

# Open Doors

Programming  
Civil Society  
Media in the  
Netherlands  
An exemplary guide

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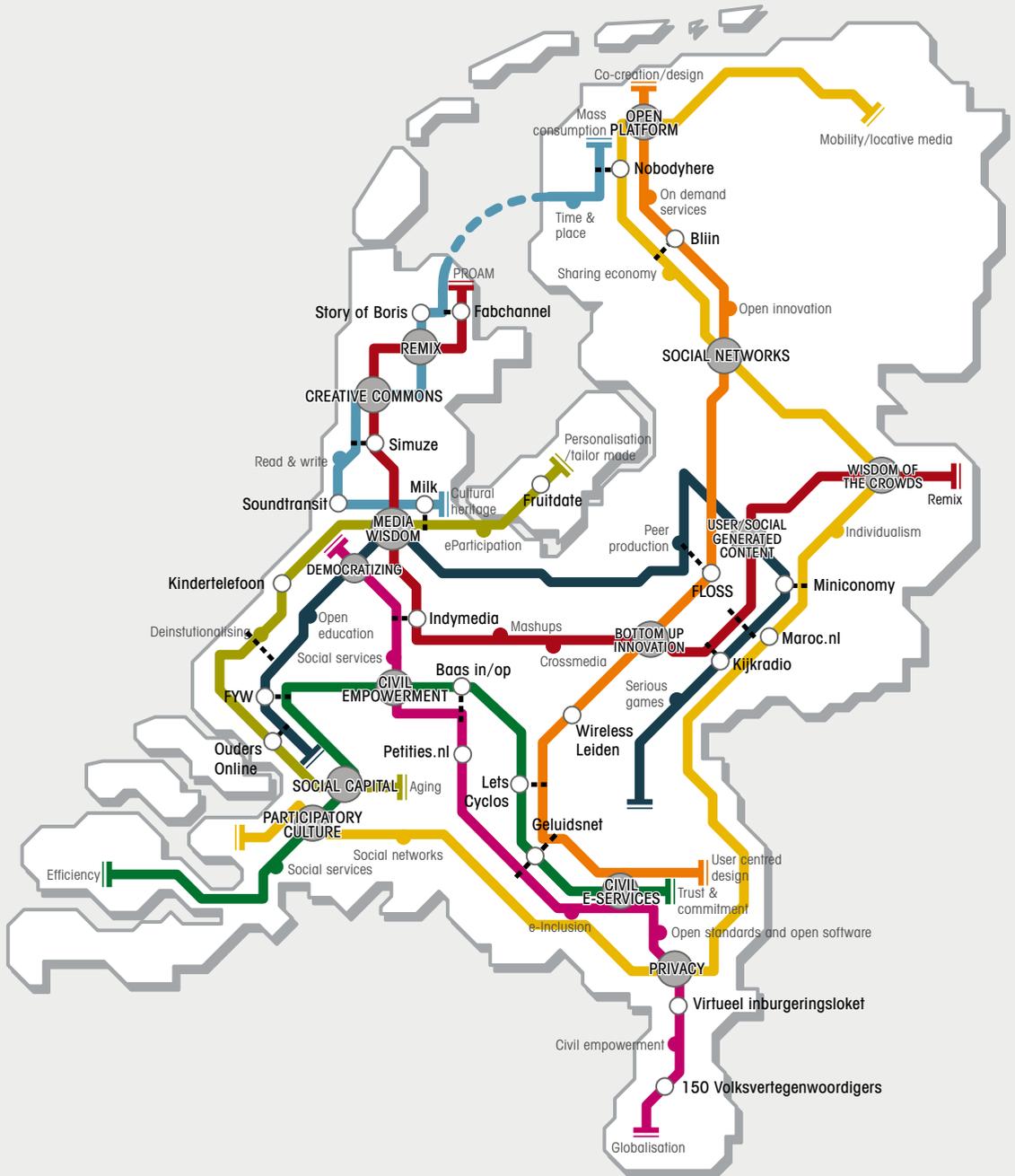
Syb Groeneveld

