

review

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CREATIVITY TIPS

In this EWI-Review you'll find a number of tips and tricks to help you be more creative. Be sure to try them out, and have fun!

Can creativity save the economy?

In a number of recent publications, creative industry has been pushed forward as an increasingly important mainstay – if not the mainstay – of the Flemish economy. Creative thinking and creative enterprise can help to breathe new life into a flourishing and creative Flemish economy. This creative industry is based above all on local knowledge and skills, cultural accomplishments, ICT and plenty of fresh, new ideas. The strong local anchoring helps to create a unique range of products and services, whose differentiating factor is not price, but quality and content. Delocalisation to drive down production costs serves no purpose. Would the TV programme *FC de Kampioenen* have been popular for so long, if it had not been made in Flanders and with Flemish actors?

Above all, it is the combination of new media, ICT, culture, architecture, tourism, fashion and design which are creating such high expectations. These promising fields of activity should not only lead to the founding of new Flemish companies, but also help to entice foreign investors, charmed by the potential of our creative cities.

Nevertheless, it should be remembered that these products and services – for example, fashion creations, cultural events or tourist attractions – do not provide for basic needs, such as food or housing. It is only to the extent that people experience these products and services as 'commodities' – and therefore as 'necessary' – that a sustainable economy can be built on these creative foundations. In times of crisis, this might not be an easy task. Numerous studies into such matters were conducted during the previous period of economic boom. But in the meantime, the Flemish fashion house Branquinho has closed its doors, forced out of business by falling orders and an increasing number of defaulting debtors. The French fashion house Christian Lacroix is also in receivership. In the media sector, several production studios are in trouble. Should the government intervene? Perhaps it should, but would that not be a form of market distortion? Or is the current emphasis on the creative economy just (policy) hype? Maybe, but on the other hand, tickets for music festivals such as Rock Werchter are selling better than ever, and the crisis has certainly not dampened the average Flemish family's enthusiasm for foreign travel. Possible explanations? Perhaps purchasing power has been increased as a result of last year's index-linked pay increases, while the cost of living has since remained static. This means that many people are not (yet) feeling the crisis. Or perhaps it also shows that these creative products and services are now regarded as essentials rather than extras, that they have indeed become 'necessary'. If so, this economic sector has acquired a solid base.

With all this in mind, and particularly during the current European Year of Creativity and Innovation, it is only right and proper that we should devote this issue of the EWI-Review to 'creativity in the economy', with a clear focus on several non-technological aspects. We will be looking, for example, at design (p. 22 and p. 38), fashion (p. 36), the media sector (p. 32), combinations involving ICT and the arts (p. 30), and also at the European Year of Creativity itself. In addition, there is an interview with Hans Bourlon, the co-founder of Studio100 (p. 40), whose work straddles the golden crossroads of creativity and enterprise. However, our 'classic' features have not been forgotten: as always, we will be highlighting the work of a Policy Research Centre (p. 10), there is our usual column (p. 50) and the spotlight will be turned on an institution operating within EWI's own policy field (p. 4).

I wish you enjoyable, inspiring and creative reading.

*Peter Spyns,
General Editor*





► *Het Steen, Antwerp*

The Flemish Heritage Institute

The Flemish government is fortunate in possessing four key – but very different – scientific institutions: The Institute for Agricultural and Fisheries Research (ILVO), The Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO), The Royal Museum of Fine Arts - Antwerp (KMSKA), and the Flemish Heritage Institute (VIOE). This final institute is perhaps the most colourful of the four. The range of expertise within the VIOE is as varied as the heritage which it studies.

Our rich cultural history has left its mark across the length and breadth of Flanders. Sometimes these relics of the past are prominent and visible, such as our many monuments and their surrounding landscapes. Other heritage items can be hidden, such as the archaeological 'archive' still buried deep in the earth or the wrecks which lay at the bottom of the sea.

In the past, two separate organisations were involved in research into heritage matters: the Directory of Monuments and Sites and the Institute for the Archaeological Heritage. In 2004 the Flemish government merged these two organisations, thereby reuniting fields of investigation which should never really have been separated: archaeology, monuments and landscapes are all intimately connected with each other. For this reason, they are best examined within the framework of an integral and inter-disciplinary approach. Since this amalgamation, architectural historians, landscape specialists and archaeologists all work together in the same institute. There are currently some 160 members of staff, ranging from labourers (who mostly carry out field work) to scientific experts in various disciplines. They are either based

at the VIOE's head office in the Phoenix Building in Brussels, or work from one of the regional centres in Tongeren, Zellik, Ename, Raversijde or Zarren.

Investigative research and improving access to heritage sites are the basic tasks carried out by the Institute's three divisions: Architectural and Landscape Heritage, Archaeology and Environmental Sciences, and Research Outreach and Heritage Experience. The research is policy-oriented: it is carried out in answer to a specific problem or a specific request from heritage managers, policy-makers or the midfield. New research results can then be used to guide future policy.

Focus on research activities

The bases for all the VIOE's research activities are scientifically compiled inventories and field work (see box). The institute carries out archaeological excavations and then records and processes the findings. In this latter respect, the knowledge of the scientific experts is indispensable. They analyse the human, animal and vegetable remains and draw appropriate conclusions for further projects or policy-making. Some

of the finds are restored and kept in the institute's own storage depot.

Maritime archaeologists chart and investigate shipwrecks in Belgian territorial waters, but also have an interest in surviving historical ships – the so-called floating heritage – and for shipping infrastructure in general.

Architectural historians carry out practice-oriented research into our building heritage. In certain cases, this research is coupled with commissions for restoration or conservation work (of wall paintings, for example). Historical landscapes are also mapped, recorded and investigated, even down to the smallest elements of living heritage, such as trees or shrubs with a heritage value (such as 200 year-old oaks). The VIOE also plays an important role in drawing up guidelines and standards which further stimulate and enhance the quality of heritage research in Flanders.

The Heritage Research Review

Until recently, Flanders – in contrast to most other neighbouring countries – lacked a synthesis of its research know-

Elisabethbegijnhof, Ghent (Image: Kris Vandevorst, VIOE)





► Koninklijke Gaanderijen, Ostend (Image: Kris Vandevorst, VIOE)

ledge in the field of 'immoveable' heritage. For this reason the VIOE, working with a number of interested partners, drew up the Research Heritage Review: an evaluation document, which offers a summary of current knowledge, lacunas and unresolved questions relating to immoveable heritage in Flanders. To make this status quaestionis more accessible, the institute also developed the Heritage Bibliography, an online search engine with thousands of useful references. Both the balance and the bibliography can be consulted on www.onderzoeksbalans.be.

Research outreach and heritage experience

The research findings of the VIOE are spread in the academic and scientific world via study days and colloquia or through publication in national and international magazines. The VIOE also publishes the leading scientific journal *Relicta*, as well as the *Relicta Monographs*. Both these publications are available digitally and in printed form¹. A broader public is reached by means of exhibitions, open-site days and educational projects, often in collaboration with other partners from the heritage sector. In Brussels, the VIOE maintains an extensive and up-to-date heritage library. It also manages various archives, including the archive of the Royal Monuments and Sites Commission and the archive of the modernist architect Renaat Braem.

Inventories for research, policy and ...

The VIOE compiles and manages large-scale inventories of architectural heritage, archaeological sites and landscapes. However, it also collates lists of other heritage objects, such as organs (in so far as these organs are 'immoveable', e.g. church organs), First and Second World Wars' heritage, parks and gardens, maritime and floating heritage, etc. Like the Heritage Research Review, these inventories are available online². An inventory is not only a valuable basis for qualitative research, but also an irreplaceable tool for policy forming, in fields such as the protection of monuments.

Bart Biesbrouck,
Editor VIOE

The Inventory of Architectural Heritage

Since 1972, the government has been working on an inventory which lists important items of architectural heritage, whether protected or not. This inventory was published as a series of books under the title *Bouwen door de eeuwen heen* (Building through the centuries). In 2005, it was decided to make the inventory accessible in digital form. To make this digital version more user-friendly and also to provide a suitable framework for similar inventories, the VIOE created a special website: <http://inventaris.vioe.be>.

This new website is not only useful for the 'traditional' users of inventories – policy makers, civil servants, planners, and researchers. 'Ordinary' people are also starting to make much more frequent use of the site, to look up their own house or to check out a building in their locality. In this respect the inventory testifies to the rich architectural heritage of yesteryear, which in many cases has been demolished to satisfy the building 'passion' of the Flemings. Thanks to the accessibility and user-friendliness of the new site, it is now much easier for the public to find its way to – and around – the inventory.

At the moment, the site lists the Inventory of Architectural Heritage and the Inventory of World War Heritage Sites. In the future, archaeological and landscape inventories will also be added. The inventory currently contains some 75,000 entries, most of them buildings, but also street descriptions and descriptions of 'unified entities' (hamlets, city estates, etc.) The entries are linked to a location on a GIS-layer (Geographic Information System) and there are similar links to possible applications for protected status. Over 26,000 of the buildings listed are illustrated with one or more photographs.

An inventory of living heritage: woody vegetation with a heritage value

Flanders boasts a huge number of old trees and shrubs, which can tell us much about the history of a particular location, or can help us to understand old pollarding or espalier techniques, or can illustrate historical usages and practices. On the basis of a number of pilot projects, the VIOE has developed a method for 'inventorising' trees and shrubs with a heritage value in Flanders. These are categorised on a thematic basis, using a number of different criteria. For example, the uses to which wood was put in the past – as a fuel, as a building material, as a source of fruit, as a marker of boundaries – has helped to a large extent to shape the appearance of our traditional landscape. Alternatively, trees were sometimes planted as a status symbol, perhaps in the form of an avenue or as an entrance-way to a farm. The historical value of a tree is another valid criterion: for example, when a tree marks a place where justice was spoken or punishments carried out. Nor should the 'natural' value of trees be forgotten, either as a source of shelter for mosses, plants and animals, or as gene reservoirs. And, of course, they can just be beautiful, or the tallest, broadest or oldest in their region, dominating the landscape with their majesty and grace.

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Would you like to help?

You can also assist the VIOE, by reporting finds or by helping to chart the Great War heritage in Flanders. Interested? Surf to www.vioe.be.

1 oar.vioe.be
2 www.vioe.be/inventarisatie



Measuring Kafka

Before you can start a company, you need to prove your professional ability and your basic knowledge of business management. You need to draw up an act of incorporation and hand it in to the court registry, so that it can be registered by a registration office. Then you have to register yourself with an enterprise counter. You also need to apply for a VAT number, ...

This is just a small selection of the many obligations facing new entrepreneurs. Complying with all these obligations requires considerable time and effort. This administrative burden is particularly (and problematically) heavy in Flanders, where matters are complicated still further by the duplications inherent in a federal state. Potential entrepreneurs can sometimes be frightened off by the sheer scale of this mountain of paperwork. This means that a reduction of the administrative burden can only help to stimulate creativity and initiative.

In recent years, the general reduction of the administrative burden has been an important policy theme in Europe, in Belgium and also in Flanders. In addition to the measures already taken, Europe has set a target to reduce the administrative burden of European regulations by 25% by the year 2012. Flanders first wishes to make a better assessment of its own administrative burden, before setting its own informed reduction target in respect of Flemish regulations.

For this reason, prompted by Europe, it has been decided to measure the administrative burden resulting from Flemish regulations in 2009. This baseline measurement must serve as a reference point for future regulatory provisions. At the same time, the measurement exercise should increase the awareness of all involved.

Perhaps even more important than the results is the fact that the measuring exercise will make clear whether or not improvement is actually possible. In order to measure the true cost of the administrative burden, it is necessary to gather information from the people who need to comply with these formalities. They are in the front line of this bureaucratic nightmare on a daily basis; they know better than anyone where the crux of the problem rests.

By the middle of 2009, the final report of the baseline measurement exercise will be ready. On the basis of statistical details and, more importantly, on the basis of concrete suggestions for improvement from in the field, an action plan will be drawn up. Separate reduction targets will be set for each policy field. The ultimate objective? A reduction of the administrative burden by 2012.

*Tom Vandenbogaerde,
Strategy and Co-ordination Division*



Roger Van Overstraeten Society:

from **INTEREST** in to
PASSION
for science





Too few young people are choosing scientific or technical subjects at school and university. This complaint has been heard more and more during the past ten years, especially in OECD countries. Why? Because the economy needs innovation in order to grow. And innovation is driven by the scientists and the technological experts. For this reason, major efforts are being made worldwide to promote science and technology as interesting courses studies, with excellent career prospects.

This vision is, of course, correct, but it overlooks the deeper value of science. Scientific knowledge is the result of a huge effort by intelligent people that have devoted their lives to the cause of progress. It is much more than a simple question of economic benefit. In fact, there are no adequate criteria for measuring its true value. What is the value of the life of a child, who can be saved from certain death by a new medical discovery? Contributing towards the advancement of scientific knowledge is more than just a job. It is a passion. It is a way to give deeper significance to your life, by playing a meaningful role in the grand scheme of things.

Satisfaction: a compensation for effort

The motto of the RVO Society is: 'Bring science to life. Your life.' The society, which was founded by the IMEC research centre³, wants to make science more relevant and more vibrant. How? By showing that science is like a living organism. An organism which grows, because it is fed by researchers. Driven by curiosity or by the desire to solve a particular problem, these researchers push forward the boundaries of scientific knowledge, unravelling the mysteries of nature as they go. They achieve their satisfaction through a better understanding of this nature, and from the creation of new and improved technologies which can better serve both man and the environment. And this satisfaction is the scientist's compensation for the great effort and sacrifices which he will be forced to make in the course of his career.

If we wish to encourage young people to show an interest in scientific studies, it is our obligation to ensure that they are correctly informed. The study of science is hard work and requires great dedication and commitment. Moreover, you need to have a certain 'feel', a certain degree of natural ability for the subject. How can young people know if a scientific career is really something for them? Only by starting work as a researcher and seeing how things

turn out. And not just for an hour or a day, but for a reasonable length of time. And not in isolation, but supported by other researchers, who can share their passion and enthusiasm.

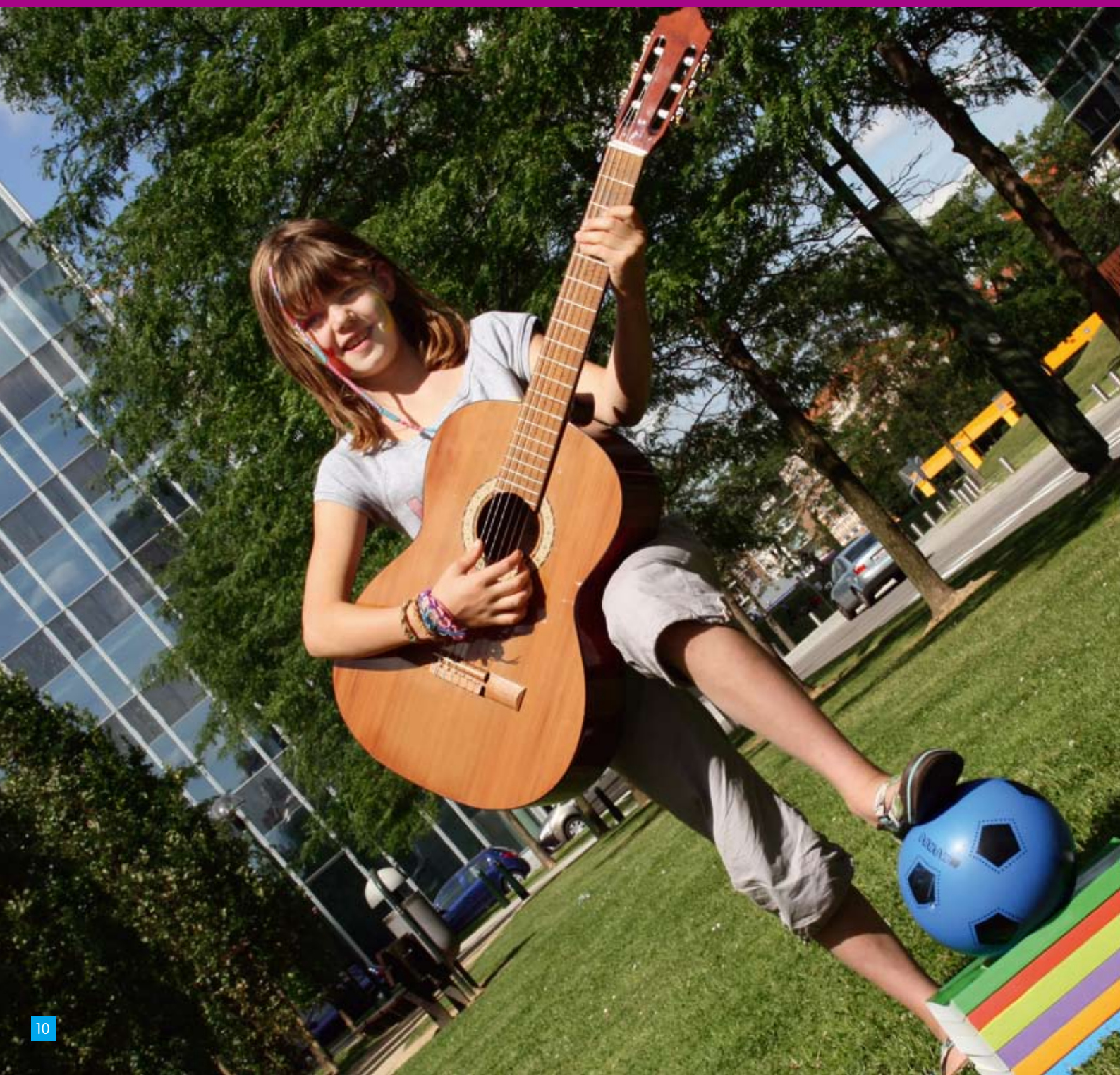
Viewed from this perspective, it is perhaps not surprising that few young people opt for a career in science. They are not easily deceived. They know how difficult such a choice can be. However, they seldom have the chance to really find out for themselves, because they are denied access to research opportunities. Normal education offers insufficient room for self-experimentation. Because the school curriculum forces teachers to move forward too quickly. Because a true spirit of scientific enquiry can have an inhibiting effect in a classroom context. Or to put it another way, young people learn all too quickly about the effort that scientific research involves, but without being able to experience the compensatory satisfaction which true scientific research can bring.

