BBC, Queen Mary University of London and I Like Music

'Genius on Steroids': Metadata enabling easy music discovery and recommendation wherever you are in the world

About the Project

I Like Music innovate in music and technology. They provide a service to the BBC (and other broadcasters), whereby any BBC TV or radio station can source music by searching through I Like Music's digital music library. This service is called the 'BBC Desktop Jukebox.'

PhD students from Queen Mary University approached I Like Music, keen to create and validate a technology they were researching. To do this they needed a huge high audio quality digital music library, consisting of uncompressed .wav files. Files in this library are about four times bigger than than in an ordinary iTunes library, which makes for much greater detail in the profiling of each track.

When the call by the TSB to examine metadata in music came, Queen Mary was interested in innovating in this area and asked I Like Music to be their commercial partner. I Like Music in turn approached the BBC – thus giving the project access to skills in project management, as well as the 8,500 users of BBC Desktop Jukebox, to test, validate and make suggestions as the research developed.

The team aim to create a music recommendation platform whose working title is 'Genius on Steroids': a product and technology that can be licensed around the world. The goal of the project is simply to enable a variety of users (both business and consumer) to easily find new music they like.

> ## "It takes something like the TSB to help collaborations that in normal circumstances wouldn't happen."

Andy Hill, CEO
I Like Music

Beginning with a 'seed track', the software analyses the audio file in great detail, giving many suitable recommendations for similar music.

With I Like Music focused on the commercial aspects and the BBC as part of the collaboration, value will be added when it comes to promoting the technology to other prospective clients - initially other broadcasters and producers across the world.

Benefits of Funding

"The funding gave us the resources to do it. It enabled the right team and skills to come together, to innovate, research, develop and build a highly refined music recommendation platform," says Andy Hill. "I Like Music, the BBC and Queen Mary University are three very different entities and the TSB initiative has enabled these different entities to collaborate, innovate and create something new."

Results

A selection of the BBC Desktop Jukebox users are now testing the prototype and the first round of results are in. UK Trade & Investment have offered the consortium a space on the British stand at CABSAT, a trade platform for the broadcast, digital and satellite sectors in Dubai, in March 2013. This provides the perfect opportunity to demonsrate to every global broadcaster the new service and IP created in collaboration with the leading world broadcaster, the BBC.

The team hopes this will springboard the prototype to market and to licence the technology and/or digital library to broadcasters and production companies who want more choice when adding tracks to TV shows and adverts. Perhaps even iTunes will be interested in a licence when taking the IP to the personal radio market. Four or five other spin off propositions also have potential and can be explored and exploited commercially, with additional funding.

Fast Facts

Sectors: Music, Software

Funding Source: Technology Strategy Board 'Metadata Production Tools' Mainstream

Total Project Value: £250,000

Duration: Autumn 2011 - spring/summer 2013

Market Impact: Projected turnover is £300,000 in the first year

Creative Industries KTN input: I Like Music is a CIKTN member, benefitting from the KTN's promotion of funding calls and networking opportunities.