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# Open Doors

## Programming Civil Society Media in the Netherlands

An exemplary guide

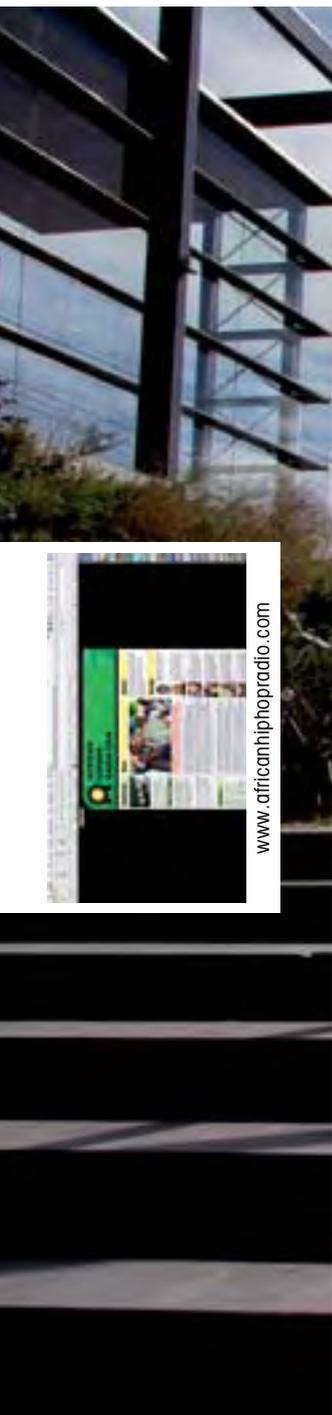
Syb Groeneveld

This booklet is part of the 'Open doors' publication. It includes screendumps and url-references to most supported projects of the Digital Pioneer Fund. Together, the projects are exemplary for the Civil Society Media sector in the Netherlands. See [www.digitalepioniers.nl](http://www.digitalepioniers.nl) for more info.



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[www.dhmoon.org](http://www.dhmoon.org)

# Preface

Young people chatting with the children's help-line to discuss their problems; a group of architects designing serious games to involve citizens in urban planning; people contributing to a public discussion on Schiphol airport by putting antennas on their roofs to collect data on noise-pollution, and empowered groupings initiating petitions on the Internet.

These are just a few of the projects that started with the support of the Digital Pioneer Fund. In this book, 'Open Doors' many of them are described. Together they are an inspiring collection of creative and dedicated citizens.

In 2002, when the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science decided to finance the fund it started as a temporary and experimental programme. We had no idea what kind of people and how many projects would ask for support. Since the first 'Call for projects' it was apparent that the programme fulfilled a need. The number of applications, as well as the diversity of subjects and the quality of the plans, was rewarding. The low-threshold procedure of the fund and the continuing commitment of KnowledgeLand, which executed the project, certainly contributed to its success.

KnowledgeLand has always striven to connect Digital Pioneer projects to social themes such as 'Living together', 'Sustainability', 'Freedom of speech' and 'Social networks'. In the years after the start, many projects have realised innovative solutions for relevant and tangible issues in civil society. Although the total number of projects covers many different domains in society, the core of the Digital Pioneer programme adheres to the principles of media policy in the Netherlands: to stimulate opinion formation; to give access to information and to strengthen public debate.

Digital Pioneer projects have successfully contributed to the diversity and quality of public services on the Internet. Personally, I find the manifestation of so much creativity, social entrepreneurship and innovative solutions within the projects at least as important.



Judith van Kranendonk  
Director-General Culture and Media  
Ministry of Education, Culture & Science



www.baasopzuid.nl



# Introduction

**This book builds on the Digital Pioneers fund that gives financial and organisational support to civil society initiatives on the Internet. Since December 2002 the fund has supported 136 projects out of 938 applications in the Netherlands. The booklet included in the middle of this publication provides screendumps and url-references to most of them**

Digital Pioneer projects confirm the establishment of a strong public domain on the Internet in which the use of information coincides with the co-creation of content. The sum of the projects illustrates how today's society produces media, re-organises itself and how bottom-up initiatives on Internet render new civil e-services.

The title of the book, *Open Doors*, refers to the Dutch expression 'Open deuren' which has different meanings. They are the *modus operandi* in this book:

1 'Open doors' refers to hospitality; a welcome environment where everybody can walk in and is approached with an open mind. These open doors can be found in many Internet initiatives. Today electronic media are deeply rooted in our daily lives. Digitalization and the global, ubiquitous Internet bring about fundamental structural transformations. Internet is, as Thomas Friedman would say, flattening society<sup>1</sup>. The first part of this book will analyse how civil society enters and opens the media landscape of commercial and public service media.

2 'To open doors' means to create possibilities for others through inspirational and disruptive actions that can really change things. The impact of information and communication technologies in social and political participation has gained much attention. However its impact on empowerment in everyday life is still short of proven practice. Therefore the second part describes more than twenty civil society media projects that are supported by the Digital Pioneer Fund and influence many different segments of society. On the first pages of this book these projects are plotted on an imaginary railroad map of the Netherlands. The projects are linked on the map with parts of civil society and major new media trends.

<sup>1</sup> Friedman Thomas, *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2005). In the book, Friedman explains how the flattening of the world happened at the dawn of the twenty-first century; what it means to countries, companies, communities, and individuals; and how governments and societies can, and must, adapt.





3 To give people an 'open door' means you invite them to take advantage of the knowledge you provide. In his landmark book 'The Long Tail', Chris Anderson reveals the secret to creating a thriving long tail business in today's media industry in two imperatives<sup>2</sup>:

- Make everything available;
- Help me find it.

This is, as Anderson's says, easier said than done<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, in the third part of this book all details of how the Digital Pioneer Fund are made available: how it is financed, operated, organised and what the project results are.

This book finishes with a vision of what is needed to further nurture the development of a strong, independent and pluriform media landscape that acknowledges the role of small-scale civil society initiatives.

