worlds in camera devices, distribution models etc.
- Lines aimed at encouraging and stimulating media portal and search engine development for broadcasting, mobiles, and broadband. If Europe wants to be able to find its content, and to assure that the proper presentation of European content, we must build expertise here. It does not replace the problem of content creation at the beginning of the value chain. But these technologies can play a content related role for creating awareness and communities.

This text is a contribution from the NEM Content Cluster only and does momentarily not reflect the position of the whole NEM community.

David Wood, EBU; www.ebu.ch; Malte Behrmann, EGDF; www.egdf.eu

<http://www.nem-initiative.org/public/event/5thGA/Presentations/ContentCluster.pdf>