Spirit of research

Through a series of educational products, the RVO Society seeks to pass on the IMEC spirit of research to our young people.. The society also wishes to support and encourage teachers, so that they can transmit the research microbe and 'infect' their pupils with a true passion for science. This approach is known as 'experience-based learning'. Thanks to the support of the Flemish government's scientific communication action plan and the co-operation of various private partners, the RVO Society is able to offer a unique series of packages to teachers and educators. They are the natural mentors of our children in their search for knowledge about the world and about themselves. If they can kindle a passion for science in our young people, then the future seems bright – for all of us.

*Jo Decuyper,
Roger van Overstraeten Society*

The Policy Research Centre for Culture, Youth and Sport



The words 'culture', 'youth' and 'sport' immediately conjure up concepts such as spontaneity, informality and openness. But this does not mean that the policy behind these concepts is impulsive or ill-conceived. In these areas, as in so many others, the policy of the Flemish government is based on scientific research.

The Policy Research Centre for Culture, Youth and Sport amalgamates the research expertise of no fewer than 16 separate research groups. It continues the activities of two former Policy Research Centres – 're-creatief Vlaanderen' and Sport, Exercise and Health (2001-2006) – and of the now defunct Youth Research Platform. In addition to its transversal research into the participatory behaviour of the Flemish people, its research activities fall into three broad categories.

Participation survey⁴

Activities and events cannot happen without people to take part in them. But how and why do people participate? Are there restrictive thresholds? What are the different attitudes towards participation? Why do some groups participate more than others? What are the motives and expectations of participants? In 2009 a large scale survey is being conducted into these matters, during which a representative sample of some 3,500 Flemings aged between 14 and 85 years of age will be interviewed. This will allow participation data to be accurately charted for the separate fields of culture and heritage, social-cultural work and sport. Attention is also being devoted to the different types of participation: some people take part, others take charge, others share responsibilities, etc. This data will not only yield information which is directly relevant to policy making, but also provide input for fundamental scientific research. For this reason the design of the survey and its related measuring instrument are being prepared to the very highest standards. A comparison with previous studies should allow trends in participation to be assessed and linked to social and policy evolutions. The data collection will be completed in October 2009 and the first results will be available in the spring of 2010.

Culture

• Arts and cultural heritage⁵

Flemish cultural policy is based on the vision that culture must relate meaningfully to the issues which are important in the everyday lives of the different sections of the popula-

tion. In this respect, 'cultural participation' and 'cultural competence'⁶ are key phrases. In order to achieve, evaluate and (if necessary) amend the objectives which have been set in the field of cultural participation, it is essential to have up-to-date, accurate and policy-relevant information. It is not only necessary to have insight into the cultural behaviour of the Flemings, but also into the mechanisms which influence their cultural participation; the most important restrictive thresholds; motives and expectations relating to cultural participation; the cultural competences of the Flemings; the link between cultural participation and social orientation; and the evolution of cultural participation. This line of research will focus on arts and heritage participation and will be based on participation surveys.

• Social-cultural work⁷

Social-cultural work plays an important role by helping to create social cohesion and by promoting the democratisation of culture and the encouragement of cultural participation. This research line focuses attention on those who participate in and those who benefit from social-cultural work (adult social-cultural work, such as cultural associations, training institutions, social movements, adult education centres, amateur arts and drama societies). It will also look at cultural policy at town level and at key local instruments of cultural policy, such as libraries and cultural centres. The survey will map and explain participation in the various channels of the social-cultural network; will describe and explain the nature of volunteer work within these sectors; and will clarify the effects of participation. This will be done on the basis of both existing and newly collected data.

• e-Culture⁸

New media are transforming the cultural domain, both in terms of participation and the range of cultural possibilities. The research line for e-Culture and digitalisation will investigate this transformation, which has already resulted in new types of cultural experience, such as listening to music online or watching streamed concerts. This new digital culture will increase the number of possibilities for cultural participation and will create a space in which the participants

can make their own voice heard. Moreover, the major cultural actors are also rethinking their ideas in light of the new roles which now exist within the network society. The variety of digital culture options is blurring traditional cultural boundaries: between galleries and museums, between cultural sectors, between providers and participants, between the real and the virtual.

• *Economic aspects of culture*⁹

This research line wishes to obtain a precise and accurate picture of the real importance of culture in Flemish spending policy. The study will look at the extent to which spending is spread over the different sectors of cultural policy. It will also examine the social and economic impact of this spending, in terms of job creation and related benefits for the catering industry. These investigations into the 'economic aspects of culture' will make use of the economic instrumentarium. Cultural expenditure by the government – at regional, provincial and municipal levels – will be analysed and explained by means of an economic model. To estimate the real value of this government expenditure, all relevant costs will be allocated to uniform cultural categories. The impact of cultural expenditure on prosperity (in the broad sense of the word) and the benefits of cultural policy, as experienced by both users and non-users, will also be reviewed.

Youth¹⁰

As a result of a growing need to devote structural attention to the quality of life and the social environment of Flemish youth, it was decided in 2003 – at the initiative of the Flemish Minister for Youth – to set up the Youth Research Platform (JOP). Since 2007 the JOP¹¹ has been integrated as a research line (under the title 'youth policy') within the framework of the Policy Research Centre for Culture, Youth and Sport. This research line has three main objectives: to create an inventory and a synthesis of existing Flemish research into youth matters; to carry out regular measurement and evaluation exercises relating to the social environment of Flemish youth, with special reference to Brussels (the JOP Monitor), and to make regular reports on these matters; and to create an international dimension to Flemish youth policy. Since the year 2000, every study relating to Flemish youth has been required to produce a synthesis report upon completion. To date, there are more than 500 of these synthesis reports, which are available for consultation¹². A first synthesis was made in 2006, with the publication of the book *Jongeren van nu en straks* (Young People, Today and Tomorrow - Vettenburg, Elchardus & Walgrave). The Youth Monitor also regularly assesses new research data. This JOP questionnaire is reissued at regular intervals and collects details relating to the living conditions, ideological convictions, preferences and behaviour of young people in Flanders. An analysis of JOP Monitor 1 –

a survey conducted amongst 2,503 young people aged between 14 and 25 years – was published in 2007 under the title *Jongeren in cijfers en letters* (Young People in Facts and Figures - Vettenburg, Elchardus & Walgrave). A new survey – JOP Monitor 2 – was carried out at the end of 2008, with an extended age range of 12 to 30 years: publication of the results is expected in the spring of 2010. The survey of Brussels youth is now foreseen in a separate exercise which will also take place in 2010, the results to be made public in 2011. The most recent youth publication, *Jongeren binnenste buiten* (Young People Inside Out - Vettenburg, Deklerck & Siongers, 2009), looks in more detail at themes such as self-esteem, school evaluation and appreciation, feelings of insecurity, the extent to which young people (intend to) participate in the democratic process, ICT use, and their hopes and expectations for their future lives. This book was first presented to the public during a study day organised by the policy research centre. It is based on an inventory and an analysis of existing research and the JOP Monitor, together with additional secondary analysis of existing databanks. These research activities are also translated into international presentations and publications. The JOP is also a member of the European Network of Youth Researchers and participates in the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy¹³. These initiatives are part of the collaborative programme between the Council of Europe and the European Commission (Youth Research Partnership).

Sport¹⁴

• *Sport participation*

This research forms an integral part of the central participation survey, in which participation in both cultural and sporting activities is being investigated. It will shed new light on both active participation (the effective practice of a sport) and passive participation (the organisation of sporting activities, the acceptance of a committee function in a club, etc.). The questionnaire will ask specific research questions, such as: What social-economic differences exist in sport and other forms of exercise? What are the connections, if any, between active participation in a sport and passive participation or acceptance of responsibility? What connections are there, if any, between participation in a sport and participation in other leisure activities?

• *Top Sport*

The Top Sport programme consists of three projects to maximise talent detection, talent development and talent counselling in the following disciplines: sprinting, cycling, triathlon and handball. The charting and analysis of the most important performance enhancing factors should make it possible to improve results through the issuing of appropriate guidelines, for both younger and more senior athletes.

In addition, the study will involve an effectiveness evaluation of sport-psychological screening and the introduction of sport psychologists in Top Sport schools and sport federations. A further research project will focus attention on sport-specific injuries, with the aim of introducing prevention programmes to eliminate, for example, ankle injuries in ball sports. In addition to prevention, efforts will also be made to detect sport-specific risk factors through prospective injury registration. This means that factors which make a sportsman susceptible to injury can be traced more quickly. Finally, the Flemish Top Sport policy will be evaluated and compared with an international benchmark study. This evaluation must make it possible to establish ways in which Flanders' Top Sport policy can become even more efficient, thereby increasing medal prospects. An assessment will also be made of the resources necessary to achieve these goals and the manner in which Top Sport policy in the national sporting federations can be professionalised.

• *Sport for all*

This research line consists of five separate studies, the first of which – relating to sporting infrastructure in Flanders – has already been completed. On the basis of participation figures and data for existing infrastructure, it will be possible to identify Flanders' needs for the future. A number of studies already exist about the best methods to encourage school children, children from poorer families and even adults to take part in more sport or other forms of exercise¹⁵. The socio-economic aspects of sport and physical activity will also be studied by a panel of practising sportsmen and women. The basic question is how the government, the market and society can most effectively react to the need for greater sporting participation. The fifth study will concentrate on the fitness of Flemish youth between the ages of 6 and 18 years: the EUROFIT-barometer. This study is carried out in collaboration with BLOSO and is repeated every five years. A comparison with earlier measurements suggests that the physical condition of Flemish young people between the ages of 12 and 18 years is deteriorating. This confirms that the regular monitoring of physical fitness is advisable.

Public opinion often regards culture, youth and sport as 'luxury' policy themes. However, people frequently forget the considerable economic aspects of such policies, which can be both direct – commercial benefits, advertising – and indirect – the development of competencies, the stimulation of creativity, etc. For these reasons, scientific support and research to ensure an optimal policy in these fields are indispensable.

John Lievens (Coordinator - Culture and Participation Survey),
Renaat Philippaerts (Coordinator - Sport)
and Nicole Vettenburg (Coordinator - Youth)

TIP

For each of your good ideas, make up a story that you can tell to (your) children. People remember stories better than they remember figures or abstract concepts. A story will force you to stick to the essentials of your idea, without bombarding your listeners with jargon and meaningless technical terms.



4 Coordinator: UGent – Department of Sociology (CuDOS)

5 UGent – Department of Sociology (CuDOS)

6 This is the capacity to value expressions of culture. It represents an amalgamation of (prior) artistic and cultural knowledge, mental openness and appreciation with regard to art and culture, and the capacity to seek out art and culture, to relate to it and even to create it.

7 VUB – Department of Sociology (TOR)

8 VUB – Department of Communication Sciences (SMIT)

9 EHSAL – CMS research group

10 Coordinator: UGhent – Department of Social Welfare Studies

11A collaborative venture between the Department of Social Welfare Studies (UGent), the Leuven Institute for Criminology (K.U.Leuven) and the research group Tempus Omnia Revelat (VUB). The Department of Social Welfare Studies (UGent) will be responsible for the co-ordination.

12 www.jeugdonderzoekplatform.be

13 <http://youth-partnership.coe.int/youth-partnership/ekcyp>

14 Coordinator: UGent – Department of Movement and Sports Sciences

15 E.g., 'A study of the possibilities for threshold-reducing sport incentives for non-organised (sport-deprived) young people in Brussels' (Marc Theeboom – VUB) and 'Evaluation of a 10,000 steps per day programme / Broad school promotion of sport and exercise' (Greet Cardon and Ilse De Bourdeaudhuij – UGent).

Name: Policy Research Centre for Culture, Youth and Sport

Promoter-coordinator: Professor Dr. Hans Waeghe

Consortium:

- Ghent University
- Vrije Universiteit Brussel
- Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
- the University College-University of Brussels (formerly EHSAL).

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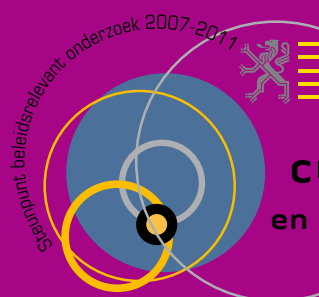
E-mail: john.lievens@ugent.be

Website: www.steunpuntcsj.be

Competent Flemish ministers:

- Joke Schauvliege, Minister for Environment, Nature and Culture
- Pascal Smet, Minister for Education, Youth, Equal Opportunities and Brussels Affairs
- Philippe Muyters, Minister for Finance, Budget, Work, Town and Country Planning and Sports

Budget: 1,204,000.00 euros



**cultuur, jeugd
en sport**

Successful innovation without R&D

Yes, we can!

More and more frequently, we get the feeling that a good product is no longer enough by itself to guarantee success. It may offer us a competitive edge today, but by tomorrow our rivals will already have copied it: after a short while, even the most innovative of products becomes just another commodity'¹⁶. Competition is a never-ending race, and one that is getting faster and faster all the time. And although product innovation is necessary to keep in step with our challengers, it no longer seems to be sufficient to keep our heads permanently above water.

In his book *Leading for the Future*, published in 2002, management guru Garry Hamel had already reached a conclusion that we now find self-evident. He argued that the truly significant industrial revolutions do not come from new products and services, but from entirely new business concepts. According to *The Economist* Intelligence Unit, many CEO's now agree with him: more than half expect greater

benefits from new business models than from technical innovation. The management press reports enthusiastically about companies which dare in radical fashion to break the rules which constrict their sector. The new weapons which will allow us to beat the competition are analysed with passion and are given impressive-sounding names, such as business model innovation or strategic innovation.





A new way

There are plenty of examples of this kind of thing. Ikea introduced a totally new business model by making design affordable and by organising its large sales areas in a manner which almost looks like your own home. Moreover, you can take your furniture with you and can put it together the same night: quick, cheap and efficient. Similarly, Amazon created a revolution in the bookselling world and became a dominant player in the internet sales market. And as if that was not enough, it made maximum use of its client base to break through in other areas, posing a serious threat to several major retailers. Michael Dell began selling computers from his dorm room. Unlike others, he did not operate with an extensive distribution network, but worked directly with the customer, cutting out the middleman. This 'direct marketing' later became the basis for the sales model of Dell Inc., which was soon exhibiting phenomenal growth.

The success of all these companies seemed to be based on a particular type of innovation. They did not follow the traditional route of investing in R&D and then bringing a new generation of products onto the market. Instead, they all did something that was 'out of the ordinary' in their sector: they developed a way of working that was different from their rivals. In short, they created a new way of doing business. They enhanced the value of their existing products and services for their customers by changing their business concept: the organisation of the company, the production processes, the distribution channels, their way of welcoming and dealing with the public.

Technological innovation is no longer enough

In the vision of innovation which dominated the 1990s, technology was the most important element. Even a respected authority such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) referred in its definition of technological product and process innovation to "technologically implemented new products and processes and significant technological improvement in products and processes."¹⁷ The premise behind this definition was crystal clear: more technological research meant more chance of new ideas and innovations, which meant more chance that the new technology could be used for new products and processes. And if the new technologies were dreamed up in R&D laboratories, it was equally crystal clear how this innovation could be measured: with indicators such as R&D statistics and patents.

Since the 1990s this purely linear vision of innovation has been radically adjusted¹⁸. One of the main reasons for this is the fact that the 'technological' definition automatically excludes services from the equation. Technological indicators are strongly linked to industry. Consequently, innovation was regarded as something which only applied to the industrial sector, as did related terms such as 'productivity'. Nobody seemed to consider that the service sector might also be capable of innovation.

New methods of innovation

Innovation can, of course, be defined in much broader terms than the simple introduction of technologically improved products. Nowadays, it is generally

recognised that innovation is possible in every part of the value chain: for example, in terms of organisation or the manner in which the market is approached.

A recent research project conducted by *Business Week* and the Boston Consulting Group compiled a league table of the world's most innovative companies. The companies at the top of the list are those which manage to combine different types of innovation: technology, processes and business models. Innovation is a matter of dealing with creativity efficiently, choosing good ideas (and ditching bad ones) and getting the resulting products or services onto the market in double-quick time.

This has far-reaching consequences for the manner in which innovation is measured. A new and broader innovation policy is made possible by expanding the metrics with indicators which deal with organisation and market approach.