Read this book as a practical and inspirational guide. It is meant for anyone interested in understanding how social innovation, peer production and grass root projects work in an open online environment.

You are invited to copy and re-use ideas or extract policy out of all this!

<sup>2</sup> Anderson, Chris, *The Long Tail: Why the future of business is selling less of more*, p.217 (New York: Hyperion, 2006). Anderson's 'Long Tail' relates to how businesses with distribution power can sell a greater volume of otherwise hard to find items at small volumes than of popular items at large volumes.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that Anderson writes that it is primarily due to the impossibility of clearing the rights of most produced material that makes it difficult to make everything available.







[www.bloemcoirszunderd.nl](http://www.bloemcoirszunderd.nl)



The way media function directly affects the quality of society. In today's information society, we negotiate our beliefs in the various media that we share. People spend large amounts of time on Internet, buying their stuff, listening to music, posting their opinion (anonymously) on forums and uploading their photos, videos or stories. But on a different scale people also organise themselves on the Net. This raises the question of whether redesigning of the media environment leads to the redesigning of society. This chapter discusses some of the phenomena that are associated with this new evolving media landscape and links it to the way society is (re-)organising itself.

### 1.1 Dutch media policy

The starting point of media policy in the Netherlands is freedom of expression and the important role media<sup>4</sup> have in a democratic society. The media shape public agendas and citizens' information about, and views on, issues. As a consequence, independence, reliability, pluriformity, accessibility, quality and transparency are the main principles guiding media policy. Dutch media is rooted in a great diversity of leading international publishers and the Dutch broadcasting establishment with a great variety of public and commercial broadcasters and television producers.

#### Civil society media

An important goal of the Dutch media policy is the stimulation of civil society. In the Netherlands the term civil society is closely connected with the typical Dutch social-cooperative democracy and strongly organized private initiative<sup>5</sup>. It encompasses the non-state and non-business sector and is formed by non-governmental and non-profit-making initiatives.

The Netherlands has tens of thousands small-scale organisations in civil society with very specific objectives related to their own interests or environment. Most of them take the shape of a 'Stichting' a legal entity governed by a board. Typical civil society organisations include cultural and environmental groups, intermediary organisations for the voluntary and non-profit sector, non-governmental organisations, non-profit organisations, policy institutions, private voluntary organisations and religious organisations. These range from neighbourhood associations to labour unions and from eco-activists to consumer lobbies<sup>6</sup>.

4 In 'Open doors' media is defined as the various means of mass communication thought of as a whole, including television, radio, magazines, Internet and newspapers, together with the people involved in their production.

5 Frissen, Valerie e.a., *De schaduwdemocratie. ICT en maatschappelijke participatie*, p.26 (Den Haag, BZK, 2001).

6 Hinze, Arne, in *Reclaiming the Media*, p.244 (Intellect Books, 2007).



www.boekenlijn.nl



Many are not formally organised and simply start a community to defend interests on, for example, endangered species, sound pollution around airports or to start a group to petition for car-free-Sundays. Over the last decennium, more and more of these organisations have appeared on the Internet and formed a pluriform online media environment.

### Co-production

This plurality alone, of course, does not automatically guarantee a larger freedom of speech. Careful regulation can foster and cultivate these values. The view of 'regulated pluralism' considers that in order to stimulate media and media content that is neither part of the state nor dependent on the market, it is necessary to regulate market processes in such a way that diversity and pluralism are not undermined by the concentration of economic and symbolic power<sup>7</sup>. In a traditional sense this would mean regulation to limit mergers, take-overs and cross ownership. Today's reality of the media landscape shows that the formation of public opinion increasingly takes place on Internet across national boundaries. A transnational public sphere has emerged as a forum for discussion, opinion making and (co)-creation. Hence, every day new online broadcasting channels emerge. There is no real financial or technical threshold as investments are low, software and bandwidth freely available and content produced by individuals. Therefore media policy should be altered to include regulatory mechanisms that take into account the specifics of Internet media.

### Social innovation & peer production

Nowadays, most attention is given to the contribution of commercial and public service media to the general objectives of media policy. Distribution and access remain of great importance for the realisation of an effective and efficient media policy. The users of media are central when it comes to accessibility, in the sense of the pricing of media, the actual availability of it, and in the sense of competencies of citizens to perceive media critically.

However, what has not been brought into policy measures is the impact of social innovation on the Internet for media policy. Social innovation refers to new strategies, concepts, ideas and organisations that meet social needs of all kinds, from working conditions and education to community development and health and the strengthening of civil society. Peer production is one of the most significant manifestations of social innovation on the Internet.

It refers to the new economic model described by Yochai Benkler in which the creative energy of large numbers of people is coordinated

<sup>7</sup> Thompson, John B. *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media*, (Cambridge: Polity Press 1995).





