

Technology Strategy Board

Driving Innovation



# Accessing and Commercialising Content in a Digitally Networked World

**MARCH 2009 COMPETITION FOR FUNDING**



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### Summary

The Technology Strategy Board is to invest an indicative £5m in a programme to help digital content creators and rights holders realise and maximise the commercial return potential from their intellectual property (IP).

### Introduction

The creative industry contributes a Gross Value Added (GVA) of 7.3% to the UK economy, with the content industries – computer games, TV and video, film, music, publishing, advertising and new media (all sectors in which the UK performs strongly on a world stage) – accounting for three quarters of the value. This investment by the Technology Strategy Board will support growth within the UK content industries and help develop the market pull to promote exploitation of the underlying digital technologies.

### Background

We are living in an increasingly digitally networked age where the traditional distinctions between broadcast, Internet and telecoms are breaking down. We have the potential to access digital content through a range of devices and across several different platforms. However, user-centric access on a context relevant, anytime, anyplace, any platform, any device basis is still a little way off. There are a number of challenges relating to the technology, infrastructure and value chain configuration, and a requirement for new business models to ensure that UK content businesses continue to maintain a world leading position.

Enabling content creators and owners to earn a return for their endeavours is critical to the ongoing economic success of the sector and was identified in the Creative Britain strategy document, published by DCMS, BERR and DIUS in February 2008. Increasing Internet bandwidth and digitisation, as well as opening up new opportunities, has facilitated peer-to-peer file sharing and commercial piracy on an unprecedented scale. Historically, rights holders have tended to deploy digital rights management systems to control access to their IP, but increasingly we are seeing businesses respond by developing compelling, value added or premium services around their content, as means to generating income.

Content is also being democratised with consumers becoming producers, contributing significantly to the volume of information now available through the Web. Not only can this make it more difficult to find the content you want quickly and easily, but users wishing to consume or repurpose existing content legitimately can face a number of barriers ranging from identifying and contacting the rights holders to availability of convenient, easy to use transaction systems.

Overlaying this increasingly converged digital distribution system are the technology interface and business model integration challenges. In broadcast TV, individual channels have used a licence fee, subscription, pay-to-view and/or advertising revenue model; on the Internet advertising supported content has dominated, whilst in telecoms a tariff based approach, directly linked to use of the service has traditionally been used.

### Scope

This competition is looking for proposals to develop applications that can be deployed across the digital content sector to extend market opportunities and promote the commercial exploitation of IP for content creators and rights holders. These could include innovative projects addressing all or any of the following for professionally produced or user-generated content and mash up services:

- Development of new business models, business processes, consumer experiences and approaches to deriving commercial benefit from IP.
- Applications that make it easier for rights holders to efficiently and effectively collect revenue from their content/services.
- Solutions to broaden the market access of digital content services; this could include the development of new platforms designed to deliver scale to small businesses, or solutions to support multiplatform distribution of content based services.
- Applications to help provide intelligent access to context relevant content, e.g. driven by individual consumer behaviours, habits, preferences or device selection.
- Development of intuitive tools and applications to increase participation and extend democratisation of the Web for generating and interacting with content and networks.
- Applications or tools to support the emergence of new value chains.

Proposals that seek to apply well established solutions from other industries to the digital content sector will be considered alongside the truly novel.



## Target Sectors

The Technology Strategy Board is concerned with innovative solutions to develop underlying capability that can be exploited widely within the UK digital content sector, i.e. applications or tools that have the potential to be applied across many businesses. This competition is likely to be particularly relevant to businesses and practitioners in the following sectors:

- Advertising
- Computer games
- Content creators
- Digital content distribution
- Digital/new media
- Film and video
- ICT and comms technology suppliers
- Music
- Rights holders
- Publishing
- TV and radio.

## Funding Allocation and Project Details

£5m has been provisionally allocated to this programme and is open to all UK based companies and research organisations. All applicants will need to:

- explain what is innovative about their proposed solution;
- identify the potential market applications;
- quantify the global market potential or impact for the specific solution proposed;
- prove that there is a requirement for R&D in the area and explain what benefit the Technology Strategy Board investment will bring; and
- demonstrate, where appropriate, an understanding of the prevailing standards development and legislative landscape and identify how the solution fits within it.

The project deliverable should be a prototype, proof of principle, demonstrator or similar rooted in a specific content based service or application exemplar. Consortia comprised entirely of technology developers, suppliers or infrastructure companies, *without a substantial role for a digital content company are unlikely to succeed*. Proposals to develop market-facing applications or business models will be expected to demonstrate that they have considered their solution from a user/consumer benefit perspective and with reference to current trends.