Making a statement

If you buy a handbag or a suit, you do not do so because you have a 'need' for something in which you can keep your keys, or because you might otherwise be cold. Even buying a cd involves something more than a liking for the music which it plays. A purchase of a cultural product is more than a passive reaction to a need; it is also an active statement. In making a choice for this pair of trousers (and not that one) or this cd (in preference to all the others) we, as consumers, are showing to the world who we are and what is important to us. A carefully selected ringtone has, above all else, a symbolic value. We do not pay so that we can listen to it; we pay so that *other* people can hear it. In



other words, the ringtone tells us something about the identity of the person who chooses it.

Creative industries are well aware of the symbolic value which products can sometimes have. This symbolic value is not the added value which a product or service can offer (as is the case with functional or economic added value). For the consumers of creative products, this symbolic value is often the deciding factor in making their choice of purchase.

The markets in which this symbolic value can be traded tend to be subjective and emotional in nature. But this does not mean that they are any less concrete. Entrepreneurs who bring this type of product to the marketplace take full account of this factor. They not only investigate what the customer 'needs' – i.e., what are his functional requirements – but also what he wants to feel and experience. In short, functionality is blended with emotion.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of this symbolic value of products for sectors and industries which attach great importance to innovation. The pattern of consumption in Flanders – as in most Western economies – is being increasingly dictated by the people at the top of the so-called Maslow pyramid¹⁹: people who have already satisfied all their basic needs and are now looking for something more.

The rise of the emotion market

In the modern mass consumption market, basic needs and functional requirements have made way for a wide range of symbolic values. Even markets which traditionally have little or nothing to do with the creative sector have now become emotion markets, in which it is the diversity and the personalisation of products which counts. Today's consumer is deliberately looking for something that is 'different' to everybody else. He buys products and services on the emotion market because it makes him feel good about himself, because it fulfils his subjective desires.

A chair, a coffee machine, a bike, an apartment in a particular neighbourhood... they all express meaning and say something about the purchaser's identity. People show that they take health issues seriously by buying 'light' products. If you put free-trade bananas in your shopping basket, you are even making a moral and political statement.

This offers a wide range of possibilities for entrepreneurs in the more traditional sectors, providing they are prepared to opt for innovation. It is no coincidence that

more and more non-creative sectors are finding their way towards the creative industries. They do not do this solely in the hope of finding new inspiration, but with the intention of collaborating in an effective manner to create the symbolic added value that can make all the difference. This is why famous designers are now being recruited to help design household equipment, hard disks and dishwasher brushes. Henkel, for example, is working with Alessi to bring a new toilet cleaner onto the market, the higher price of which reflects how symbolic added value can be turned into financial added value.

It is clear that the traditional definition of innovation requires a little innovation of its own. Innovation is more than just R&D. Successful innovation often needs no R&D at all.

Marion Debruyne,
Associate Professor at the Vlerick Leuven
Ghent Management School



More info?

You can find out more about this subject in the book *Innoveren met Creativiteit* (Innovating with Creativity) published by Lannoo Campus in collaboration with the Flanders District of Creativity and the Vlerick Leuven Ghent Management School. This publication is only available in Dutch.

¹⁶ Products or services which are perfectly interchangeable with each other.

¹⁷ The term 'products' is also taken to include services.

¹⁸ EWI Review 1 (1): 10 – 13

¹⁹ According to Maslow, each person works his way through a progressive pattern of needs, the so called Maslow pyramid or Maslow's hierarchy of needs. He will first satisfy his basic needs, before he is able to move on to more luxurious and less necessary needs – see also http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abraham_Maslow and http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piramide_van_Maslow.

More creativity, please!



From the halal-burger to the slip-lift, from business gurus who blow their top (in the old fashioned way!) to creative human resources: Flanders DC has seen it all. After five years of working to promote creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation, the organisation has been given a positive evaluation by the Flemish government – and a new management contract, which will be monitored by EWI ...

Until ten years ago the word 'creativity' made most people think of knitting circles and needlework clubs. It was the American sociologist Richard Florida²⁰ who breathed new life into the phrase, when he applied it to the modern-day economy. In 2002 he introduced the idea of a 'creative class': artists, designers, scientists and other professionals who occupied themselves with innovation. If a city – or a country – had enough creative minds, prosperity would be sure to follow. This, at least, was the theory, and so the concept of the creative economy was born. Moreover, it was a concept which seemed to apply perfectly to Flanders, with its many knowledge

institutions, rich culture and open economic structure.

Creativity is the capacity to elaborate new ideas, which (one way or another) yield positive benefits. This can be a company which grows, a region which creates more jobs, or a society which solves its social problems. Since the Second World War, our economy has been geared first and foremost towards production. Year after year, Flanders became more productive and more efficient. But these trump cards are no longer enough in today's globalised world. In terms of price, we simply cannot compete with the low wage countries of

Eastern Europe and Asia. Consequently, we must compete in terms of innovation: we must offer clever solutions which they cannot match.

The 243 euro toilet brush

Until recently, innovation was always closely linked to technology. This caused many small companies to drop out of the competitive race. Flanders DC emphasises the soft side of innovation. This helps to lead to the realisation that innovation is relevant and applicable to all products and services. 'Speculoos' spread – a new chocolate-like spread that is all the rage



in Belgium – is just as innovative as a new software system. Moreover, there are numerous cross-fertilisation possibilities between disciplines which belong to the creative sector – art, architecture, multimedia – and the world of entrepreneurship. An ordinary toilet brush costs about 1 euro, but the model designed by Philippe Starck costs 243 euros. What is the difference? Design.

In the first instance, the mission of Flanders DC is to make entrepreneurs more creative. With the award of the new management contract, Flanders DC has also been given the task of making the creative spirits more entrepreneurial. A first step in this direction is the integration of the Flanders Fashion Institute²¹ within Flanders DC.

Looking over the fence

Flemish companies have no lack of creativity. However, they are not always able to make the most of this creativity, because of a lack of professionalism. Almost every company has a quality manager, but how many creativity managers are there in Flanders? Entrepreneurs (strangely enough) are not readily prepared to look over the fence and see what others are doing, even in related sectors. 'International' thinking is, for many, an advanced stage of entrepreneurship, while the reluctance to approach a knowledge institution, which could help companies to find a new way of doing business, is also, for many, too great.

Flanders DC wants to do something about this, by educating, by spreading knowledge, and by offering useful aids to everyone and anyone who wishes to be creative. Many tools can already be found on the Flanders DC website. Here, you can test – and

train – your creativity, draw up your own entrepreneurial profile or discover how you score as an innovative company manager. In addition, the popular package 'GPS for Enterprises' has already helped thousands of Flemings – both inside and outside a company structure – to brainstorm in a more efficient and purposeful manner.

Slip-lift and 'Speculoos' spread

The encouragement of entrepreneurial creativity was clearly the main intention of *De Bedenkers*²² (The Inventors), a programme on Belgian national television initiated by Flanders DC. The winners included the slip-lift (an ingenious way of pulling up slippers for people of limited mobility) and 'Speculoos' spread, but no fewer than 11 of the products which appeared on the programme have been taken into production. There was also a follow-up edition for Flemish schools: *De Bedenkers - Classroom edition*. This resulted in the design of the ingenious Party Purse: a cross between a garter and a small wallet.

Flanders DC offers knowledge and inspiration. The Flanders DC knowledge centre at the Vlerick Leuven Ghent Management School has already published an impressive number of studies²³, on subjects as diverse as fashion, globalisation and human resources. Moreover, on the basis of these studies the researchers have developed a number of useful aids. Inspiration is also offered by Flanders DC's distinguished guest speakers, who have included Sir Ken Robinson²⁴ and Tom Peters²⁵. Peters thinks that large companies, stability and male employees are much overrated. His recipe for success is SMEs, purposeful action and female staff! Another initiative – the Creativity World Forum, with original speakers such as John

FLANDERS DC

INSPIRING CREATIVITY



Cleese and Martin Heylen – attracted no fewer than 1,500 participants this year, a figure that most organisations in Flanders can only dream of.

But Flanders DC does more than simply offer inspiration: it actually goes in search of it. For example, in Baden-Württemberg, a German region with a boring reputation but an excellent record in creative enterprise. And B-W is just one of the regions which Flanders DC has persuaded to join its international District of Creativity network, which already has thirteen members spread across three continents.

Creative with the crisis

For Flanders DC, the current economic crisis does not necessarily represent an obstacle to creativity. On the contrary, the crisis is a challenge for the business community, and it is a challenge which a creative economy is better able to meet.

Knowledge workers deliver more added value and have more expertise. These are the people you do not want to let go – even when times are hard.

According to the Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter²⁶ radical innovation and destruction go hand in hand. This type of 'creative destruction' will sink companies which are not cost-effective, thereby making room for new business models. In contrast, some companies will succeed in shaping creative destruction to their own requirements. They effectively re-invent themselves, like the Finnish Nokia company, which began life in the 19th century as a producer of rubber goods, but is now a highly successful mobile phone manufacturer. It will be a number of years before we know which Flemish Nokia's have been able to turn the crisis to their advantage.

*Koen Peeters,
Flanders District of Creativity*

The stradar

Street furniture tends to be boring. Very boring. But not any more, thanks to Wolters, the Belgian specialist in street safety and street comfort. The company asked several designers to re-invent objects such as benches, bike stands and even rubbish bins. The result: a number of new items of street furniture which are efficient but also decorative – and fun! Typical in this respect is the stradar – a barrier for car-free play streets, which is less of a barrier and more of a plaything: child-friendly, visually pleasing and inviting (www.wolters.be and www.stradar.be).

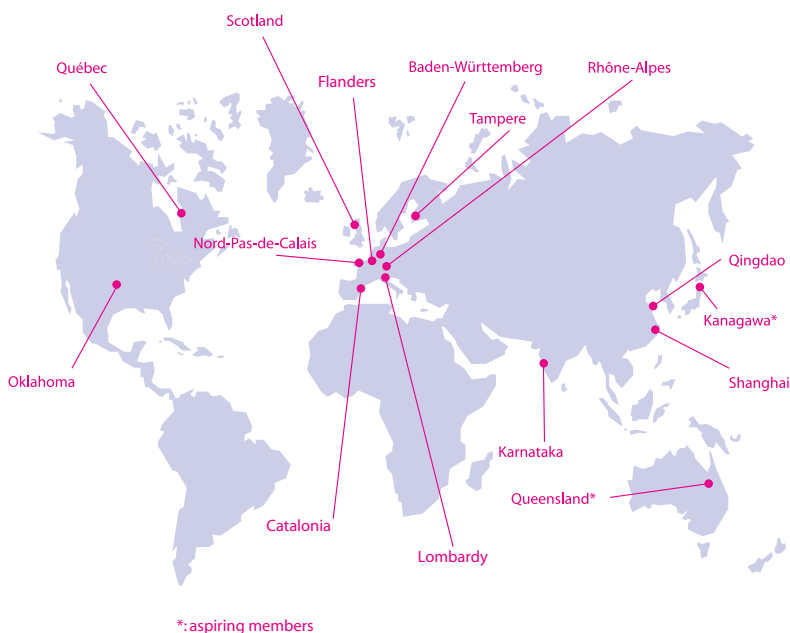
The halal-burger

Creativity is not only a question of new products, but also of adjusting to the local market. McDonald's hamburgers are the same the world over. This is what makes them world market leader. Except in North Africa. There the Belgian Quick company rules the roost. Why? Because it was the first company to bring a halal-burger, acceptable to Muslims, onto the market. A small change in the recipe, but a huge advantage over the competition.

Tifani is coming!

Televic, a Flemish SME, has a fine reputation in R&D. When it wanted to involve all its staff in its latest search for new ideas, it resorted to a mysterious poster campaign: 'Tifani is coming!' Little by little, it was revealed that Tifani stood for *Televic Innovation Funnel and Ideas*. The whole company understood immediately that new ideas were welcome. Tifani increased the commitment of Televic personnel to innovation and maximised creative potential within the organisation (www.televic.com).

► The Flanders DC network



20 <http://creativeclass.com/> and [/www.kei-centrum.nl/view.cfm?page_id=2622](http://www.kei-centrum.nl/view.cfm?page_id=2622)

21 See elsewhere in this edition: p. 36

22 EWI-Review 2 (1): 38

23 See elsewhere in this edition: p. 16

24 www.flandersdc.be/view/nl/34321561-Sir+Ken+Robinson.html

25 <http://www.tompeters.com/>

26 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Schumpeter

European Year of Creativity and Innovation



Each year, the European Commission selects a special theme, which it wishes to bring to the attention of the citizens and the governments of the member states. 2009 was nominated as the European Year of Creativity and Innovation, under the motto: 'Imagine, Create, Innovate'.

The general purpose of the Year is to support the efforts of member states to stimulate creativity, through an approach of life-long learning as the driving force for innovation and the decisive factor for the development of personal, professional, entrepreneurial and social skills and the welfare of every person in the community²⁷. In addition to this, the Commission also hopes to achieve a number of other specific objectives (see box).

Lots going on ...

The Commission hopes to realise these diverse objectives through a programme of conferences, events and debates²⁸, linked to a series of information and promotion campaigns. At the same time, the Commission will also inventorise and disseminate good practices. With these aims in mind, a conference was held in Brussels on 8 and 9 July to discuss the regional dimension of creativity and innovation, organised by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture. This DG is responsible for co-ordinating the Year, together with the DG for Enterprise and Industry. In addition, several other DGs are actively involved, such as Research, Energy and Transport. Contributions will also be made by the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions²⁹ and the European Economic & Social Committee.

And it is not only the 27 member states of the European Union which are taking part: countries such as Norway, Iceland and Turkey are also involved. In each member state, a national co-ordinator is responsible for the organisation and orchestration of the Year.

... in Flanders as well!

The Flemish government is participating actively in the European Year of Creativity

and Innovation. A steering group³⁰ was set up to give maximum publicity to the Year and to involve various policy makers in its further development and implementation. A dedicated website was also created.

Events which share the aims of the European Year can still be announced here: the campaign runs until the end of December. During the autumn – as the icing on the cake, as it were – a closing event will take place, which will focus on the importance of keeping creation and innovation alive in the year(s) ahead. In particular, the encouragement of out-of-the-box thin-

king and the possibilities for cross-fertilisation between different disciplines, such as culture, science and entrepreneurship, will be central. Make sure to keep a watchful eye on www.creatief2009.be!

*Ilse Boeykens,
Enterprise and Innovation Division*

Specific objectives

With the Year of Creativity and Innovation the European Commission is seeking to pursue a number of other objectives, which it hopes will stimulate creativity and the capacity for innovation:

- fostering artistic and other forms of creativity through pre-school, primary and secondary education, including vocational streams, as well as non-formal and informal education;
- maintaining engagement with creative forms of self-expression throughout adult life;
- cultural diversity as a source of creativity and innovation;
- information and communication technologies as media for creative self-expression;
- ensuring that mathematics, science and technological studies promote an active, innovative mindset;
- developing a wider understanding of the innovation process and a more entrepreneurial attitude as prerequisites for continued prosperity;
- promoting innovation as the route to sustainable development;
- regional and local development strategies based on creativity and innovation;
- cultural and creative industries including design – where the aesthetic and the economic coincide;
- innovation in public and private services³¹.

27 Source: Decision No. 1350/2008/EG of the European Parliament and the Council dated 16 December 2008, relating to the European Year of Creativity and Innovation (2009).

28 The debates are organised in collaboration with the European Policy Centre. For more info about these debates, see: http://create2009.europa.eu/about_the_year/debates.html

29 www.cor.europa.eu

30 This group is chaired by the regional coordinator for the Flemish Community and is made up of representatives from the Ministry of Education and Training, the Department of Economy, Science and Innovation, the Department of Youth, Sport, Culture and Media, Flanders DC, Syntra Flanders, the 'Proeftuinen' and IWT.

31 An overview of all the ambassadors (together with their personal message) can be found on: <http://create2009.europa.eu/ambassadors.html>

Recommendations from the Ambassadors of the Year

As in previous years, a number of ambassadors were also chosen to represent the European Year of Creativity and Innovation. These prominent figures support and encourage the aims of the Year and serve as a role model for others to follow. In view of the wide range of objectives pursued by the Commission, the ambassadors form a diverse group of authors, designers, researchers, entrepreneurs and other creative spirits³².

And we are not just talking about anybody. There are some famous and colourful names on the ambassadorial panel, such as Ernő Rubik, inventor of the legendary Rubik's cube; Dominique Langevin, professor in natural sciences; Edward de Bono, an author specialising in creativity and lateral thinking; and Esko Tapani Aho, Executive Vice-President of Nokia. Choreographer Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker and Christine van Broeckhoven, who is well-known for her research into Alzheimer, were the Belgian representatives.

The ambassadors held their first round-table meeting in Prague on January 7th 2009. Above all, they wished to emphasise the importance of creativity and innovation for the future of Europe. They formulated a number of recommendations for the policy of the European member states and institutions.

They argued – notwithstanding the economic crisis – for greater investment in research, innovation, human capital and

education. They pointed to the example of Finland, which overcame the economic crisis of the 1990s by increasing R&D expenditure and maintaining investment in education. However, it is necessary that education should focus more on *learning-by-doing* – the creation of opportunities and the solving of problems – instead of concentrating on the simple transmission of knowledge.

In addition, they advised the member states and the European institutions to encourage the innovative and creative capacities of individuals, organisations and communities. In this respect, it is not only necessary to support society's commitment to technology, but also to recognise the importance of building up human capital and promoting cultural diversity.