(usually with the aid of the Internet) into large, meaningful projects, mostly without traditional hierarchical organisation or financial compensation<sup>8</sup>. Jimbo Wales, founder of Wikipedia emphasises the importance of this mode of production: *"the software and the technique of Wikipedia existed six years before we started the project. Hence, it was freely available under an open source software license. But, the millions of articles that people since then have contributed to Wikipedia are the real innovation."*<sup>9</sup>

Wikipedia is an example of how peer production leads to professional content. In *We Think*<sup>10</sup>, Charles Leadbeater writes about what is necessary for such a community project to prevail. *"The project must be regarded as exciting, intriguing and challenging by a critical mass of engaged users with the know-how needed to contribute to it. It must be very easy for disaggregated contributions to be made. Tools should be widely distributed, experimentation cheap and feedback very fast. That enables a constant process of trialling, testing and refinement. The product should benefit from extensive peer review, to correct errors and verify good ideas. Contributors should get a tangible sense of satisfaction from their involvement. No one should have to wait for a long time to find out whether their idea has been approved."*

Wikipedia is a service that aggregates individual thinking power. It is entirely based on individual contributions. This peer production is based on mass volunteerism. The tools to contribute and to produce media are available to most people. Everyone can become a producer and the difference between an amateur production and a professional media product is decreasing.

Peer production is the starting point of many communities and new services on the Internet and it leads to products which are available to anyone.

Social innovation on the Internet also leads to new kinds of products which are not necessarily peer produced. The new community MyFootballclub.co.uk shows how people can organise and manage themselves. In less than three months, more than 50.000 people joined this initiative and they will together own a club, vote on the team selection, decide on what players to buy and sell and make the general policy of the club. The group gathered a little more than 2 million euros.

8 Benkler, Yochai, *The Wealth of Networks*. (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2006).

9 Jimbo Wales at the Holland Open Software Conference, 31 May 2005, [www.hosc.nl](http://www.hosc.nl)

10 Leadbeater, Charles, *We Think*, why mass creativity is the next big thing, p.20 (Full draft: the book has not been published yet. On a public wiki everybody can contribute. <http://www.wethinkthebook.net/book/download-and-print.aspx>).

Many people in this group participate because they do not agree with the commercialisation of sports and want to take matters into their own hands. Others do it for fun or simply see it as a business opportunity. It exemplifies the trend of the virtual world merging with the real world and vice versa.

Eric von Hippel, writer of 'Democratizing Innovation', argues that the proliferation of these kinds of user-generated designs signals the democratizing of innovation. Armed with inexpensive digital tools and networks, ordinary people, he says, can band together to push their own innovations. They also can hijack existing technologies, taking them in directions only dimly envisioned by the original creators<sup>11</sup>.

This way of working within a community is common practice in many of the open source software development communities, collaborative editing projects or cross media co-design productions. Co-producing content, products, or services is not a geeky or nerdy thing anymore. In developed countries with easy access to broadband Internet connections, most young people use 'Flickr.com' to upload their photos, 'YouTube.com' to share hilarious videos they shot on holiday and 'Hyvves.nl' to find and follow friends. Media has become an important part of their environment. For them there is no difference between old and new media. The Net generation expect innovative services to meet their needs. If innovation isn't tailored to them, they want to be able to tailor it to themselves. This is a big change.

Those who do not participate in social networks on the Internet often have no idea of what it means to be part of it. They do not have the skills and the insight to use the infrastructure Internet provides. In other words, they are not *media wise*.

### Media wise

Those who are not media wise run the risk of becoming socially excluded with the growing role of Internet in the organisation of daily life. In order to function adequately in contemporary society, citizens need to have the knowledge, the skills and the mentality to move freely and meaningfully in our new 'mediatised' everyday surroundings<sup>12</sup>. In its report *Media Wisdom*, the Dutch Council for Culture suggests that all citizens, institutions and governments need to be media wise. This applies not just to parents and educators, but also to people and institutions in the health system, local and national governments, housing associations and of course media and other

<sup>11</sup> Von Hippel, Eric, *Democratizing Innovation*, (Cambridge, MIT press, 2005). See also the article by Pascal Zachary in NY Times. [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com) search for Democratizing Innovation + Pascal Zachary

<sup>12</sup> Report 'Mediawijsheid', Raad voor Cultuur (2005).





cultural institutions. Civil society is transforming under the influence of new media and the Dutch government wants citizens to be more self-reliant, using new media to organise their lives and their needs.

The Council also states that this government objective will only work if the government actively supports initiatives helping people to become media wise. Otherwise chances are that the digital divide – separating those who are capable of using Internet in multiple and empowering ways from those who use it only in a very limited manner - will become even wider. The Council therefore suggests that emphasis should be put on the responsibility of public media to make exemplary content and to share their knowledge and network with institutions that make up the new 'social midfield' – the intermediaries between citizens/people and the main social institutions.

### 1.2 Empowerment and Social Capital

It is exactly this new social midfield that, according to Robert Putnam, is vital for democracy. He argues that these organisations build social capital, trust and shared values, which are transferred into the political sphere and help to hold society together, facilitating an understanding of the interconnectedness of society and interests within it<sup>13</sup>. According to Putnam social capital refers to the collective value of all social networks (family, friends, neighbours, colleagues etc.) and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other. Trust, shared identity, language, common beliefs, reputation and norms of reciprocity can underpin the ties in these social networks.

