

Creative Scotland announce Funding for hyperlocal media



Creative Scotland and Nesta are today calling for ideas that could contribute to the development of a hyperlocal media sector. (We find this news very exciting indeed!)

The call is part of a major new £1million programme – led by Nesta and the Technology Strategy Board – called ‘*Destination Local*’. The programme will identify the technologies, business models, content opportunities and challenges for a successful hyperlocal media sector in the UK.

Today, Nesta has opened a call for applications for projects seeking seed funding of up to £50,000 to test the next generation of hyperlocal media services. Successful ideas from Scotland will be match-funded by Creative Scotland. Applications open today and further information and criteria can be found at www.nesta.org.uk/destination_local

Here at The Edinburgh Reporter we have tried applying for various sources of funding before, but this is probably the most significant announcement of any offer of help so far. We may need your help, so tell your friends now and enter your email details on the subscribe form on the right hand side of the page for a daily update on our stories. This will assist us in any application we make.

Jon Kingsbury, Programme Director, at Nesta, says: “The increasing adoption of new, mobile-based technologies offers exciting possibilities to deliver highly localised information services to niche audiences. ‘*Destination Local*’ will prototype the next generation of hyperlocal services in a bid

to understand whether these new technologies and platforms can deliver sustainable, scalable models that serve local communities and deliver economic benefit.'

Caroline Parkinson, Director of Creative Development, Creative Scotland, says: 'Destination Local is an exciting opportunity for individual voices to bring their communities to life. Partnering NESTA on this programme offers the potential to harness new technologies and help us invest in places and strengthen their contribution to a creative Scotland.'

Along with today's call for applications, Nesta is publishing a landscape review of the sector. '*Here and Now: UK Hyperlocal Media Today*' is the first comprehensive review of the emerging sector, examining key characteristics, ingredients for success, challenges and emerging trends.

The report highlights the considerable value already offered by hyperlocal media services such as community websites, blogs and Facebook sites to communities around the UK, providing news and information at a more grassroots level than most traditional media. These services help to define local identity, fill gaps in existing content provision, hold authority to account and broaden the range of media available to audiences. And as technologies and platforms – such as smartphones, tablets, Audioboo, YouTube, WordPress and Facebook – make it easier to create and consume hyperlocal content, its use and popularity is increasing.

The report also identifies a number of structural challenges faced by the sector, including funding, sustainability and visibility. Over the last few years, the UK has seen many launches of online media services that attempt to deliver hyperlocal content. Yet traditional media providers have found it hard to adjust their high-cost models to sufficiently local

granularity, and hyperlocal bloggers have found it difficult to develop a critical mass of audience and to develop sustainable business models.

'Destination Local' will begin to address these challenges in a systematic way that begins to measure the potential impact of the sector and puts the UK at the forefront of research into this sector.

To download *'Here and Now: UK Hyperlocal Media Today'* and to apply to the programme, please visit www.nesta.org.uk.

In addition, to further inform potential applicants in Scotland about this programme, Nesta and Creative Scotland have organised an event to take place on the afternoon of 11 April. For further information and to register, please go to <http://hyperlocalscotland.eventbrite.com/>

The Nesta programme call will work in partnership with a broad range of expert partners including the Community Organisers Programme, Innovation Intelligence group, Mozilla, Skillset, STV, Talk About Local, The Media Trust, Timeout and The University of Central Lancashire (uclan). Nesta co-funding partners also include the Welsh Government and Creative England.