Finally, they underlined the fact that Europe will need to display the necessary reserves of creativity and innovation to meet the challenges which lay ahead: the transformation to a knowledge society,

demographic shifts, globalisation and climate change. According to the ambassadors, technology is the key.

The ambassadors met for a second time in Brussels on 25 March. The results of their deliberations will become apparent in the course of the year, when they issue their *Manifesto for creativity and innovation in Europe*.

*Ilse Boeykens,
Enterprise and Innovation Division*



Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker



Christine van Broeckhoven

³² An overview of all the ambassadors (together with their personal message) can be found on: <http://create2009.europa.eu/ambassadors.html>

Flanders Design, an engine for the creative industry

The Flemish Community has made it a spearhead of its policy to promote and publicise the need for greater creativity. One of the pillars of the new Enterprise Agency³³ is Flanders Design.



Flanders Design promotes contemporary and qualitative design. It supports, fosters, assists, stimulates and subsidises recognised designers. Via structured advice and workshops, it seeks to integrate design into their business culture and production processes. The wider public is educated and informed about the added value of design for exhibitions through the award of the Henry van de Velde Awards & Labels, through the magazine *Kwintessens*, and through well thought-out promotional stands at key trade fairs. In short, Flanders Design promotes Flanders as a design region.

Creativity rules!

Design is an object, service or process which is consciously created with an added value in economic, aesthetic, ecological, social or culture terms. All companies which create design in Flanders in whatever manner are deemed to belong to the creative industry. In this respect, there is a particularly important role for designers and design bureaus. This explains why Design Flanders, in its practical day-to-day working, concentrates on these bureaus.

This represents a fundamental difference with Flanders InShape³⁴, whose starting point is the companies. Both organisations have different points of emphasis. If you are working with a company, the product has already been decided before the start of the project. But if you allow a designer freedom of choice, his creativity can find its fullest expression. If necessary, adjustments can be made at a later stage, to meet the needs of the production process, but in the initial phase it is important to let the designer's imagination have free rein: this is the creativity which the economy needs – and which is so representative of Flanders' position in the international world of design. Think of the furniture crafted by Extremis or Quinze & Milan, or the lighting made by Dark and Modular. And these are just a few examples from a whole range of top Flemish design companies.



► “*Brocante de salon*”, designed by *Atelier BLINK (Emilie Lecouturier and Céline Poncelet)*, carpet, wool and nylon

► “*Kosmos*” (2009), designed by *Dirk Wynants* for *Extremis*, outside furniture

Designing better together

Flanders Design has brought these creative companies together in the Belgian Design Forum³⁵. Conferences and workshops are organised for their CEO's, with important foreign specialists as guest speakers. Amongst the themes so far discussed are service design, user-centred design, design effectiveness and branding. The Forum website shows a number of films about several of these trendsetting Flemish companies. Many of them have already won a Design Management Europe Award³⁶. These DME Awards are conferred annually, to reward creative companies for their innovative design policy (see box). And Flanders is always amongst the prizes.

Design makes the difference

Two studies³⁷ about the economic impact of design on business life in Flanders have both underlined its positive influence. Companies are particularly successful when they apply design as an instrument of management policy. This creates and maintains a growing realisation of the true possibilities of design and design management. To support this trend Flanders Design organises regular workshops under the title ‘Design Makes the Difference’. These workshops are targeted at company managers. The programme of each workshop contains a number of case studies, in which entrepreneurs and designers sketch the outline of their collaborative process and explain how this can result in better economic results. The proceedings of each workshop are published and are available free of charge. The industrial designers, recognised by Flanders Design, can also use this channel to give design advice within the framework of the SME wallet³⁸.

Local talent

Flanders Design seeks to keep in regular touch with the companies through the Enterprise Agency's network of provincial action managers. Together, they issue a number of publications, including *Design geeft Voorsprong* (Leading with Design) and *De Designmeter* (The Design-meter): useful tools for raising the importance of design with the companies. Many businesses actually approach Flanders Design to seek assistance in their search for creative talent. They are given guidance and help, often with a positive outcome: several design collections have been created as a result. There have also been a number of prototypes and one-off pieces, published in *Kwintessens*³⁹ or noticed in an exhibition in the Flanders Design Gallery⁴⁰, which were later taken into production.

In order to focus attention on the best design companies and their creative talent, the prestigious Henry van de Velde

Company Prizes are awarded each year. In addition, there are also Henry van de Velde Labels, high-quality hallmarks with an international reputation for well-designed products. These labels give Flemish companies additional weight in the international market place and are particularly useful for image-building with potential foreign buyers and investors. This is crucial, since the Flemish design industry is export-oriented. For this reason, Flanders Design also works closely with Flanders Investment & Trade⁴¹ to promote Flemish design companies abroad. In recent years, the joint venture ‘ABC – Authentic Belgian Creativity’ has been a prominent feature at the Milan Furniture Fair. In this way, Flanders Design also helps the Flemish design business to make an international difference.

Christian Oosterlinck,
Flanders Design

Where does the DME Award come from?

The DME Award grew from the European Admire project⁴², in which Flanders Design took part as a correspondent. The intention is to stimulate innovation and differentiation at company level, more specifically within the SMEs. A similar European project in which Flanders Design is taking active part is SEE Design (Sharing Experience on Design Support⁴³, an INTERREG IIIc programme⁴⁴).

In Flanders, European ESF funding⁴⁵ has been used to set up Concreas⁴⁶, the Centre for Enterprise in the Creative Sectors. In addition to Flanders Design, the other partners in this venture include the Lessius University College, the Design and Interior Department of the Catholic University College of Mechelen, the Flanders Fashion Institute⁴⁷, Design Centre ‘De Winkelhaak’, VKW Antwerp-Mechelen, Ad!dict Creative Lab and Optimo.

33 www.agentschapondernemen.be

34 Also see elsewhere in this edition: p. 38

35 www.belgiandesignforum.be

36 www.designmanagementeuropa.com

37 The economic impact of design on the business world in Flanders’, 2003, VIZO and ‘The economic impact of design on the business world in Flanders’, 2007, Flanders Design.

38 EWI-Review 1 (3): 5

39 www.designvlaanderen.be/nl/kwintessens

40 www.designvlaanderen.be/nl/dvl-galerie

41 EWI-Review 1 (2): 47

42 www.proinno-europe.eu/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&topicID=59&parentID=59#

43 www.seedesign.org

44 www.interreg3c.net/web/home_en

45 EWI-Review 1 (2): 26-28

46 www.flandersdesign.be/concreas

47 Also see elsewhere in this edition: p. 36

Well-considered investment in creativity

It is not easy for creative culture companies to attract private financiers. Investors often have doubts about the risk profiles of such companies and their profit potential. For this reason, the Flemish government has created an instrument to assist with the financing problem of the cultural industry: CultuurlInvest.



TIP

When you're brainstorming in a group, make sure that the other people sitting around the table are prepared to share their ideas, and see to it that they're competent and able to contribute meaningfully to the discussions. It sometimes pays to invite an 'odd-man-out': someone from another department, a customer, your neighbour ...

CultuurInvest, the investment fund for the Flemish creative industry, operates under the auspices of the PMV (Investment Company for Flanders)⁴⁸. The fund does not award subsidies. It invests risk capital in culture-related enterprises, with the intention of making a profit.

Capital for culture

Dependent upon the phase of growth and the exact needs of the company, CultuurInvest can invest in three different ways. Firstly, it can provide risk capital, by taking a share holding in the company. A second possibility is project financing: CultuurInvest will provide funding for specific schemes in the short term. Finally, CultuurInvest can also offer subordinated loans: limited loans over a longer period, with the possibility to convert the loan into shares. In addition, CultuurInvest plays a facilitating role in attracting private finance. An investment by CultuurInvest serves as a quality label, encouraging bank and private funds to invest in the company concerned. Moreover, CultuurInvest stands surety for professionalism, growth and continuity in the sector, with the aim of providing sustainable employment opportunities.

In order to be considered for investment by CultuurInvest, a company's ability to offer high-quality, culture-related products and/or services with a clear market potential is not the only criterion. A well-founded, realistic business plan and a knowledgeable, competent team are the crucial deciding factors in every investment decision. The fund has invested in companies which (amongst other things) are active in the sectors of new media and computer games, the audiovisual sector and digital design, the music industry and concert events, design and designer fashion, the printed media and graphic design, publishing and the book trade, musicals and the podium arts, and the distribution process in plastic arts. In short, in players active at the crossroads of economy and culture.

Avant-garde Flemish handbags in Japan

In the period between November 2006 and February 2009 CultuurInvest dealt with 215 applications for funding. 33 companies were eventually selected for financing, for a total amount of more than four million euros. One of these companies is Crucial Associates, run by the Antwerp designing duo of Audrey van der Velden and Olivier Waelkens. These two designers have their own line under the brand name Dallas & Vegas. They specialise in the development, production and commercialisation of a designer line of handbags, luggage and accessories at the top end of the avant-garde segment. CultuurInvest provided a subordinated loan for Crucial Associates, which gave the company the necessary breathing space to grow further.

"Thanks to CultuurInvest, Dallas & Vegas has been able to profile itself at an international level, such as attending the trade fair in Paris, which has allowed us to open up new sales points in Japan, Russia, the USA, even in Cyprus and Greece" according to van der Velden and Waelkens. For a sneak preview of their accessories range, surf to www.dallasvegas.com.

Ben Jhaes,
The Investment Company for Flanders (PMV)

What can CultuurInvest do for you?

Are you interested in borrowing capital from CultuurInvest or do you want to check if your company is eligible? Surf to the website www.cultuurinvest.be or contact CultuurInvest via cultuurinvest@pmvlaanderen.be or www.pmv.eu.

Cultuur Invest

PMV  kmo

Can creativity be measured?



“Can creativity be compared on an international basis?” This is a frequently asked question, both in private and public circles. Ernesto Villalba, research assistant at the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning – CRELL for short, a division of the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre – has gone deeper into this question in a recent paper. On 28 and 29 May, there was also a conference on the theme of the measurability of creativity⁴⁹, organised by CRELL and the DG for Education and Culture.

TIP

Go and sit somewhere else

Your usual place at the kitchen table, or in the works' canteen or in the office simply keeps you locked into a comfortable routine. Change places, and dare to look at things from the other side of the table or room. Or pretend that you're a visitor to your own office.

In order to measure creativity effectively, it is first necessary to have an internationally agreed definition of precisely what it is. At the present time, the professional literature offers a variety of definitions. Even so, according to Villalba, there is a consensus over certain characteristics of creativity. "There is unanimity with regard to the fact that creativity is related to the production of something new which has a certain value." This 'something new' need not necessarily be a product: it can also be a new process or a new service⁵⁰.

However, there is another problem. In the same professional literature, the measurement of creativity is approached from a number of different angles, each based on a different theory. Villalba studied four different angles of approach. The first two are concerned with the psychological investigation of creativity, whereas the last two are more sector-based.

Four angles of approach

The first angle of approach is that of divergent thinking, which is described as 'the ability to generate a large number of different possibilities for the solving of a problem'⁵¹. The Torrance Test of Creative Thinking is a widely used test which attempts to measure creativity on the basis of divergent thinking. However, this test has also been much criticised, and is applied differently in almost every country where it is employed.

The second angle of approach is that of the creative personality, which seeks to investigate the characteristics possessed by creative people. This approach is subdivided into three different methodologies: psychometric, biographical and historiometric. The psychometric method makes use of lists with personality traits, checklists for self-reporting, biographical questionnaires, and interest and attitude criteria. The biographical method examines case studies of classic creative spirits. The historiometric method does much the same, but concentrates on the great creative minds of the past.

The third angle of approach is the Creative Class Theory of Richard Florida, who in 2002 also devised a creativity index.

This index is based on his 3T-Model: Technology, Talent and Tolerance⁵². At the beginning of 2004 Florida and Tinagli⁵³ adjusted this model to comply with the European context. As with Torrance, Florida's model has been the subject of much critical reaction, in particular relating to his selected indicators, his delineation of the creative class and his general theory of creative capital. Flanders DC, working in collaboration with the Vlerick Leuven Ghent Management School, developed a barometer to assess the creativity of a region⁵⁴. But this, too, is partly based on the Creative Class Theory.

With the fourth angle of approach, indicators relating to innovation and entrepreneurship are seen as the most credible criteria for measuring levels of creativity. Examples of this method include the European Trend Chart, which examines and compares the innovation performance of member states of the European Union; the Community Innovation Survey, a survey by the EU member states at the request of the European Commission relating to technological product and process innovation⁵⁵; the Inno-barometer, an annual opinion poll of companies and the general public with regard to attitudes and activities relevant to innovation policy⁵⁶; the European Innovation Scoreboard, which makes a comparative analysis of the innovation achievements of the European member states⁵⁷; the European Service Sector Innovation Scoreboard⁵⁸, which contains indicators for innovation in business services; and the indicators developed for the Entrepreneurship Innovation Programme⁵⁹.

The step-by-step plan

Finally, Villalba also investigated whether or not creativity can be measured by large-scale international research projects, such as PISA or TIMSS (see box). He came to the conclusion that this would not be efficient. He was once again confronted by the problem that it would first be necessary to devise a common working definition of creativity. Only then would there be scope for a feasibility study to explore the possibility of developing a test to measure creativity at an international – and, above all, European – level. As soon as this test is available – following a positive assessment

of the feasibility study – it must be trialled in as many different lands as possible. In this way, it might be possible to devise in the long term a large-scale process which gives an accurate picture of the creative levels in a society.

*Ilse Boeykens,
Enterprise and Innovation Division*

PISA and TIMSS

PISA – the Programme for International Student Assessment – is a tri-annual international study which tests and compares the knowledge and skills of 15-year-old from 57 different countries. The PISA questions concentrate primarily on science, mathematics and reading ability. The education ministries of the participating countries are responsible for conducting the project, under the coordinating authority of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). PISA is an important quality barometer for education. In 2006, Flemish teenagers scored well for the sciences. They had even better results for mathematics. Reading ability was less good, but still just under the performance levels of the top countries.

TIMSS – Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study – is conducted every four years, with the purpose of improving teaching and learning in mathematics and science subjects worldwide. The 2007 edition of TIMSS collected detailed information relating to the extent to which mathematics and sciences are properly represented in national curriculums, the lesson preparation of teachers, the availability of relevant information and the use of technology.

49 The presentations and blog of this conference can be found at: <http://crell.jrc.it/creativitydebate/>

50 Bron: Villalba, E. (2008), Towards an understanding of creativity and its measurements, Joint Research Centre, European Commission.

51 Definition according to McCrae (1987)

52 Also see elsewhere in this edition: p. 17 and www.creativeclass.com/richard_florida/

53 Irene Tinagli is specialised in research into innovation, creativity and regional development. In 2004, she wrote the paper Europe in the Creative Age with Richard Florida.

54 This study can be found at www.flandersdc.be

55 CIS: based on the Oslo handbook.
See: <http://aps.vlaanderen.be/sgml/largereeksen/1092.htm>

56 See www.proinno-europe.eu

57 See www.proinno-europe.eu

58 See www.proinno-europe.eu

59 http://ec.europa.eu/cip/eip_en.htm

VUB CROSSTALKS: a local network with international echoes

crosstalks

In 2004 the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) started a university-industry network: CROSSTALKS. During its meetings, this network aims at creating a knowledge and experience exchange to enable vision-forming beyond institutional and scientific disciplines and with the active participation of key players from all levels of society.

How does CROSSTALKS work in practice? Formats vary from selective brainstorming sessions and science & industry lunches, to more extensive workshops and activities for the public. The Pecha Kucha Nights, for example, is for its challenging format a very popular CROSSTALKS event. Pecha Kucha is Japanese for the background murmurings that you hear during conversation. The concept was devised by architects Astrid Klein and Marc Dytham in 2003. They wanted to offer a platform for young architects in their night club, Superdeluxe. The concept? Each speaker can use 20 slides, which are each visible for 20 seconds. No more, no less. In the meantime, the Pecha Kucha phenomenon has been taken up in 187 cities around the world. At the end of 2007 multimedia-engineer Alok Nandi and CROSSTALKS launched the first Brussels edition, which was enhanced by the contributions of scientists, photographers, composers and creative entrepreneurs.

The common feature of all the different formats is their 'bottom-up' and interdisciplinary approach, which cuts across all hierarchies and fields of endeavour, from physics and biology to architecture and art. In this way, CROSSTALKS can move beyond the usual cliché-confirming media debates, allowing participants and interested parties to find new insights and make new associations.

The VUB research community provides the expertise for these meetings, in close collaboration with the Technology Transfer Interface⁶⁰. Other actors are also involved, such as Belgian and international universities, research-based or innovative companies, but also strong individual personalities, preferably without a popular media status.

Breaking the mould

All CROSSTALKS events are international. During each meeting, the different aspects and perspectives of a particular subject are illustrated and discussed. In this sense, the concept has much in common with the theory of Edward de Bono, an authority in the field of creative thinking. It was de Bono who first coined the phrase 'lateral thinking': creativity means working outside the normal patterns of behaviour, breaking the mould of tradition, so that you can look at things in a new light.

Link this new way of thinking to a series of company, research, organisational and human values, and the CROSSTALKS formula is complete. Someone who comes along to 'pick up', just a single lecture has not understood the concept. The same is true for those who think that creativity will come automatically, if they listen long enough to the gurus. Being creative is a social and mental process, which develops away from existing networks and standard lectures by the usual suspects. The essential qualities are a willingness to listen and a critical, but constructive, mentality.