Research also suggests a positive impact between social capital and the enhancement of economic productivity, community development, social reform and social inclusion<sup>14</sup>. Therefore it is interesting to study how significant and powerful the aggregation of individual knowledge really is and how the rapid development of Internet based social networks like 'Hyvves.nl', 'del.ic.ious.com', 'dig.com', 'flickr.com' and 'YouTube.com' contribute to the level of social capital. However, as stated earlier, individuals need to be media wise to participate in these networks and to be part of what Yochai Benkler calls the networked information economy.

In his persuasive book, 'The wealth of networks'<sup>15</sup>, he states that the networked economy improves the practical capacities of individuals along three dimensions:

<sup>13</sup> See Putnam, Robert, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions In Modern Italy*, (Princeton 1993) and *Bowling Alone* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

<sup>14</sup> Zinnbauer, *What can social capital and ICT do for inclusion?*  
<http://ipts.jrc.cec.eu.int/publications/pub.cfm?id=1466>

<sup>15</sup> Benkler, Yochai, *The Wealth of Networks*, p.8  
 (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2006).

1. It improves their capacity to do more for and by themselves;
2. It enhances their capacity to do more in loose commonality with others, without being constrained to organize their relationship through a price system or in traditional hierarchical models of social and economic organisation; and
3. It improves the capacity of individuals to do more in formal organisations that operate outside the market sphere.

So, we have a rapidly growing group of people in civil society that is using online social networks to build its social capital. It has the capacity to start new projects, new organisations or online participatory communities to improve the practiced experience of democracy, justice and development and a critical culture.

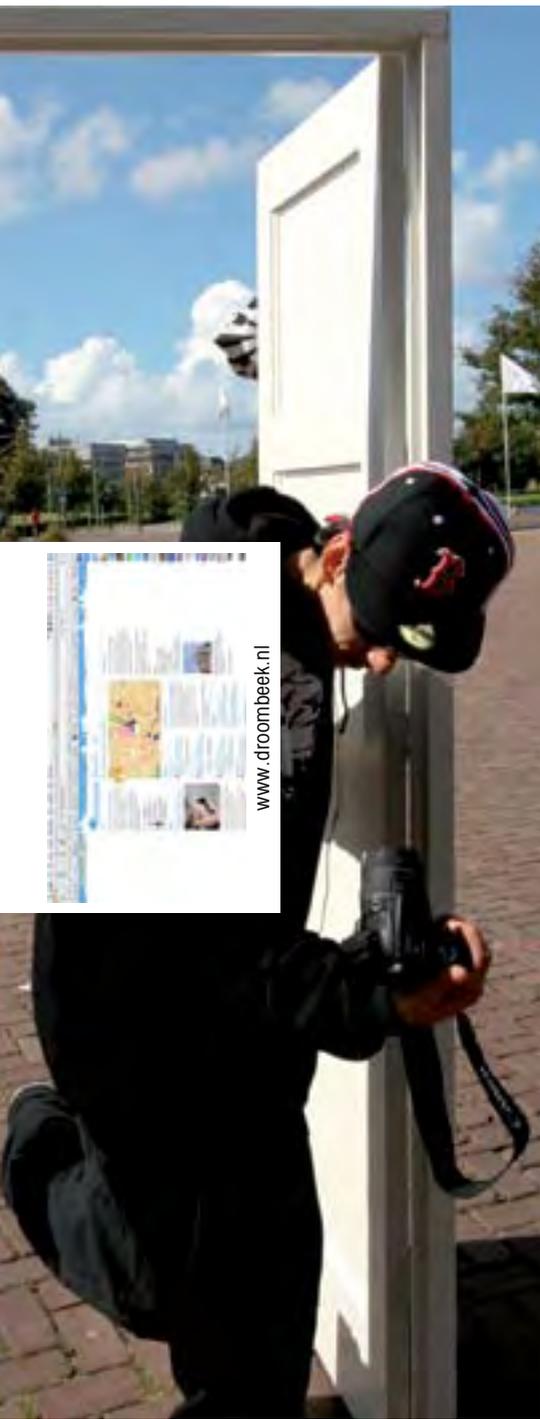
This is a major shift from where media was in 1939 when the international relations theorist Edward Carr wrote: *"The issue is no longer whether men shall be politically free to express their opinions, but whether freedom of opinion has, for larger masses of people, any meaning but subjection to the influence of innumerable forms of propaganda directed by vested interests of one kind or another.(...) The nationalisation of opinion has proceeded everywhere pari passu with the nationalisation of industry."*<sup>16</sup> Carr probably never envisioned an open media environment as we know it today on the Net.

The emerging trend of how media wise citizens empower themselves in social networks means a diminishing state influence on civil society and mass opinion. There is no clear state power over access to information or opinion formation in the Western world. This challenges the media policy of governments.

