Creative Industries KTN Case Study

Portal Entertainment

User-centric audience experiences reach new heights - and depths - with ‘immersive entertainment’

About the Project

The growing success of content production company Portal Entertainment is encapsulated by the support of the Technology Strategy Board for Portal’s latest project, which will allow content creators to create a new form of personalised entertainment for their audiences.

By measuring levels of stimulus and response in the facial expressions of any given audience, the software then personalises the content offered, providing content extras or even changing the story itself, by using metadata.

The new industry of ‘immersive entertainment’ opened up by Portal Entertainment was recognised by the TSB because of its groundbreaking nature. Giving producers a chance to signpost to extra content and even secure micro-payments, audiences are taken on a journey specific to their emotional responses and interests.

The technology works by capturing bio and facial responses through the camera function on certain devices such as PCs and iPads. A few key cinematic genres are being worked on at first, but this technology looks set to expand across the board.

Fast Facts

**Sector:** Film and Video
**Funding Source:** Technology Strategy Board ‘Convergence in a Digital Landscape’ Challenge 2: Cross-platform Content
**Total Project Value:** £75,000
**Duration:** Autumn 2012 - summer 2013
**Market Impact:** Forecast £1m in year 1, £3m in year 2 and £8m in year 3

**Creative Industries KTN input:** CIKTN administered the awarding of an ICASE studentship, and invited the company to attend networking events in Berlin, Amsterdam and London.

A stage of ‘requirements gathering’ has been undertaken with discussions at the BBC and Channel 4, as well as Europe-wide across the industry. Backend development is progressing through to spring 2013. One of the technical challenges to overcome is how to measure a viewer’s response to, for example, a character or thread of a story. Once finalised, this will swiftly be followed by front-end development.

**Benefits of Funding**

Funding has enabled the immersive entertainment prototype ‘Thrill Me’ to be made specific to the thriller/horror and mystery suspense genre. By using facial expressions, the discovery process establishes what the viewer wants to watch based on who is in the room and level of previous thrills captured. Users can select whether they want a high or low thrill and suitable recommendations will be made.

**Results**

Once launched, this opt-in service will give audiences an appetite for a more enriched, personalised entertainment experience on online devices. When the more traditional content audience realises the benefits – and as the hardware improves - this may later translate to Immersive entertainment will give content creators a personalised platform to launch additional content around their programmes and exploit new revenue streams. And the audience will experience a more immersive entertainment journey, leading to new heights and depths in viewer enjoyment.

“The funding has hugely helped the company start up. Through awards, trade missions and support, the Creative Industries KTN and the funding from the TSB has ensured that we, as a business, can innovate in this area.”

Julian McCrea, MD, Portal Entertainment

http://creativeindustriesktn.org