**Anything worth doing
is worth doing slowly**

(Mae West)

Time is also a crucial factor for CROSSTALKS: time to sound out common interests, time to enter into dialogue, time to give a place to newly emerging realities. The total approach of CROSSTALKS is an encouragement to think differently and act differently. With 'biological' catering and a surprising mix of speakers; with a sub-cultural 'bottom-up' approach, and an informal and open setting; with an



unorthodox series of publications. The locations also vary: from the Graduation Hall at the VUB Campus in Etterbeek (the home base) to the University Foundation, the Atomium, the old Recyclart metro-station, iMAL, BIP, the Flemish Parliament, the House of the Future and the Claridge/Mirano dance bars.

The topics discussed are equally diverse. General subjects – such as Free & Open Source Software, Brave New Interfaces, Early Warning Signals, The Future of Medication and Energy Efficiency – are alternated with more specific questions: Architecture, Photography & Chinese Encounters (with Buro II), Semantic Interfaces and Key Opportunities of S&PA (with EDS), Privacy & Data Protection (with the VUB Research Group on Law Science Technology & Society or LSTS). Since June, CROSSTALKS has been working together with Buro II on a series of Open Academy sessions, with themes which include sustainability from an architectural perspective (Alistair Guthrie, from the London-based Arup study bureau), zooming out to sustainable economy (Olivier Mongin) and a sustainable Europe based on undercurrents (Karl Schlögel).

CAMPUSTALKS

At the beginning of this year, the new rectorate of the VUB gave CROSSTALKS an extra stimulus to demolish the vertical and horizontal walls within the Brussels University Association between the VUB and the ULB (its French-speaking equivalent) and beyond. This resulted in the starting up of CAMPUSTALKS: sessions which aim to strengthen the wider VUB community and develop its international networking.

Marleen Wynants,
Operational Director
VUB CROSSTALKS

TIP
6

Draw or learn how to draw
It stimulates the right side of the brain, the side responsible for our creative impulses. The left side is used for analysis and reasoning.

The participants speak:

Dirk De Wit, director of the Institute for Plastic, Audio-Visual and Media Art, after the 'Brave New Interfaces' sessions:

"The idea of CROSSTALKS is of course fantastic and it really does work: during that kind of day, you talk with people you have never seen before. In this way, you create a kind of 'public space', because there is mutual openness and willingness to meet, and because you can't help talking across different worlds and disciplines, even if only to find some kind of common ground. With its very precise concept CROSSTALKS creates a solid basis for dialogue and exchange. The first readings lay the foundations which are necessary to bring people from different backgrounds together: we need each other to tackle the big questions of the future. During the second session, things are already becoming more concrete. As soon as there is a solid common base, you can begin to explore specific scenarios, without losing sight of the main issues."

Guy Peeters, General Secretary of the National Union of Socialist Healthcare Funds, during the launch of the most recent CROSSTALKS' book – 'In Sickness and In Health':

"The CROSSTALKS concept can quickly transcend its current status as a 'free' exercise in alternative thinking. It might well be that some of the themes discussed will serve in the very near future as sources of inspiration for the fundamental change of our system. Thanks to the experience of the first CROSSTALKS cycle, I have gained a better insight into the questions and aims of industry in the long term. The image of industry which I discovered is clearly more nuanced than the traditional picture of maximising ROI. I hope and I believe that industry will also gradually come to realise that the frame of reference of a social insurance institution is wider than straightforward budgetary considerations."

Like to know more?

- Crosstalking: <http://crosstalks.vub.ac.be>
- Open Academy sessions: www.buro2.be
- Pecha Kucha Nights Brussels: <http://pechakucha.architempo.net>
- Linking the Leaders:
http://crosstalks.vub.ac.be/past_events/2008_energyefficiency/linkingtheleaders.html

60 The interface services of the Brussels University Associations enhance the interaction between the association and the business world and ensure the economic valorisation of the scientific research carried out by the partners in the association.

Creativity and ICT: the IBBT Art&D programme

IBBT, or the inter-disciplinary Institute for BroadBand Technology⁶¹, was founded in 2004, in the aftermath of the dotcom crash. Today, IBBT already has more than 300 partners in Flanders and abroad. Notwithstanding the economic crisis, the project calls continue to attract considerable interest. Art&D, which allows researchers and artists to collaborate in an inter-disciplinary manner, illustrates this point perfectly.



exploring the information society

IBBT does not only focus on collaboration with industry and other social actors. In addition, the institute made a deliberate choice to adopt an inter-disciplinary approach. This explains, for example, why IBBT also includes three social science groups and a legal research group. In the institute's project approach, the user, the relevant regulations and the market – the needs of which are often considered too late in technology-driven projects – are all central. After all, our purpose must be to develop technology which is attuned to the complexities of our daily life: technology should never be viewed separately from its context.

During the more than 80 research projects carried out by IBBT, there was an increasing demand for the broadening of the institute's inter-disciplinary expertise. For example, project developers and designers were also involved in 'scientific' projects

for the design of user-interfaces and prototypes. In some projects, students from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent⁶² were 'let loose' on the technology and the results of the user's survey.

The I-factor

The strategic choice to allow a greater interaction between the creative aspects of development and innovation is not only a response to specific project requests. More and more, the difference between hype and flop is to be found in the indefinable 'x-factor': a mixture of state-of-the-art technology, user-friendliness and design which has the public reaching for its wallet before you can say 'buy me!'

To innovate successfully, we must be prepared to follow paths other than the traditional paths of technology-driven research. We are often exhorted to practice 'out-of-

the-box thinking', but this phrase conveys the mistaken impression that people need to push their own expertise aside. On the contrary, IBBT is convinced that excellence in its own fields of expertise is an essential precondition for continuous innovation. In addition, we need to ensure that our experts possess the necessary degree of experience to collaborate efficiently with other disciplines, to communicate in a common language and to appreciate the value of other people's knowledge.

A linking programme

The Art&D programme attempts in its own modest way to contribute towards the development of these new forms and practices of research. This programme joins artists and scientists together in an artistic-technological project. It is hoped that the experience will enrich the practitioners of both disciplines, but that



► Figure 2: Artist Maarten Van Volssem attempts to 'capture' movement in photos, soon also digitally, thanks to IBBT researchers.



► Figure 1: The interaction of body and information, different from a real experience (artist: Tom Heene; image: Dries De Roeck)

it will also show the wider public that ICT is a creative instrument: a means, and not simply an end.

In practical terms, a first call was launched at the end of 2007, which encouraged researchers and artists to submit their project proposals. A professional jury then selected the four 'winning' entries: 'Dark Matter' (see Figure 1), 'Virtual Reality/Real Virtuality', 'Faces of Relief' and 'Photography Beyond the Still Image' (see Figure 2). Each of these projects was awarded a grant of between 50,000 and 75,000 euros.

In the course of 2008 and 2009, the projects all submitted prototypes. The results of the collaboration often went much further than had originally been envisaged. In this sense, it seems as though both artists and the researchers found the experiment to be a positive one. In the

case of Dark Matter, for example, a number of residential meetings and workshops were organised. And the collaboration continues, even though the projects are now officially completed. Virtual Reality/Real Virtuality was built on the existing interaction between the Crew theatre group and Professor Philippe Bekaert of IBBT-EDM⁶³ (U Hasselt), who had already produced a number of new interpretations and installations for the group in preceding years.

In view of the success of this first series of projects and as a result of the numerous demands for a new call, a second Art&D call has now been launched. It is intended that the new projects will start at the beginning of 2010.

*Nico Verplancke,
IBBT programme manager*

Dark Matter:

This project investigates how physical data about the world (from sensors) and virtual data from the web can be combined and presented in an all-embracing user-experience. The aim is to increase the public's awareness of the true state of our world and welfare, on the basis of representations which are recognisable for humans and to which people can relate.

All project descriptions can be found on www.ibbt.be/en/onderzoek.

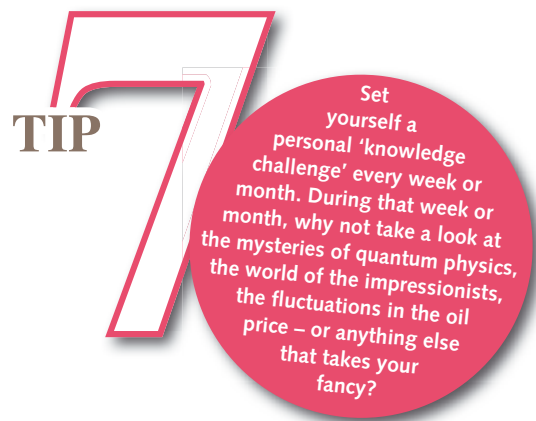
61 EWI-Review 1 (3): 41 – 43

62 Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Ghent – see also www.kask.be/

63 Also see elsewhere in this edition: p. 49 – www.edm.uhasselt.be

Innovation in television land





EWI-Review put together ten propositions about innovation, which are frequently heard in policy circles. We put these propositions – which are more concerned with content than with technology – to Clem Robyns, an independent television expert. We asked him to what extent the propositions also apply to the Flemish television sector. Television is regarded as playing a crucial, central role in the fast-growing creative industry⁶⁴. TV must serve as a model for stimulating creativity and creative thinking in other branches of the economy. From his reactions – which do not shirk the difficult issues – it is clear that the television sector is subject to rules of its own, which require a very specific approach.

Competition encourages excellence, creativity and innovation.

“The arrival of VTM was the best thing that ever happened to Flemish television. In any other region of comparable size, the variation in programmes and the level of creativity are much lower. Flanders was extremely fortunate that a commercial station was created – under pressure from politicians, nota bene – which did not behave like most other commercial stations. This gave a colossal boost to our television industry, so that Flemish television became unique throughout the world. The VRT – then the BRT – was thrown into crisis, and needed five years before it reacted effectively. It then resolutely opted for the same tactics as its new commercial rival: innovative programmes, often developed externally. This led to the creation of a number of production companies – today there are about 20⁶⁵ – of which Woestijnvis is the most well-known. Sadly, in the present climate a number of these companies are under threat. In the meantime, VTM has also developed its own specific business model, which is much broader than what one might usually expect from a classic commercial station. The most obvious difference? The great importance which it attaches to its news service. Apart from this, however, there is a very clear dichotomy: commercial stations import programme concepts from abroad and no longer develop their own formats, whereas the VRT concentrates almost exclusively on its own formats⁶⁶. This has greatly impoverished our television: as far as creative TV is concerned, half of the field has simply stopped playing. In other words, competition no longer provides added creativity. In fact, there is no longer any real competition – in the true meaning of the word – between these stations. We are awaiting the arrival of a (new?) player to upset the apple cart, just like VTM did 20 years ago.”

A creative industry is locally anchored.

“In every country, the really important programmes are produced locally. However, Flanders is again unique, in the sense that so many programme concepts are also developed locally. Even so, in recent years even VTM has started buying in a number of foreign formats, of the type *Farmer Seeks A Wife*. The station no longer wishes to spend extra money on its own develop-

ment, but it has a good nose for the types of format which will be popular in Flanders. VTM knows that the Flemish public will not accept 100% imports.”

Open innovation involves far-reaching collaboration with external parties to create a common platform for new and innovative products or services.

“This is becoming a major problem. A few years ago the VRT set up its own internal production house. This is operating at full tilt, and the station commissions as many programmes as possible from it. This allows the VRT production house to build up a kind of monopoly position, so that the external production houses, other than the really big ones, hardly get a look-in any more. As a result, there is a danger that a mono-culture may be created: we are already reaching a position where the development of new formats in Flanders is almost exclusively in the hands of the VRT.”

In a globalising world, it is no longer possible to confine your activities to the local market – and certainly not with an open economy, such as in Belgium and Flanders.

“Television has a too defining a role in shaping the cultural identity of a people to be conceived from an international perspective. Flemish productions are uniquely Flemish, with a limited number of exceptions, such as *Man bijt hond*, which is also broadcast in The Netherlands. Many of our productions are simply ‘too Flemish’ to be exported successfully, even to Wallonia, probably also because the market is too restricted. Almost every production company has tried to devise a format that would work in both regions, but they are quickly confronted with the cultural differences, such as the fact that a celebrity culture, on which many Flemish formats are based, is almost non-existent in Wallonia.

IPR regulations and protection of intellectual property rights (e.g., of formats) are important.

“It is impossible to protect TV ideas adequately. In the few cases which have been prosecuted, it is clear that the courts demand a level of proof for ‘plagiarism’ which is simply unobtainable, so that the cases are always lost. Besides, the TV world

is a small world. If you risk prosecuting one of the major players, sooner or later they will get a chance to take their revenge. The small production houses have little option but to relinquish their rights. Whoever makes a programme for the VRT is almost obliged by definition to do this. Very few people have an answer to this problem. Moreover, nobody in the TV world regards ideas as being unique. If two very similar programmes appear on air within six months of each other (as sometimes happens), this is not a case of plagiarism. It is simply impossible to make a copy within six months. It is more likely that two companies have developed the same idea at more or less the same time. Every production house keeps its finger on the pulse of society, so that they often pick up the same vibes."

Investing in innovation and creativity is even more important in times of crisis.

"The television sector has actually been in a crisis for a couple of years now. In one sense, the VRT is shielded from economic circumstances through its state-subsidised funding. Even so, the company has been forced to tighten its belt for several years. Production budgets were recently cut by 10%. This is more or less equivalent to

the margin which is necessary to improve quality. In addition, the commercial stations are being starved of revenue. They rely on the buying in of foreign success formulas, simply because they cannot take the risk of making a mistake.

Yet at the same time, constant innovation is a necessity. The television market is characterised by the transitory and short-lived nature of its products. Most programmes are only successful for one or two series. Very few run for 10 or 20 years, like *FC De Kampioenen*. Every production company and every station needs constantly to come up with new ideas. In this respect, the television sector can certainly provide an example for other fields of the economy. Sadly, however, at the present time there is simply too little money to work out all the creative ideas."

Disruptive and radical innovations are the most profitable.

"Reality-TV was certainly an eye-opener, but in essence change in television is never radical. The so-called 'TV-revolution' of the past two years was the introduction of the tele-novella in Flanders: *Sarah* and *Louis-Louise*. But the first tele-novella – *Isaura* – was actually bought in by the BRT from Brazil more than 20 years ago. Television is very conservative when it comes to exploi-

ting the true possibilities of the medium.

On the other hand, the TV world is also very quick to latch on to new trends and interests in society.

Creativity in television is a combination of many different aspects, such as light, sound, people, decors, presenters, storylines, etc.

To be successful, all the pieces of the puzzle need to fit together properly. The concept of creativity in television is often related to the manner in which this combination is brought about. This means that the basic programme content does not need to be

radically new, although this what many people – incorrectly – expect. With the exception of *In De Gloria*, no other successful fiction series in Flanders during the past decade has been truly innovative, in the sense of 'different'. In part, this is because the public is also very conservative. Nevertheless, even the popular, long-running programmes, such as *De laatste show*, *Man bijt hond*, etc. are revamped every summer.

The basic concept is kept, but within that concept something 'new' is required. In this sense, TV makers are often concerned with variations on a genre theme. This evolution occurs gradually, but always with a finger on the pulse of the market. Truly radical ideas seldom make it onto the screen. However, just because you are not constantly innovating does not mean that you are not taking risks. Each station launches dozens



▼
Clem Robyns

of new programmes each year – in total, about 10,000 hours worth of television, a third of which is produced by the VRT. And each new launch implies new risk.”

A creative idea can only be turned into effective innovation if the right guiding and supportive processes are also present.

“Not in the world of television, where the creative processes are still fairly primitive! In fact, the process usually begins with a few people sitting around a table or laying in the grass. Some programmes are literally developed out of nothing. Sometimes all they’ve got to start with is the title. In contrast, however, some programmes are devised to meet a specific need. The VRT wanted to do ‘something new’ involving popular Dutch-language music. During a brainstorming session, the producers asked themselves what role Dutch-language music played with the viewers? This resulted in *Zo is er maar één* (*The One and Only*), a cross between a competition and a homage. But a huge number of good ideas are simply thrown away. For every new concept accepted, ten others end up in the rubbish bin. And for every ten concepts which are developed, only one makes it onto the airwaves.”

Market studies are necessary.

“Sensing what the market wants is often an intuitive process. Perhaps more than in other sectors, the TV world ‘feels’ the way the public is thinking. Typical in this respect was *Big Brother*, the programme which ‘abolished’ privacy. It is no coincidence that this programme was made at a time when privacy was becoming more and more relative, in part because of the growth of the internet. The young people of today find it much more ‘normal’ to expose their private lives via the computer than previous generations – and the programme makers understood this.

‘People’ are the subject of television programmes. This means that the programme makers need to keep in contact with people, even if they do not directly belong to the target public. Even so, formal market research can still be useful. The trial candidates in a test panel can often put their finger on potential pitfalls and shortcomings, and they are extremely useful for content feedback. On the other hand, they often tend to be conservative and can be too quick to pass judgement. In this respect, the claim that the so-called Censydam surveys were the key factor for deciding whether or not a new programme was shown on air, was simply not true. It has always been

a combination of gut feeling plus market insight.”

Business innovation or strategic innovation pay in the long run.