If people are capable of finding information they trust on open and pluriform platforms, forming their opinion via different channels, co-producing content of often high quality and distributing this in an accessible manner to a large audience, then some of the earlier mentioned building blocks of media policy in the Netherlands can be accomplished by civil society itself. Of course, as stated earlier, not everyone is media wise but there is a clear transformation of how people deal with their own media environment. This asks for revision of how government conceives media policy. It should not exclusively focus on the producing capacities of radio, television newspapers and other mass media and entertainment industries but should also take into account the productive power of civil society media, not only in a social, but also in an economic sense. This subject is explored in the next section.

<sup>16</sup> Carr, Edward, *The Twenty Years Crisis*, p. 135 (The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1939).





### 1.3 The democratic paradigm of intellectual property

Traditional business models rely on strong enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), tight contractual agreements between those who produce and those who distribute, hierarchical organisational forms, top down management, closed production and innovation cycles, to mention a few characteristics. How we deal with IPR has major consequences for how society functions.

If we regard users merely as consumers of copyright protected information and content, the creativity and investment made by the copyright holders should be recognised and rewarded. *"The purpose of intellectual property law (such as copyright and patents) should be, now as it was in the past, to ensure both the sharing of knowledge and the rewarding of innovation."*<sup>17</sup> So creative industries such as TV producers, newspapers and broadcasters should, to a certain extent, be protected to prevent the unauthorised economic use of their material.

However, if we regard users as producers as well as consumers of information, then intellectual property law does not meet the needs of the current Net generation. If people re-use or remix content, then in most cases they commit copyright infringement. Enforcement of copyright law has become enforcement of economic rights of the author rather than enforcement of creative and social rights of the user. This is what Netanel calls the democratic paradigm: *"The democratic paradigm requires that copyright protection be sufficiently strong to ensure support for copyright's production and structural functions. But at the same time, it would accord authors a limited proprietary entitlement, designed to make room for-and, indeed, to encourage-many transformative and educative uses of existing works."*<sup>18</sup>

Recently we have seen a wave of initiatives, in many cases from creative individuals, who challenge traditional IPR and who provide alternatives to meet the needs of this democratic paradigm.

#### Open content

One way to encompass this deadlock in IPR is to publish work under a Creative Commons licence<sup>19</sup>. Creative Commons (CC) is an initiative to stimulate the distribution and use of copyright protected literature, photography, music, film and scientific work

<sup>17</sup> An International Commission of experts published the Adelphi Charter in October 2005 outlining some principles of how to deal with innovation, creativity and intellectual property. [http://www.sitoc.biz/adelphicharter/adelphi\\_charter\\_document.asp.htm](http://www.sitoc.biz/adelphicharter/adelphi_charter_document.asp.htm)

<sup>18</sup> Netanel, Neil Weinstock, Copyright and a Democratic Civil Society, p.106 (Yale Law Journal 283, 1996).

<sup>19</sup> See [www.CreativeCommons.org](http://www.CreativeCommons.org) for the various licenses available.

as much as possible, via the Internet, without violating copyright. Creative Commons provides free tools that let authors mark their creative work with the freedoms they want it to carry. You can use CC to change your copyright terms from 'All Rights Reserved' to 'Some Rights Reserved'.

This enables the producer of the content to decide for himself what rights are awarded to it. He might, for example, give up his exclusive right to distribute his work, while maintaining the right to exclusively profit from the work. Or content can explicitly be made available for the public domain<sup>20</sup>. This trend to share your content freely is coined 'open content'. It overlaps with a clear movement towards adopting and implementing collaborative models of production of culture, information and knowledge. This happens not only in the free and open source software movement. We see similar projects popping up in the educational and health sectors and in the music and art industries. Recent statistics of CC headquarters indicate that worldwide more than 130 million works (ranging from artistic photos, learning material to complete high definition movies) are licensed under CC<sup>21</sup>. Otherwise, these works would have been copyright protected, limiting the possibilities of distribution and legal-re-use.

This open content revolution contributes to the trans-national public media sphere and there, apart from national government, the European Union plays an important role.

In December 2004<sup>22</sup>, the EU Council of Telecom Ministers adopted a resolution that acknowledged the:

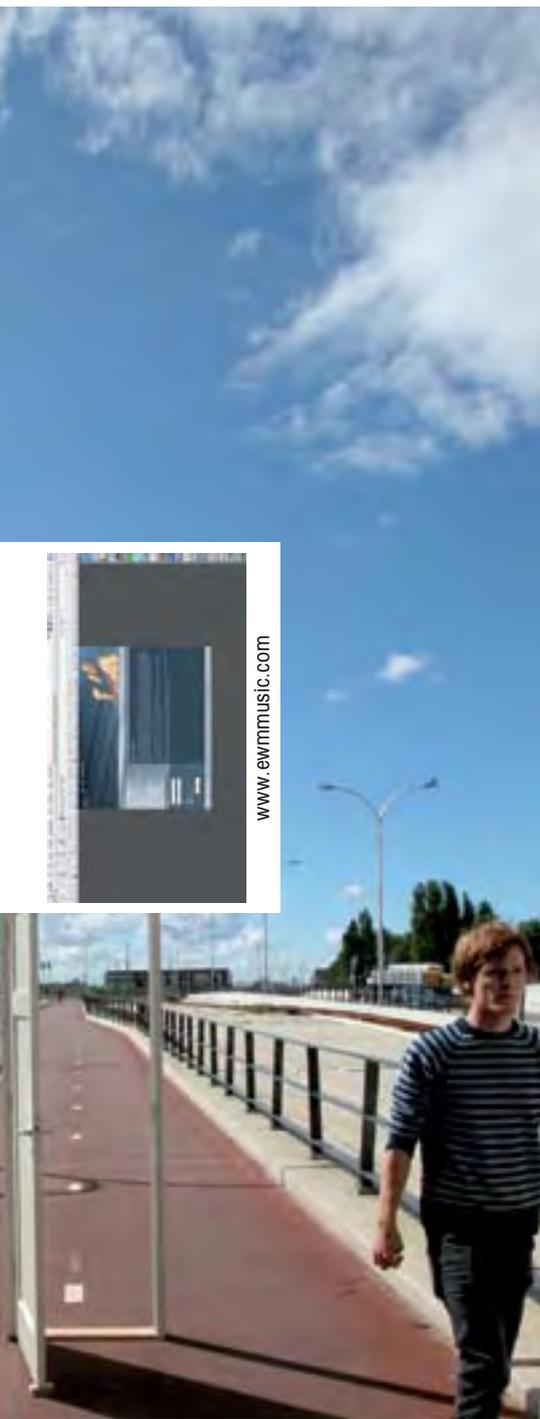
- Importance of ICT as a tool to stimulate social and geographic cohesion as well as citizenship in an inclusive Europe;
- Considerable potential for future growth of the ICT sector and the audiovisual industries;
- The need to promote a supportive environment which stimulates the free movement of knowledge and innovation where research results are translated into value-added applications and products;

<sup>20</sup> In this book the public domain on Internet is defined as follows: The public domain comprises the body of knowledge and innovation (especially creative works such as writing, art, music, video and inventions) in relation to which no person or other legal entity can establish or maintain proprietary interests within a particular legal jurisdiction. This body of information and creativity is considered to be part of a common cultural and intellectual heritage, which, in general, anyone may use or exploit, whether for commercial or non-commercial purposes. This definition is extracted from Wikipedia.

<sup>21</sup> See for some (critical) observations of CC licenses <http://www.freesoftwaremagazine.com/node/2116>

<sup>22</sup> Resolution by the European Union Council of Telecom Ministers: 'Looking into the future of ICT', (9 December 2004).





- The relevance to promote the development and distribution of rich and creative content;
- The relevance to remove, where appropriate, barriers for the availability of content.

The resolution was an important step towards a more holistic approach for ICT, intellectual property and media policy. For a society that wishes to stimulate creativity and innovation, as laid down in the European Lisbon strategy back in 2000, the increase of available content for sharing, re-use, remix and distribution of content is a condition sine qua non.

Three years later, the European Commission's Communication '2010 Digital Libraries' and the Commission Recommendation on 'the digitization and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation' have again highlighted the importance of (public domain) material as a basic content resource and as a potential driver for new content creation and for traffic on the Internet<sup>23</sup>. The real economic and cultural value of open content and its potential for new services and civil society initiatives has to be assessed.

**1.4 The sharing economy of Civil Society Media**

As more authors choose not to enforce (parts of) their copyrights but to release their work under open content licenses, the value chain of IPR changes. Others can build upon their work and the message is open access to code, text and data. More and more authors produce for the benefit of society and not for their own profit.

This transformation coincides with the countervailing power of the 'commodification of information': factual data, personal data, genetic information and theoretical ideas have all acquired independent economic value in the current information age. Consequently, they have become the object of property rights, thus making the information a tradable commodity<sup>24</sup>.

A balance between these two extremes has been sought over the past few years, not by regulation but by the continuous developments in the networked information economy. Today, more than 75% of all data on the Internet is distributed via file-sharing peer-to-peer (P2P) networks. It allows the handling of huge

23 [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/digital\\_libraries/doc/communication/en\\_comm\\_digital\\_libraries.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/digital_libraries/doc/communication/en_comm_digital_libraries.pdf) and [http://ec.europa.eu/information\\_society/activities/digital\\_libraries/doc/recommendation/recommendation/en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/digital_libraries/doc/recommendation/recommendation/en.pdf)

24 Hugenholtz, Bert and Lucie Guibault, *The Future of the Public Domain*, p.2 (Kluwer Law International, 2006)

amounts of data in a distributed and self-organizing way. In such a system, all peers are equal and all of the functionality is shared among all peers so that there is no single point of failure and the load is evenly balanced across a large number of peers<sup>25</sup>.