Proposals solely concerned with promoting knowledge exchange, communicating best practice or developing generic tools that do not address the specific challenges faced by digital content sector are not within the scope. All proposals should explain how the project team intends to exploit the deliverables. Consortia comprised of organisations that can accelerate the route to market will be at a distinct advantage.

There will be two levels of application:

- 1. Projects greater than £100k in total project value** – that typically take between 12 and 36 months to complete, with the outcome entering the supply chain within two to five years of completion.
- 2. Fast Track project below £100k in total project value** – these must be led by a creative industry SME or micro company and are expected to take a year to complete.

(NB: any consortia considering submitting a proposal in excess of £2m should speak to the Technology Strategy Board at the earliest opportunity.)

Projects can range from focused Basic Research, aimed at establishing technical feasibility, through to Applied Research, and to Experimental Development projects. It is anticipated that most of the funding will be allocated to proposals in the Applied R&D (attracting 50% public

funding) or Experimental Development (25% public funding) categories. Projects involving industry oriented Basic Research (75% public funding) will also be considered but a robust case must be made to support the requested level of funding. All Fast Track projects will attract 50% public funding. Definitions of the above categories of research can be found in the Guidance for Applicants – see Competitions at [www.innovateuk.org](http://www.innovateuk.org).

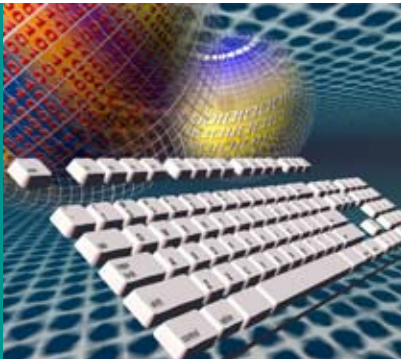
The Technology Strategy Board will require all projects to provide a non-commercially confidential summary, at the start and the conclusion of the project, for dissemination.

If you have any queries about the technical scope of the competition or the application process, please contact the competitions helpline on 01355 272155 or email [competitions@tsb.gov.uk](mailto:competitions@tsb.gov.uk).

## Application Process

The process for this competition is in line with Technology Strategy Board policy which seeks to give opportunity for applicants to make an initial optional Expression of Interest (EOI) prior to their compulsory application. The optional EOI will be looked at by officials and a response given to applicants within three working days. Applicants may take advantage of this up to one week prior to the compulsory EOI deadline. The key dates for this Competition are the 16th March 2009 when the competition opens and the 23rd April 2009 when the compulsory EOI must be submitted.

The Guidance for Applicants explains the process in detail. In short, applicants need to submit their Expression of Interest by 23rd April 2009 and this will be reviewed and feedback given on 11th May 2009. During the period 16th March to 15th April applicants will be able to submit their outlines and receive initial comment on an optional and no commitment basis. Following the independent panel review, the Technology Strategy Board will then



invite successful applicants to the full stage. For these applicants, in the week beginning 11th May 2009, there will be the opportunity to discuss the feedback with Technology Strategy Board officials by telephone; details can be found via the Competitions link at [www.innovateuk.org](http://www.innovateuk.org).

There will be an Information Day in Bristol on 5th November 2008. This will be aimed at applicants for all Technology Strategy Board collaborative R&D Competitions. There will be an optional briefing day specifically for this competition in London

on 1st April 2009. These briefings are optional although potential applicants are strongly advised to attend one of the events if possible.

Applicants invited to submit a full proposal will need to send one representative of their consortium to the compulsory briefing on 20th May 2009. They will also need to register their intention to apply by 18th June 2009 and submit their full application by 25th June 2009. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their applications by 24th July 2009.

## More Information

For more information about this and other competitions and details of how to register and apply, please see Competitions at [www.innovateuk.org](http://www.innovateuk.org).

**Helpline:**  
**01355 272155**

**Email:**  
[competitions@tsb.gov.uk](mailto:competitions@tsb.gov.uk)

## Key Dates

Information day	<b>22nd October 2008 &amp; 5th November</b>
Competition opens	<b>16th March 2009</b>
Optional Briefing Day	<b>1st April 2009</b>
Expressions of Interest deadline	<b>23rd April 2009</b>
Feedback provided by	<b>11th May 2009</b>
Feedback discussion in week beginning	<b>11th May 2009</b>
Applicants briefing (compulsory)	<b>20th May 2009</b>
Registration of intent to submit (compulsory)	<b>18th June 2009</b>
Deadline for receipt of full applications	<b>25th June 2009</b>
Decision and feedback to applicants	<b>24th July 2009</b>

*The Technology Strategy Board is a business-led executive non-departmental public body, established by the Government. Its role is to promote and support research into, and development and exploitation of, technology and innovation for the benefit of UK business, in order to increase economic growth and improve quality of life.*

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