“In the TV sector some companies have developed a very different business model: the so-called ‘360-degree’ approach. Studio 100 e.g. creates products in all possible media and platforms: it is involved in merchandising, it makes films, it manages fun parks, it produces CDs and theatrical performances. Above all, it makes television programmes, which serve as promotion for all its other products. As a result, these programmes can be offered to the television stations at knock-down prices. The programmes are very successful, so that the stations would be mad to turn down such a golden opportunity.

In general, however, the Flemish television sector offers very few examples of innovative business models. Many television makers wear blinkers, when it comes to business matters: they are much too concerned with ‘doing their own thing’ to be bothered about the surrounding economic context. They are sceptical when it comes to hype models, probably because they are all too familiar with hype themselves.”

The governments must provide specific financial stimuli, micro-credits and other made-to-measure instruments for the creative industry⁶⁷.

“The unique richness of the television market in Flanders is currently in great danger. The commercial stations are narrowing down their operations. The VRT has also experienced cutbacks and is developing more and more in-house, thereby threatening to create a monoculture. Many of the smaller production houses – the very same production houses which a year ago were creating the most innovative programmes – are now being threatened. Policy makers must realise that one of our most important creative sectors is experiencing great difficulties. Important, because it is a sector which gives many people great enjoyment: the average Fleming watches television three hours each day! We have need of a policy which can help to re-stimulate diversity and creativity in the sector. This is much more important than making sure that enough Dutch-language songs are sung, or that political reporting is balanced, or that gameshows don’t feature too many politicians. Part of the problem is that politicians are happy to use TV when it suits them, but are not prepared to recognize it as a creative sector that needs protection. A government agency specifically charged with promoting the creative sector could ensure that funding is made available

to encourage programme and format development. But this would be of little use if the stations do not have the necessary money to actually make the programmes. Consequently, it would be wiser to spend the available resources on the production of pilot programmes for really promising ideas. This would significantly reduce the risks for the stations, since a pilot programme would allow them to see whether a concept is likely to work – or not. In addition, targeted project subsidies for creative ideas are also needed. The criterion for judging creative and innovative ideas is diversity and differentiation. When is theatre successful in Flanders? When new and varied plays appear which are ‘different’ from anything that can be seen elsewhere. It is exactly the same with television formats and programmes.”

Clem Robyns in collaboration with Peter Spyns (Strategy and Co-ordination Division) and Steven Schelfhout (Communication Team)



Clem Robyns is an independent media maker, who earned his spurs in the Flemish television world. Following work as a director and chief editor with various production houses and the VRT, he was eventually appointed as creative editor at Telesaurus (which later became part of The Entertainment Group). His remit included final content and creative responsibility for projects; the guidance of concept development; the coaching of presenters, artists and creative staff; the management of external relations and press contacts; and the overall development of general strategies. He is currently an independent development and project coordinator.

⁶⁴ Also see elsewhere in this edition: p. 36

⁶⁵ The largest are Studio100, Eyeworks, Woestijnvis, Endemol, Kanakna, DeMensen and Fremantle.

⁶⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Program_format

⁶⁷ Recommendations for the creative industry by the Cultural Treaty Commission Flanders – The Netherlands, on the occasion of ‘The Great Meeting’: newsletter 2 (2009): p.2

TIP

Make a mind-map of your ideas

Write down your basic idea at the centre of a blank sheet of paper. Around this idea draw a series of branches, which show its main characteristics. Develop each of these characteristics in the same manner. This will give you a neat single-page overview of what your idea involves, and will be much more useful than five pages of solid text.

Fashionable economy OR economic fashion?



Our economic fortunes can fly high, if we dare to invest in the creative economy. This economy is to be found at the crossroads where social, economic and cultural activities all meet. There are also side roads which lead to tourism, technology and intellectual ownership. New ideas in cultural creations, scientific inventions and technological innovations can all work as powerful levers, giving our economy a much needed boost and leading to greater prosperity. These levers possess an amazing potential for development, a potential which we must not let go to waste.

The creative economy is a sector on the move – and it is a move forwards. There is still plenty of margin for growth and good prospects for further employment opportunities. According to the Creative Economy Report drawn up by the United Nations in 2008, Belgium is the world's ninth largest exporter of creative goods, with a world market share of 2.8%. The largest sub-sector within the creative economy is 'design'. This includes 'fashion', for which Belgium also occupies the ninth position in the UN report. The report also highlights a number of success factors. One of these factors is the 'creative city', a conglomeration with numerous social and cultural facilities, supplemented by a high-potential workforce.

The city is creative

The results of a recent study – 'The creative economy in Antwerp: SWOT analysis and policy recommendations', carried out in May 2009 by Buck Consultants International at the request of the City of Antwerp – showed that the creative sector is strongly represented in Antwerp, in comparison with other urban centres, both in terms of the number of companies and the number of people employed. Antwerp generates about 40% of the added value and 34% of jobs in the combined creative economy of the Flemish Centre Cities. What is the explanation for this success? Of all the Flemish cities, Antwerp holds the best trump cards – the talent, the technology and the diversity – to attract companies from the

creative sector. The presence of potential buyers and the city's wider image are also plus-points. Fashion continues to be an important component.

Fashion from Flanders

Fashion from Flanders – and in particular from Antwerp – has become a household word throughout the world. This is apparent from the fact⁶⁸ that no less than 17⁶⁹ of the top 150 contemporary designers are either Belgian or studied in Belgium. And Antwerp is still reckoned to be one of 10 most important fashion cities in the world⁷⁰.

Antwerp's fame as an international fashion city is largely attributable to the talent and perseverance (now some 23 years ago) of a

first generation of designers – the Antwerp Six: Walter Van Beirendonck, Dirk Van Saene, Dirk Bikkembergs, Dries Van Noten, Ann Demeulemeester and Marina Yee. They set the example for subsequent generations of fashion graduates to follow. In the meantime, numerous Flemish designers have achieved international success. They not only sell in West Europe, but also on the American, Asian and Russian markets. In addition, the international fashion press always keeps a keen eye on the Flemish fashion world. And when important international prizes are to be won, you will usually find the Flemings somewhere amongst the winners⁷¹.

Flanders Fashion Institute

There are numerous organisations which offer stimuli to the creative industry in the fields of entrepreneurship and innovation. One of the most important is the Flanders Fashion Institute⁷². Since its foundation in Antwerp in 1998, the institute has been actively supported by the Flemish government. FFI is the knowledge centre for the fashion sector in Flanders. Its priority objectives are to increase employment in the fashion industry, via its creative talent and support functions; and to promote fashion from Flanders on the national and international scene.

FFI is based in the *Modenatie* (Fashion Nation). This is both the name of the building and of a unique concept which coordinates the activities of Antwerp's most important fashion players. For example, it provides accommodation facilities for the Fashion Department of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of the Artesis University College, where future talent is nurtured. In addition, it houses the Province of Antwerp's Fashion Museum (ModeMuseum or MoMu), where

important aspects of our fashion heritage are made accessible to the public. And finally there is the FFI itself, where (young) talent is given career guidance and practical promotional support.

Continuously reinventing yourself

Fashion is finely balanced on the interface between culture and economy. Fashion begins with talent, creativity and innovation. However, the related technical skills, the constructional creativity, the historical, psychological and ethnic backgrounds all mean that fashion is really a form of applied art, and is therefore an expression of our cultural heritage.

But fashion also has a hard business side. Fashion designers need to reinvent themselves at least twice every year (although in the wider design sector the pressure is a little less severe). Designers are constantly experimenting with new materials, new applications and new techniques. Innovation is therefore more than just a simple matter of technology and is more concerned with new ways of working, innovative business processes and better organisational models. This being said, as part of the creative industry the fashion sector does make use of technological applications to implement its innovative ideas. Futurotextiel08, which ran in Kortrijk from October to December 2008, and the conference on Smart Fashion, which the FFI organised on 30 April 2009, are excellent examples of this process at work.

Working in the fashion industry

Under the influence of globalisation, the Flemish fashion industry is increasingly playing the creativity-innovation card to distinguish itself from competition. These same trumps can also offer an answer to a

number of bottlenecks which are threatening to hamper development in the sector: the shortage of sufficiently qualified personnel (for example, pattern drawers are in very short supply); the lack of integration in the development of the sector as a whole; the less than positive image which the fashion business sometimes has with the public. These were amongst the conclusions drawn in the 2008 report 'Fashionate about creativity', which the FFI and its partners Creamoda⁷³ and Fedustria⁷⁴ had commissioned from the Flanders District of Creativity⁷⁵, working in collaboration with its knowledge partner, the Vlerick Leuven Ghent Management School⁷⁶.

FFI and FDC: working together for a creative industry

On 1 July 2009 the Flanders Fashion Institute became a business unit of the Flanders District of Creativity, but with full retention of its specific identity and objectives⁷⁷. Flanders DC was set up by the Flemish Government in 2004 and is the Flemish organisation responsible for entrepreneurial creativity. Flanders DC is working to create a culture of innovation in Flanders, in order to maintain or improve the region's existing competitive position. The stimulation of greater entrepreneurship in the creative industries is now set to become an important additional pillar in Flanders DC policy. For example, the FFI model of the Career Office⁷⁸ will henceforth be used within Flanders DC to assist and support interest groups active in other creative sectors in their efforts to stimulate entrepreneurship.

André Meyers (Enterprise Agency) and Edith Vervliet (Manager Flanders Fashion Institute and Manager Creative Industry at Flanders District of Creativity)



68 "Fashion Now, I-D selects the world's 150 most important designers", Terry Jones & Avril Mair, Taschen, 2003.

69 Haider Ackermann, AF Vandevorst, Dirk Bikkembergs, Véronique Branquinho, Ann Demeulemeester, Angelo Figus, Véronique Leroy, Martin Margiela, José Enrique Ona Selfa, Jurgi Persoons, Stefan Schneider, Raf Simons, Olivier Theyskens, Walter Van Beirendonck, Dries Van Noten, Dirk Van Saene and Bernard Wilhelm.

70 Along with Paris, Milan, Berlin, Düsseldorf, London, Los Angeles, Moscow, New York and Tokyo.

71 In 2004: Dries Van Noten (Night of the Stars, NY), Dirk Bikkembergs (Oscar Italian fashion, Milaan), Demna Gvasalia (It's three, Trieste) and Haider Ackerman (Gwand, Luzern). In 2008: Dries Van Noten (Award for Best International Designer awarded by the American Council of Fashion Designers (CFDA), NY + Prix de la Mode, Amsterdam + Royal Designer for Industry, London). In 2009: Dries Van Noten (Couture Council Award for Artistry of Fashion 2009 awarded by the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT), NY) and added to the 'Galerie der Prominenten' by Voka Antwerp and Waasland.

72 www.ffi.be

73 Creamoda is a central enterprise databank organisation for companies working in Belgium in the fashion, clothing or ready-to-wear sectors, in the broadest sense of the terms – see also <http://www.belgianfashion.be/Pages/index.php>

74 Fedustria represents Belgian companies from the textile sector and the wood and furniture industries – see also <http://www.fedustria.be>.

75 Also see elsewhere in this edition: p. 17

76 www.vlerick.be

77 In order to combat the multiplication and duplication of organisations in the creative industry, the Flemish Government decided on 15.05.2009 that Flanders DC should integrate the Flanders Company Management Plan Competition and the Flanders Fashion Institute into its existing structure.

78 This model covers all activities relevant to the support of designers and fashion graduates, such as: (i) the integrated Jobsite www.modejobs.be on the FFI website, in collaboration with Jobat, VDAB, Ivoc and CV Warehouse; (ii) individual coaching in entrepreneurship for starters and transferees; (iii) the sponsorship project 'Plato Mode' in collaboration with the Voka-Chamber of Commerce Antwerp-Waasland; (iv) info sessions/workshops, such as information forums with representatives of industry, market segments, fashion fairs, etc.

Licence to design

TIP

9

Leave perfection to the neurotics

Perfectionists seldom try new things, because they're afraid that they won't work perfectly at first. Good work is obviously important, but it takes an awful lot of time and energy to turn something good into something perfect. This time and energy can often be better spent elsewhere.

If you hear the word 'design', do you instantly think of modern, trendy and (above all) exclusive items of furniture, jewellery or lighting? If so, you are not alone. The word 'design' is used – sometimes correctly, more often mistakenly – to convey the idea that something is both modern and functional. For a trendy hair-style, you no longer call in at your friendly, neighbourhood hair-dresser: you now need to go to a 'hair-designer'. Underground laboratories now manufacture 'designer drugs', such as ecstasy. But design means much more than fun furniture, creative kitchen utensils and innovative bathroom accessories.

Design – and above all industrial design – has developed to such an extent that it is now an important economic growth factor. Industrial design delivers added value to both the product owner and the end user. It is a bridge-builder between technology and application. It takes account of both technological and economic aspects – and of human nature! Industrial design translates creative ideas into innovations. It is for this reason that the continuing

encouragement of Flemish companies to achieve the better integration of product development and industrial design into their business culture is of such crucial importance.

In order to be able to support Flemish companies with the right models and tools, in December 2006 the Flemish government set up Flanders InShape. This Flemish competence pool⁷⁹ for product development and industrial design is a collaborative venture between Flanders Industry (Industrie Vlaanderen)⁸⁰ and various service companies, university colleges, and knowledge centres. Its mission? To create a sustainable added value for Flemish industry through product development and design.

Industrial design pays

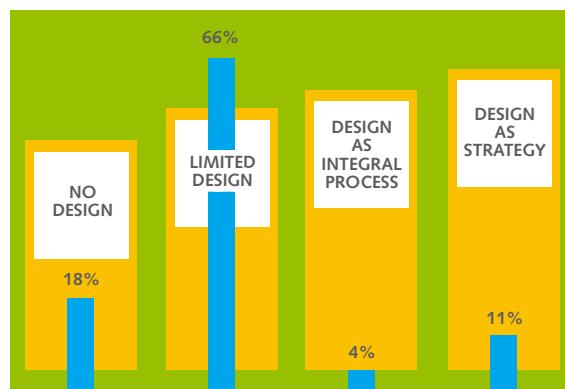
Recent studies have shown that Flemish industry does not sufficiently understand or use the principles of industrial design and systematic product development. For example, the survey 'Product Development and Industrial Design according to the Design & Plan Ladder' carried out in the autumn of 2008 by Flanders InShape and its partners, revealed that 66% of all companies in Flanders (see Figure 3) only have a limited number of design activities. They are actively engaged in product

development and industrial design, but there are several areas where there is scope for greater professionalism: design methodology, technology marketing, customer and user-oriented design, team composition, the anchoring of creativity within the company, etc. By attempting to adopt a more efficient and a more systematic approach in these areas, the product development process can be made significantly shorter. This will result in more innovation and more successful products.

Flanders InShape can help

In order to help companies to become more professional and to offer them a range of best practices and successful business models, Flanders InShape has developed a number of different instruments. These have been adjusted to meet the needs of companies at different levels in the design ladder. In this respect, the service provided by Flanders InShape is not based on the size or sector of a company, but on its relative maturity in matters relating to product development and industrial design.

*Maka De Lameillieure,
Director, Flanders InShape –
Competence Pool for Product
Development and Industrial Design*



► Figure 3: Design ladder

Interested?

You can call on Flanders InShape for a variety of different services: for a design scan; for a training course (in your own company, if preferred); for individual advice, tailored to meet the needs of your company, in consultation with various experts; as a member of one of the thematic networks (Learning Network, Synthetics Network, IP Special Interest Group, etc.); as the initiator or implementer of a research project; or, of course, as a participant in one of our wide range of workshops, study days and seminars, which can also be organised on your own company premises.

Up-to-date information about our full range of services can be found on www.flandersinshape.be. You can also contact us by mail via info@flandersinshape.be or by phone on the number + 32 56 28 28 50. Alternatively, we would be happy to welcome you at our offices: our team of experts in ready and waiting to help.

⁷⁹ Competence pools are initiatives which seek to develop a 'knowledge base' for innovation in key economic segments in Flanders. The activities of a competence pool are in the first instance targeted on collective research and/or the dissemination of knowledge.

⁸⁰ The collaboration platform of the sectoral organisations of the most important branches of industry in Flanders – see also <http://www.industrievlaanderen.be>

TIP 10

It's
okay to
fantasise about
your dreams

In fact, try to dream as wildly as possible. Many of your dreams and ideas won't be capable of realisation, but this is only normal. Creativity is often a matter of having ninety-nine mediocre ideas, so that you're able to recognise that one great idea when it comes along.



Combining business and
creativity,
therein lies the success of Studio 100

An interview with Hans Bourlon, Manager of the Year
and co-founder of Studio 100

In 1996 Studio 100 first saw the light of day as an independent production company.

TV programmes form the basis of their success, but are not the only string to their bow.

The company not only plays a key role in the national sector, but has also broken through at international level. A conversation about creativity, innovation and the economy with Hans Bourlon, Manager of the Year and co-founder of Studio 100.

Wherein lies the core business of Studio 100?

"Studio 100 wants to bring family entertainment. To achieve this, we have developed various channels. What we are doing today is still really an extension of what we started with *Samson & Gert*. On the basis of that TV programme, we were able to develop a number of songs. If you combine those two elements – a TV story and songs – you can put on a live show. You can also draw the same characters, and so you can publish a comic book. Before you know it, you are working with a complete concept, but without the need for any kind of high technology. Today we are involved in so many different activities that our staff meetings run for three hours, just to cover the bare essentials of all of them. In 2008 our turnover amounted to 107 million euros, of which 35% came from our fun parks. The rest was divided up between television, film, theatre, merchandising and musicals."

