

Edinburgh Innovation Lab

Festivals

Festivals Edinburgh, the strategic umbrella organisation that represents and works on behalf of Edinburgh's twelve major festivals, has been awarded £300,000 from Creative Scotland's National Lottery Fund to set up the Edinburgh Festivals Innovation Lab, a two year initiative to lead the digital development of Edinburgh's Festivals.

The Edinburgh Festivals Innovation Lab, believed to be the first of its kind in the UK, will enable Festivals to work with leading thinkers, technologists, artists, audiences and digital communities to develop and prototype ideas that improve and inspire the audience experience. It will tackle themes such as helping festival go-ers make the most of their experiences, new ways of distributing festival content and making the festivals greener.

Everything from special developer tech events and webtools that transparently "crowdsource" ideas from the public, to a brand-new "geek-in-residence" position working across the Edinburgh Festivals, will be developed. The Lab will also support improvements to core infrastructure, enable the digital distribution of content and support the exploration of digital programming.

The Edinburgh Festivals Innovation Lab will run alongside Creative Scotland's Amb:IT:ion Scotland programme, which currently supports Scottish arts organisations to build their digital capacity and enhance their effectiveness using new technologies. In line with the aims of Amb:IT:ion Scotland, the Innovation Lab will provide organisational capacity, resources and access to expertise, to take advantage of opportunities in digital innovation, technology and culture in order to provide public benefit.

The Innovation Lab is a natural development for the Edinburgh Festivals, who in the past twelve months have supported, delivered or piloted a number of digital projects including: the Festivals' first iPhone application; the creation of the Festivals' first official online TV channel edinburghfestivals.tv; "Festbuzz"* and the crowd-sourcing via Twitter of the Fringe 2010 programme artwork.

Andrew Dixon, Chief Executive, Creative Scotland said:

"The Edinburgh Festivals already reach a live and TV audience in the millions. Creative Scotland's investment will enable the festivals to interact with a global audience and to engage with the public through online digital programming."

Faith Liddell, Director of Festivals Edinburgh said:

"Collaboration and innovation are at the heart of our plans to sustain and boost the ongoing success and development of Edinburgh's Festivals. Over the next two years, our world-renowned Festivals will be a stage and a showcase, a playground and a platform for a number of innovative pilot projects and initiatives. And through our developer events programme, crowdsourcing initiatives and geek-in-residence programme, the way we invite, select and deliver the projects will be an innovation in itself too. We are delighted that Creative Scotland has chosen to invest in our ambition, as we focus on digital technology and innovative practice to maintain our global competitive edge."