

Creative Industries KTN Case Study

Portal Entertainment

Cross-platform production company develops research arm and international profile

About the Company

Portal Entertainment is a content production company which makes 'immersive entertainment': stories in which the audience participates. Their first production will be a week-long Hitchcockian suspense thriller coming out on the iPad in 2012 that blends film, web, email and mobile. The company only launched in November 2010, but through a pro-active approach by Managing Director Julian McCrea, is already making huge strides in business development.

ICASE Award

In April 2011, CIKTN was contacted by Keith Bound, a would-be PhD student searching for companies with which he could collaborate or secure funding on his interactive cinema project. CIKTN presented Keith with a list of possible companies, amongst which was Portal Entertainment.

Five months later, Portal Entertainment and Birmingham City University were recipients of one of six ICASE studentship awards administered by the CIKTN, in a newly formed business/academic partnership. Keith's work will be key to the company's development of a metadata production platform to tell immersive stories.

Developing Internationally

But McCrea is also keen to develop the business in other directions. In September 2011, Portal Entertainment was one of ten UK companies that attended the 'Connecting Digital Start Ups' event in Berlin, a CIKTN event in partnership with UKTI, SIN and Berlin Brandenburg Medianet. McCrea was impressed by the matchmaking opportunities, stating that 'in running a start-up you CAN think globally, IF you have the networks in place'.

The event obviously provided a great starting-point for developing Portal Entertainment's international networks: working relationships have been established with Media Deals, the Berlin-base European Angel Investor Network for the creative industries, as well as Egmont and Pembridge Partners in the UK.



Still from 'The Craftsman', shortlisted by BAFTA and RSA films.

"If Creative Industries KTN had not informed me about Portal Entertainment, I would not be in this exciting position."

Keith Bound, ICASE PhD student

Results

Portal Entertainment has continued to impress those in the industry, winning first prize at the London Startup Weekend in September 2011 and receiving approximately £15,000 worth of design, branding and mentoring to develop and grow the business.

The ICASE award will directly help in developing a patented technical platform that allows the company to measure the audience's level of response to their stories, and change the narrative accordingly. The pre-market valuation of the platform is over £1 million, with a post market valuation in 2015 of over £12 million.



Fast Facts

Sector: Film and Video

Funding Source: EPSRC ICASE Award

Total Project Value: £92,161

Duration: October 2011 – April 2015

Market Impact: Pre-market value of patented technical platform over £1m, post-market valuation of over £12m

Creative Industries KTN input:

CIKTN introduced a PhD student to Portal Entertainment, administered the awarding of an ICASE studentship, and invited the company to attend a networking event in Berlin.