Are you able to keep an overview of all these different activities?

"You have to, if you want to be a good manager. But you must be careful that you don't become a bottleneck within the company – then you are on the wrong track. Gert Verhulst and myself are first and foremost shareholders, then directors and only then operational managers. If you make yourself indispensable as a director or as an operational manager, you will eventually undermine the value of your own shares. The highest priority of a shareholder is to create value. This is not possible if you fail to make time for the control and guidance of the company as a whole. Otherwise you are simply encouraging value depreciation. This means that you need to trust others for the nuts-and-bolts running of the company. Nowadays, it often happens that I am involved at the start of a production, but then drop out of the picture until the completion phase. Of course, I keep a check on general progress, but it is impossible to follow everything at first hand. Besides, it is sometimes good to take a step back and look at things from a distance."

Does Studio 100 have a unique business plan?

"What makes us unique is the fact that the shareholders and founders of the company are still involved in the conceptual and creative side of things. This doesn't often happen in media companies: the creative minds usually stay as far away as possible from the business brains. But this is not the case with us. Doing business and being

creative are inextricably linked, and therein lies the success of Studio 100. But there is a clear understanding that creativity comes first, because it is these creative impulses which keep pushing the company forward. People say that our programmes are so successful because we devote a lot of attention to marketing. But I can give you plenty of examples of good ideas which marketing has not been able to save. Advertising only works up to a certain level. Once you move beyond that level, it can actually work against you. Being talked about is the only thing that can make a big difference in terms of success and failure. An advertising campaign can help you on your way, but it is the strength and quality of the product which finally decides whether you win or lose."

Creative impulses

How do you arrive at a strong idea?

"This, of course, is the 64,000 dollar question. The success or failure of a programme or song depends upon a number of different factors. It all starts from scratch. One of our most successful musicals was 'The Three Pigs'. When this idea was first suggested at a meeting, everybody burst into laughter. But there are three pigs – just as there are three members in the successful K3 girls group. Put the two together and you have a totally different concept. In our sector, there are sometimes too many defensive impulses. You shouldn't always be looking behind you, trying to make your new programmes a copy of their successful forerunners. You will never find good, innovative ideas from market research. For real success, you need new concepts which open up new horizons. But with a study, yet get precisely the opposite effect. People are always happy with the familiar. Our creative impulses are often beyond logic, beyond rhyme or reason. Of course we make mistakes, but we learn from them. If we had asked the public via market research to say what they expected the next K3 show to be like, we would simply have ended up with a 'greatest hits' extravaganza. Nobody would have answered: "Turn them into pigs!" – but it worked!"

Who gives the final green light for a production?

"That varies from idea to idea. Gert Verhulst has a good feel for content and presentation. He has been on stage so often himself; he knows what works and what doesn't. Of course, every project is looked at by lots of different people before the

go-ahead is given. We take our time and give it plenty of thought, because we don't want to make too much of the same kind of thing. For this reason, we often work thematically. For television stations, we also check what types of programmes are missing in their schedules. In addition, our marketing department plays an important role. In many media companies, the marketing department is a separate entity, cut off from the creative process. At Studio 100, they have to work together."

You shouldn't always back away from the cliché

An everyday dog

Once you have an idea, how do you protect it?

"Like every production company, Studio 100 has – and needs – a legal department. In principle, you need to free up a whole lot of different rights at the beginning of a project. It starts with the drawer of a new character, who might claim that he holds the commercial rights. If an actor plays the character, he has to agree that he is only performing a role, and did not develop the character out of his own personality, which might give him intellectual rights. In order to give a new creation maximum protection, you need above all to show that it is unique. That was the problem with *Samson* all those years ago: he was just an everyday dog, no different from any other bobtail. Even the name was difficult to protect. It was for this reason that we decided three years after the setting up of Studio 100 to register *Samson & Gert* as the brand name for copyright purposes. If you intend to market your product worldwide, you need a unique name."

Have you ever had problems relating to rights?

"A woman once claimed that she had written the text to a particular song. As it happens, I often get suggestions for new ideas, songs or texts in my mailbox. It seems that this woman once sent me a folder with all kinds of lyrics for new songs, one of which did indeed have a similar theme to the song



Amika



Mega Mindy



Plop



Pirate Pete



Hans Burlon and Gert Verhulst

in question. This came as a total surprise for us: it is impossible to look at everything that we receive from the public.

Even though it was only a question of a basic theme – the rest of the arrangement was completely different – the disputes committee of SABAM decided that the royalties for the song had to be split. Fortunately, we managed to win the case when we took it to the civil courts: being accused of something you haven't done is not acceptable; nobody can live with that. According to our lawyer, if you want to avoid problems of this kind, it is better to return everything you receive unopened to the sender. But of course you can't always know in advance what is sitting in an unopened envelope."

How does Studio 100 stand on the issue of cliché versus creativity?

"A good idea doesn't always need to be innovative. It can be, of course, but this doesn't mean that you should always back away from the cliché. The Pixie Plop character, for example, is just an ordinary pixie, living in the woods, with no computer and always wearing the same clothes. The storyline is also very traditional. Is that a cliché? Perhaps it is, but it is also original enough to succeed.

We are now working on a new show based on a clown. It is hard to find a more classic theme in children's entertainment. But Flanders has never had its own clown – and so this idea is kind of innovative.

Does this mean that quality is more important than creativity?

"It means that you have to find the right balance between the two. We are working for a young target audience, and for them recognition is an all-important factor. In this sense, perhaps the Pixie Klus character reminds them in a positive way of the kid in their class with ADHD, or maybe they see Pixie Kwebbel as the older sister who is always chattering. The Samson figure is the younger brother who mispronounces and misunderstands everything. If you turn on the television and recognise yourself in a situation, then you are likely to carry on watching. This is even more the case for children."

Talent, craft and human nature

The importance of a good team is impossible to underestimate.

"Absolutely. Every project begins by finding the right common wave-length. Hugo

Claus wrote fantastic things, but could he have written a Plop storyline? Jan Declair is a top actor, but could he have played Pixie Plop? Perhaps he could, but would he have been proud to do so? To play this kind of character in a manner that is believable for children, you need to believe in it yourself. Peter Van de Velde (who plays Pirate Pete, another Studio 100 character) comes into the office and greets everyone he meets with "Ship Ahoy!". These are the kind of people you need."

Flanders' very own clown; that's also innovation

But how do you choose these people?

"You simply need to feel that they 'belong' here, which, of course, is highly subjective. A good CV, relevant experience and an understanding of the media sector are all plus-points, but it's also great if they used to belong to the scouts or some other youth movement.

There is certainly enough talent in Flanders, but sometimes it can still be hard to find the right people. A cartoonist who leaves Sint-Lukas is really only interested in drawing his own cartoons. We prefer to choose a thirty-year-old, who has already had a few other jobs. Someone who understands that drawing is a craft and who is happy to do his best to draw Plop in exactly the same way as the other cartoonists. Someone who is not necessarily interested in 'standing out', but wants to deliver quality, time after time. These are the people we are looking for."

So craftsmanship is more important than artistic inspiration?

"That is a whole different discussion. In my opinion, everything is a craft, even 'being artistic'. It is simply that some people dress up their craftsmanship with more mystery than others. If a singer needs to repeat the same hit a hundred times in a hundred different ways for the same public, that is a craft more than an art. It is all a question of how focused and how motivated you are. You will only achieve true quality if you are prepared to push your craftsmanship to the limit – no matter what your craft is."

Does a Studio 100 drawer ever get the chance to put forward his own ideas?

"It goes without saying that we are always open to new ideas, but it is equally

Market research will never result into innovative ideas.

The government should be supporting the sector as a whole, not encouraging the falsification of legitimate competition

obvious that in the first instance people are expected to do what we pay them for. But within an organisation you never reach a status quo. It is probably not the ambition of our receptionist to do the same thing for the next 20 years. You need to bear this in mind. And you must always be looking ahead, especially with creative people.

How difficult is that?

"You need to make sure that you don't get too big for your boots, that you don't try things that are beyond your limitations. This means that you need a good understanding of human nature, especially in an expanding company. You need to have an intelligent approach to your abilities, objectives and ambitions. You need to be clear about what you expect. These are things which only come with experience."

International breakthrough

Studio 100 is the only Flemish production company to have real success abroad.

"It is true that Flanders exports very little of its television production, but this does not mean that we in Flanders are not making quality. The problem is that we are not very good at selling ourselves. The Dutch are experts in this field: their TV formats are no better than ours, but they are much more internationally well-known."

Even so, Studio 100 is still managing to make an international name for itself.

"Yes, we are making good progress. Twice a year we take part in the major international television festival at Cannes. This costs bucketfuls of money, but this is the place where you need to be seen, if you want to be part of the international media landscape. All the world's major TV stations are there and they come with the express intention of buying programmes."

Do you buy things there?

"Last year we obtained an interesting German portfolio, including *Pippi Longstocking*, *Vicky the Viking* and *Maja the Bee*. At the moment, we are currently making a 3D-animated series of *Maya*, which has attracted considerable foreign interest. TV stations opt for recognisable images, because they are almost guaranteed success. In promotional terms, this is a bit like kicking in an open door, certainly if you remake the original with the necessary degree of respect. In retrospect, this portfolio is turning out to be more of a winner than we had anticipated. We need to deal with it creatively, but if we can link familiarity of subject to modern technology, then that can make all the difference in the international market place. It will certainly help to strengthen our ambitions to break through as international producers."

Were you taking a risk when you bought the portfolio?

"We had a feeling that there were some opportunities there, but you never know whether you can really make it work. An idea is important, but it needs to be technically feasible: this is a crucial factor. The first production of an animated series can easily cost 7 or 8 million euros. You try to convince as many outside investors as possible, so that you don't need to finance everything yourself. We deliberately bought something that everyone knows or recognises, and that makes a big difference."

Exploring new horizons

The musical *Daens* was Studio 100's first attempt to target an adult public.

"In recent years, we have built up a reserve of expertise that can be equally applied to children or adults. *Daens* gave us a first opportunity to focus our attention at an older public. Sometimes you want to explore new horizons."

Will there be a follow-up?

"We had plans for new musicals, until we heard that Music Hall is going to receive more than 2 million euros in subsidies from the government. If a direct competitor receives such an injection of cash, it can ruin the market. As a result, we are no longer interested. The government should be supporting the sector as a whole, not encouraging the falsification of legitimate competition. We are planning to take this matter to the Council of State. It is usually against our principles to resort to litigation,

but this was something which we just couldn't let pass by."

Certainly not in time of crisis...

"We need to make sure that talent is not lost. The government can help in this respect, by stimulating the sector. But this should not be at the cost of private investment. If the state intervenes, it needs to do so in a balanced manner, taking full account of both private and public initiatives."

A new challenge, every day

Do you find it easy to strike a personal balance between management and creative participation?

"Happily, yes – and it is also interesting to listen to the ideas of others. For the last two years I have been concentrating more on management. We now have a German office of Studio 100. As a result, I am currently learning German. There are 45 people working over there, with whom I am anxious to communicate. It also makes negotiations with the German TV stations that much easier. Keep moving forward: that's my motto."

Steven Schelfhout (Communication Team)
and Peter Spyns (Strategy and
Co-ordination Division)



Biography Hans Bourlon

Hans Bourlon (° 13 March 1962) is the driving force behind Studio 100, together with Gert Verhulst. The two learnt to know each other 20 years ago, when they both worked for the then BRT, on the programme *Speed op Sport*. This was the beginning of a close collaboration and an even closer friendship.

At that time, Hans Bourlon was primarily active behind the scenes, as an audience prompter, a writer of quiz questions and the producer of various programmes, including *Samson & Gert*. In 1996, together with Gert Verhulst and Danny Verbiest, he set up Studio 100, the production house behind *Samson & Gert*, *K3*, *Plop*, *Pirate Pete* and *Mega Mindy*. In addition to merchandising, its own publishing house and its own record label, as well as numerous films, theatre shows and TV programmes, the general public best knows Studio 100 through its theme parks in Belgium: Plopsaland (De Panne), Plopsa Indoor (Hasselt) and PlopsaCoo (Wallonia).

Hans Bourlon and Gert Verhulst are also the creators and writers of several popular family musicals, including *Snow White*, *Cinderella*, *Pinocchio*, *Robin Hood*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Three Pigs*. Having conquered Flanders, Wallonia and The Netherlands, they have now their sights set on the rest of the world. Their Bumba character is already on air in more than 30 countries around the globe, including India, Israel, Canada, Singapore and Spain. In Germany, they have launched *Wir 3*: a remake of *K3* with German singers.

Since the end of 2008, the British BBC has been broadcasting the brand-new puppet series *Big & Small*, a co-production between Studio 100, Kindle Entertainment, 3J's Entertainment & the BBC. Last year's takeover of the German EM Entertainment was another big step in the internationalisation of the company, making Studio 100 the owner of several famous TV classics, such as *Maja the Bee*, *Pippi Longstocking*, *Lassie* and *Black Beauty*.

After many years, the duo Hans Bourlon – Gert Verhulst are still the leading players in the company, setting both their business and creative stamp on all the many activities of Studio 100.

Creative Tampere:

programme for the development of creative economy



Flanders is not the only region which attaches importance to creative entrepreneurship. For this reason, Flanders DC took the initiative in 2004 to set up the Districts of Creativity network – known for short as the DC network. At present, 13 strong economic regions from 3 different continents are members of the network: Baden-Württemberg, Catalonia, Karnataka, Lombardy, Nord-Pas de Calais, Qingdao, Quebec, Rhône-Alpes, Scotland, Shanghai, Oklahoma, Tampere and Flanders⁸¹.

These regions exchange experiences and work together to encourage creativity. They do this in three ways. Firstly, they organise an annual Creativity World Forum. Here, entrepreneurs, policy makers and researchers from all around the world are given the opportunity to discuss ideas and find new sources of inspiration. Secondly, they take part in European projects aimed at the promotion of innovation, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial creativity. Thirdly, they also set up projects of their own, such as exchange programmes in the fields of innovation and creativity.

The cradle of paper, pulp and the mobile phone

Tampere⁸², one of the regions which makes up the Flanders DC network, is the third largest city in Finland. It is the most populous non-coastal city in all Scandinavia. About 3.5 million Finns live within a radius of 200 kilometres. During the 19th century, Tampere grew into one of the region's largest industrial centres, based largely on wood, paper and textiles. The spirit of innovation, knowledge exchange and growth was always present. In 1882,

► Tampere, Finland

the first electric light in Northern Europe was turned on at the Finlayson textile factory⁸³. Today, Tampere is better known as the birthplace of Nokia, the company which sells the greatest number of mobile phones worldwide. One of Nokia's most important R&D centres is still in Tampere. This, for example, is where the Nokia Communicator was invented in 1996: the world's first intelligent telephone.

Innovative business development

For many decades, Tampere has been nationally and internationally famed for its daring initiatives in the field of business development. A good example is the eTampere programme (2001-2005), which invested 130 million euros in the development of the knowledge society. In 2003, biotechnology formed the focus for a similar programme. In 2006, the same concept was applied to the creative economy.

These programmes reflect and support Tampere's ambition to become one of the world's leading centres of services, know-how and creativity by the year 2016. The basic aim is to secure sustainable prosperity for both the city and its businesses.

Today, the Creative Tampere Programme (2006-2012) is the largest regional programme for the development of creative economy in Finland. Its objective is to realise a total impact of 100 million euros on the local economy. Creative Tampere adopts a strong 'hands-on' approach. It is open to all the inhabitants of Tampere. The city plays the role of programme developer, which formulates concepts and translates them into objectives and a strategy. Although creative industries are often regarded as a part of the cultural sector, coordination of the programme is the responsibility of the Department of Economic Affairs: the goals of CTP are primarily economic.

Active in three themes

Most of the ideas for projects, as well as for their implementation and administration, come from the people who are most directly concerned: companies, research and educational institutions, associations and other organisations. The programme aims to promote close cooperation with other departments of the local city admini-

stration. Tampere devotes a sizeable annual budget for the initiation of projects: 7.2 million euros over a period of 6 years.

Creative Tampere is divided into 3 themes.

1. Creative industries

The development of creative industries is important for various reasons. Firstly, the cultural sector is an increasing source of economic growth. Moreover, the attractiveness (both physical and intellectual) of the surroundings is important for creative spirits, when choosing their place to live and work. The availability of local attractions and local events – which owe their existence to the creative economy – are also key considerations for tourists, when deciding their next holiday destination. The basic foundations for all these elements are present in Tampere: an old industrial architecture, millions of visitors, a wide range of events, technological know-how, large-scale public sector support for the cultural sector (when compared with other countries), etc. This can all help to lead to a new international success story and to even greater pulling power for Tampere.

The emphasis in the 'creative industries' theme is very clearly placed on the development of new companies, the promoting of business growth, the stimulation of new concepts, the encouragement of exports and greater internationalisation, and the creation of networks between creative industries and other sectors. Creative Tampere provides consulting, training, workshops, mentoring, new networks and participative projects. One important project was the development of a centre for creative industries, which offers work space, interesting events and relevant information at a single location: an old factory site.

2. Innovation and entrepreneurship

Everyone must be willing and able to innovate. Entrepreneurship is largely a matter of how you react to and deal with new ideas and new situations. One of the missions of Creative Tampere is to encourage companies and people to look and think ahead. It is important that companies seek new sources of inspiration. It is important that everyone – irrespective of age, sex or education – should be persuaded to see the value of innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship. Creative Tampere uses

structures which apply the basic principle of open innovation⁸⁴. These structures give the 'closed' R&D departments of the companies a greater openness with regard to accessible development projects⁸⁵, so that consumers of different ages and backgrounds can make a contribution to the innovation process.

3. The attractive city

The elements which make a city attractive are primarily to be found in the appearance of its buildings and the events which it organises. Creative Tampere promotes interesting, experimental, high-quality architecture and thoughtful urban planning, based on research, education and public debate. The 'attractive city' theme is closely linked to the 'creative industries' theme.

First results

During the first three years of the programme, more than 350 ideas were evaluated and 68 projects were started. At the end of 2008, some 500 local companies were involved in these programme projects and no fewer than 58 new companies had been founded. The volume of the various projects already exceeds 20 million euros...

*Translated and reworked by
Liesbet Schruers, Enterprise and
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⁸¹ Also see elsewhere in this edition: p. 19

⁸² <http://www.tampere.fi/english>

⁸³ <http://www.tampere.fi/industrialpast2010/heritage.html>

⁸⁴ EWI-Review 2 (2): 46-49

⁸⁵ An example of a project which applies these principles is the Demola project (www.demola.fi).



Video games: more than **MEETS** the **EYE**

Video games are 'in'. Since their first development – now more than 40 years ago – they have progressed from their nerdy sub-cultural origins to become a mainstream cultural product. Flanders is also involved in the modern-day development of video games, but a fully-fledged games industry does not yet exist. In consequence, government support is more than welcome, but can this be reconciled with the violent and aggressive reputation which video games have acquired?

Games are big business. The sector has developed into an industry in its own right, comparable with the film and music industries. The creation and production of a successful game can easily cost 30 to 50 million euros. In order to win back this colossal sum, it is necessary to sell at least half a million copies, which in turn necessitates a worldwide marketing and sales network. However, it would be wrong to conclude that Flanders might be better advised to give the games industry a wide berth. Flanders holds many of the required trump cards: high broadband penetration, high standards of education and – with its fine tradition of cartoon books – an impressive creative background. These factors in the region's collective unconsciousness can easily – and profitably – be applied to the new medium of video games.

Investment climate

The games industry is a continually growing market with many specific segments. Games development can attract investment to Flanders, can create new jobs and is perfectly compatible with the Bologna objectives, which seek to further promote the knowledge economy. Flanders has excellent levels of education and expertise (much of which is already leaving to work abroad), and there are already several promising companies. For example, the West Flanders company Larian⁸⁶ was responsible, in collaboration with the VRT, for the market success 'Ketnet Kick'⁸⁷, which has since been bought by the BBC.

But Flanders can still do more to develop a real games industry. The quality of

technical education and training can be further improved, in part through a relaxation of the region's language legislation, or by recognising a Master's degree in Games Development. The improvement of the investment climate – for example, by offering tax incentives – also opens up a number of interesting possibilities. Further benefits can also be obtained from the setting up of an incubator, which would channel expertise, advise starter companies, provide working space and equipment, and offer administrative, judicial (ownership rights) and technological support. Flemish policy is already moving actively in this direction. This spring the decision was taken to set up three incubation centres of this kind, in Genk, Kortrijk and Leuven.



The need for research

This means that there is a need for more (sociological) research into the phenomenon of game-playing in Flanders, so that the necessary data is available to shape policy and guide industry. The Institute for Society and Technology has already set a good example with its overview study⁸⁸ entitled 'They can't get enough of it! Young people and gaming'. This study concentrates on four challenging aspects of gaming in Flanders. Is there room in Flanders for a gaming industry, and what are the opportunities, possibilities and limitations? What are the effects of gaming – both positive and negative – in the short, medium and long term? What is the relationship between the playing of games and the so-called new social networks? And can games be used constructively in the learning process at school and beyond?

In the social debate the positive effects of games are seldom or never mentioned. Learning to think in problem-solving terms, stimulating creativity, learning to take decisions, improving knowledge of foreign languages, enhancing spatial and visual conceptualisation: these are all benefits which research has shown to be linked to game-playing. In other words, most games do have an educative value. For this reason, the IST research argues in favour of the selective and carefully-chosen use of video games in school. The full results of this study (and their related publication) can be viewed via the website www.samenlevingentechnologie.be.

*Lieve Vandamme,
Institute for Society and Technology*

Negative image

All this being said, the greatest stumbling block to the further development of a games industry in Flanders continues to be the negative image of the sector. Notwithstanding their now 'respectable age', their place in (youth) culture and their economic impact, video games and their makers are repeatedly confronted with an unbalanced and ambiguous perception of their business, in both public opinion and political discussion. In the political arena, proposals to stimulate the games industry are quickly submerged within the broader social debate about games and gaming in general.

Policy

Following the results and recommendations of the study 'Young people and gaming', in May 2008 the Flemish Parliament passed a resolution which was designed to break the taboos surrounding computer games. The proposers of this resolution wish to do all in their power to stimulate and develop the existing (but modest) games industry in Flanders. They are supported in this objective by the Federal Parliament, which has drawn up a draft bill to create a tax shelter for audio-visual games in Belgium, along similar lines to France.

The Flemish resolution also foresees the setting up of a Centre for Media Knowledge, such as already exists in The Netherlands and the United Kingdom, where teachers and parents can become more familiar with the world of video gaming. The centre will share premises with the Flemish Media Regulator (VRM) and can also carry out research into the effects of new media applications. A Master's course in Games Development at universities and university colleges should encourage students to think more closely about a career in the games industry. There is also an increasing attention to games within teacher training programmes, so that teachers are no longer reluctant to use games as valid educational tools in the classroom. The creation of the Centre for Media Knowledge and the recognition of a Master's degree in Games Development are both including in the agreed policy programme of the new Flemish Government.

In May 2009, the former Minister for Economy, Patricia Ceysens, gave the go-ahead for the foundation of three 'gaming incubators' in Genk, Kortrijk and Leuven, with the specific purpose of providing support to starter companies in the games sector in Flanders. In January 2009, the IWT (Institute for Innovation by Science and Technology) launched its **Innovative Media Programme**⁸⁹. This programme seeks to help the sector by gathering relevant information relating to technical possibilities, social and cultural developments, and successful media applications within a global context. It will also assist companies with the practical implementation of this knowledge and the internationalisation of its exploitation. This will give Flemish media companies a better insight into the manner in which their innovative concepts can best be translated into internationally marketable business models.

⁸⁶ <http://www.larian.com/company.php>

⁸⁷ http://www.vrt.be/vrt_master/over/vrt_overvrt_innovatie_ontwikkeling_knk/index.shtml en <http://www.ketnet.be/ketnetkick>

⁸⁸ This research was carried out by the Expertise Centre for Societal Security (KATHO-Ipsoc, Kortrijk), the Digital Arts and Entertainment Research Unit (HOWEST-PIH Kortrijk) and the Culture and Education Research Group (UGhent).

⁸⁹ Also see EWI Review 7.

Twittering toddlers win 'IBBT INCA Award'

The University of Hasselt recently won the prestigious INCA Award⁹⁰, conferred by the Inter-disciplinary Institute for BroadBand Technology (IBBT⁹¹). This open competition allows developers to present their ideas for technological solutions which solve a social problem in an innovative manner.

The University of Hasselt team consisted of the IT Master's students Bart Swennen and Gert Vos, working with researcher Johannes Taelman of the Expertise Centre for Digital Media. This innovative trio won the prize for *Twoddler*: Twitter for toddlers. Twitter⁹² is a popular social network site, which anyone can use to place short messages on the web about

what they are currently doing. Twoddler is a playful social application for toddlers; young children between the age of 12 and 36 months.

To develop their project, the team combined two concepts which are currently regarded as the IT technologies of the future: *physical computing and the internet of things*. The first concept relates to the use of everyday 'physical' objects to communicate with a computer system. The second concept points in the direction of an internet which links not only servers and computers, but also a large number of physical objects.

From communicating kids to IT Masters

How does Twoddler work? The team fitted out a play board (see Figure 5) with all different kinds of sensors which observe and 'record' the activities of the child-users. For example, toddler Karelkje presses on the horn button attached to the photograph of his mum. When he does this, a new message will appear on his mother's Twitter page: "Hi Mum, I'm having great time!" Mum can read the message on her smart-phone. She can even send a 'reply', by choosing a piece of music or nursery rhyme which the play board will automatically play for Karelkje. It goes without saying that Twoddler is not

Innovative video competition

The winners of the first European Entrepreneurship Video Award were recently announced. With this new initiative, the European Commission hopes to promote greater innovation and creativity. The idea behind the competition? Like all great filmmakers, successful entrepreneurs need to think 'out of the box'.

The European Entrepreneurship Video Award attempted to build a unique bridge between the business world and the world of film. Film students, employer's organisations, entrepreneurs and creative companies were able to submit a film – one to three minutes long – with a creative vision on the process and practice of entrepreneurship. The films were assessed in three different categories: The Entrepreneurial Spirit, Innovative Entrepreneurship and Responsible Entrepreneurship.

Broad support for enterprising SMEs

The European Commission initiated this competition within the framework of two other related events: the European Year of Creativity and Innovation⁹³ and the first European SME Week⁹⁴ (6 to 14 May). This campaign aimed to inform entrepreneurs about the support which is available to them at European, national and local levels. The SMEs received a wide range of information, advice, guidance and ideas, which can help them to further develop their activities. In this manner, the Commission

hoped to stimulate existing entrepreneurs to use their potential to the full and to encourage potential entrepreneurs to 'take the plunge'.

The winners of the Video Award were announced on 6 May, during the opening ceremony for the European SME Week. The three winners in each category each went home with prizes of 3,000, 2,000 and 1,000 euros respectively. They also had the added bonus of considerable media attention for themselves – and their companies.

KNOOP: new wine in old bottles

On Thursday 30 April 2009, 160 members of staff of the Flemish government took part in the opening day of KNOOP, which was held in the innovative surroundings of Technopolis. KNOOP stands for *Krachtige Nieuwe Oplossingen voor Oude Problemen* (Dynamic New Solutions for Old Problems) and is an initiative of AgO, the Agency for Flemish government Personnel. Its aim is to contribute towards a more efficient, client-oriented Flemish administration.

KNOOP aims to encourage government staff to undertake personal initiatives and to put forward new ideas which will help to improve general efficiency and user-friendliness. The project is targeted first and foremost at personnel in administrative and support functions, and at management assistants.

Various sessions

The opening day was kicked off with a group session under the title *Talent in Action*. The participants explored manners in which they could further develop their talents and competencies, and how they could make these talents and competencies more 'visible' in their everyday work environment. Afterwards, they followed a

'watch-and-do' pathway through Technopolis. Each participant chose an experiment which had some kind of link with their own job, with the aim of using creativity and common sense to find the right solution. To round things off, everyone was divided back into groups, under the supervision of KNOOP monitor, to examine an 'Old Problem', with the intention of finding a 'Dynamic New Solution'. Amongst the old problems discussed were: keeping matters up-to-date, finding suitable locations for themed activities, and making badges. The solutions were noted on a fiche. Later in the evening, line managers took part in a session entitled *Solution-based thinking and working*, under the watchful eye of specialist Louis Cauffman (www.louiscauffman.com).

intended as a form of explicit communication, but it does give parents a greater feeling of closeness with their offspring.

Twoddler was developed as one of the 15 projects set up by Hasselt University within the framework of a Master course on pervasive and mobile computing lectured by professor Kris Luyten and Dr. Peter Quax. Students learn to combine hardware and software in an intelligent (and ingenious) manner. The emphasis is placed on the practical development of innovative, portable and 'pervasive' applications.

Twoddler was chosen as the best of the 35 entries received by the IBBT. The Flemish Minister for Economy, Enterprise, Science, Innovation and Foreign Trade presented

the first prize of 5,000 euros during the iMinds event at the IBBT.

*Johannes Taelman,
Expertise Centre for Digital Media –
University of Hasselt*



The verdict of the INCA 09 jury

"A sound, well-developed idea, with great potential. It allows children or others who are unable to express themselves verbally to communicate through a clever combination of hardware and software. It is this potential that we wish to reward."

90 The INCA Award seeks to be a stimulus for the development of new IT applications with a clear social dimension. Participants are given just one month to transform their theoretical idea into workable practice – <http://www.inca-award.be/>

91 Also see elsewhere in this edition: p. 30

92 www.twitter.com

► Figure 4: Baby Kareltye busy twoddling

twitter

Flemish contributionst

Two creative Flemings also accepted the challenge to make a film. One of them was Laura D'Halleweyn. She submitted a documentary commissioned by the MAS | Heritage Unit Antwerp.

Her work poses questions about immigration, integration and cultural heritage. As Flemings, we pass judgement about whether or not 'our' immigrants are properly integrated. But do Flemings take the trouble to integrate themselves properly when they go to live abroad? And is it easy to integrate yourself as a European in a new host country? We are introduced to two entrepreneurs: Fat-boy, a Chinese cook in Flanders; and Philippe, a Belgian cook in Hong Kong. The documentary shows how both cooks have been able to integrate successfully into the social-cultural environment of their new homes. But they still need to be creative and innovative within their professional environment, in order to survive.

For more information about Laura D'Halleweyn's documentary, please mail to kroepoekfilms@gmail.com or visit www.vimeo.com/3944148.

93 Also see elsewhere in this edition: p. 20

94 http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/entrepreneurship/sme-week/index_nl.htm



A fruitful day

Looking back, it is clear that the opening day gave the participants plenty of food for thought. In particular, the difference between talents and competencies was made more apparent. Competencies can be learnt; talents need to be developed.. In one sense, it is easier to develop talents, because they are yours and because they are already there. Managers should be aware of the need to offer all their staff the opportunity to develop their work-related talents.

*Gerda Serbruyns,
Agency for Flemish government Personnel*

And you?

Finding solutions for problems is one thing, but it is even more important to actually do something about it. Participants, session monitors and organisations who would like help with an 'Old Problem' can always turn to the AgO for help and guidance.

On www.agoweb.be you can find information about the follow-up to the KNOOP opening day. A number of new KNOOP projects have already been started (see 'lopende projecten'). For more details, please contact Hilde Robbeets at hilde.robbeets@bz.vlaanderen.be.



“Creativity does not exist!”



Deviant thinking

Creativity does not exist. There you have it: the unadulterated truth. Hidden away at the back of the magazine, in a column that might as well not even be here. Unless you are that kind of person. The kind of person who skips the 'quality' articles and immediately turns to the back page, where he (or she – although women are less inclined to do this sort of thing) seeks out the opinions of the author who wasn't good enough to write a proper article. Not that this really matters. After all, you are only human. But if my opinions can bring light into your darkness and make life that little bit easier for you, who am I to deny you my words of wisdom? Even so, this does nothing to alter the fact that creativity does not exist.

At least, not in the conceptual role that you probably attribute to creativity. Being creative is, above all, an excuse for justifying your mistakes and for doing things that you really shouldn't do in the first place. In this respect, I am the inventor – or so I like to think – of creative parking. Have you ever driven onto a car park where a car is parked in the most impossible place, so impossible that it is almost arrogant (not to mention illegal)? That could be my car. Not because it's so much fun to park that way, but because there's simply no other option. Usually, all the good spots are already taken in by the Smarts, which are only half the size of the painted parking spaces, and the 4x4's (the ideal city car), which are twice

as large. Admit it: you are starting to feel some sympathy for me, aren't you? Well, that is the moment when you should really start to 'colour outside the lines' or 'think out of the box'. Be creative and make your own parking space! A badly parked car is not so much an offence, as it is the sign of a creative spirit who is trying to solve a problem in an innovative manner. This is something that we, in the Flemish government, understand all too well.

Did you know that the Flemish government regards creativity as a full competence? And that you can be assessed on this competence if you include it in your personal competence profile? In accordance with the relevant (and no doubt carefully worded) definition, you are creative "if you devise original and new ideas, or propose solutions, or elaborate angles of approach which deviate from standard patterns of thinking". Try and explain all this in the workplace and you will probably be met with blank (and possibly even deviant) stares, but this is something that you will simply have to accept. Do not let this lack of interest deter you. On the contrary, regard it as a stimulus!

To allow you to master this competence, there are even training courses in creativity. But this is the crux of the matter, isn't it? Can something like creativity – in so far as it exists – actually be learnt? Is it not slightly ambiguous

(to say the least) that you should seek to be 'original' by learning and copying the ways of thinking and the techniques of others? Is creativity a skill, or is it a gift or talent? Some things can be learnt, others cannot. To my way of thinking, a creative spirit falls into the latter (and much rarer) category. It is something which you have in you (or not), a passion, an urge, an overwhelming feeling which makes you wake up in the middle of the night. People sometimes have a problem to channel all this restless energy in the right direction, to do something 'useful' with it. In this case, a creativity course might help. Perhaps this is just the opportunity you need to blossom open and to give your creative ideas (no matter how contradictory it might sound) the structure they really need.

But how do you know if you are creative or not? Well, if you still need to ask that question, the answer is probably negative. Not that there's anything wrong with that. Just don't believe everything that you are told. Not even by me.

*Steven Schelfhout,
Communication Team*





Combining Economy, Science and Innovation for a better society

N°8

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CREATIVITY? STARTING FROM SCRATCH!

Flemish government

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