The rise of the P2P-networks corresponds with the increase of peer production which ensures that a work is made available both for sharing, remixing and reusing as well as for collaborative working processes. Together with the extended participation of all segments of civil society via broadband connections on the Internet, new forms of media productions, journalism, science and public services are emerging. They are user and society centric rather than government or manufacturing-centric. This leads to a sharing economy within civil society media.

### Civil society media

The concept of Civil Society Media (CSM) encompasses media organisations, groups and projects which fit into the basic non-state-non-commercial model and share structural and thematic tendencies of civil society, as described earlier in this chapter. Generally, it comprises all 'third sector' media and therefore excludes the two biggest sectors, namely commercial and public service media<sup>26</sup>. The concept of CSM is used throughout this book as it is the framework for many peer production initiatives in society that implement new innovative services.

The meaning of 'public services' has fundamentally changed over the past decade. The hybrid character of Internet has shifted some of the 'public services for all' to services that are specific for a particular group. In contrast to the traditional public services which are provided by government, these civil e-services are, in general, offered by CSM initiatives. The services are not market or profit driven, but are intended to have value for a specific community of users.

The next chapter presents an inspiring collection of projects which are built on many of the described trends. They illustrate, rather than define, the start of a 'sharing economy'.

<sup>25</sup> For further info on peer-to-peer systems see: <http://www.mpi-sb.mpg.de/departments/d5/software/minerva/index.html>

<sup>26</sup> Arne Hinze, *Civil Society Media at the WSIS: a new actor in global communication governance?* p. 244 in *Reclaiming the Media* (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2007).



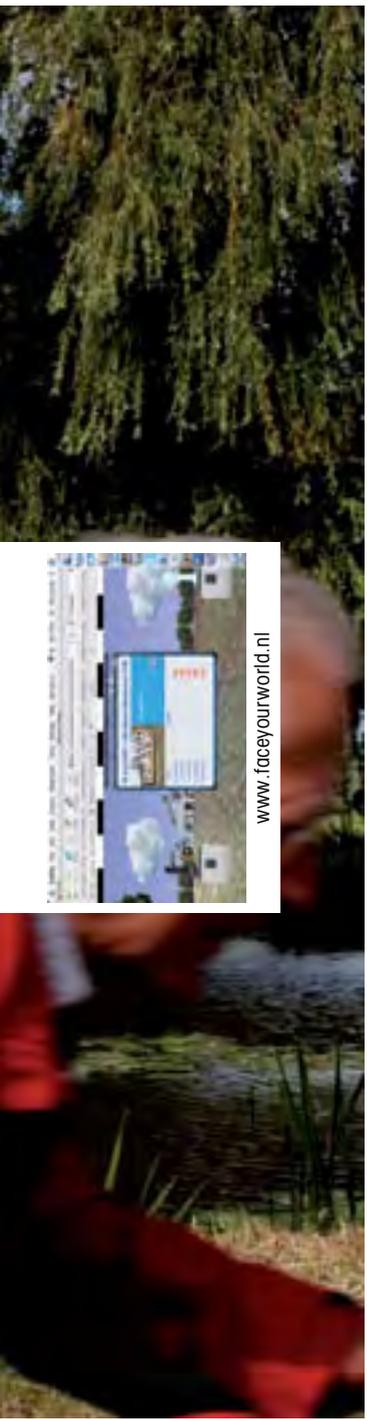


[www.yellowfellow.com](http://www.yellowfellow.com)



# 2 A trend blend for Digital Pioneers

[www.fabchannel.com](http://www.fabchannel.com)



Most of the supported Digital Pioneer projects were initially based on a simple idea. The awareness that something (by using Internet applications) could be useful for society in general or for a specific community was enough to start working on it. Some pioneers start a project because they are agitated about the way things around them are organised (in an organisation or society in general). With their idea they create the possibility of influencing public debate. Many of them are alone when they start: looking for ways to express their creativity. Often, as we can see in this chapter, this initial idea expands into a bigger project and is developed into an organisation with civil e-services.

Over the past twelve months, many of those involved in Digital Pioneer projects have been interviewed to obtain a better understanding of motives, ambitions and the position of projects in civil society. In these talks, they explained how projects look at their respective communities, how they cooperate with others and how their civil e-services contribute to society.

### 2.1 Origin of Digital Pioneers

Before we start discussing the projects, some information on the origins of the Digital Pioneers fund should be noted. Back in 2001 research into the possibility of stimulating public content on the Internet was carried out by TNO at the request of the Dutch Parliament. In the report *Public Services on the Internet*<sup>27</sup>, the researchers concluded that existing government, cultural and media institutions were active on the Internet, but that in general they reacted very slowly to innovation. At the same time they identified the importance of small-scale social organisations, independent artists, new groups and individuals. The report stated that civil society organisations often have valuable and innovative ideas. They use the Internet to build a community, to defend their interests, to provide information and to realise their goals. However, they also lack the knowledge, skills and often the finance required for realising their ideas, while in most cases they would need very little to be able to do so.

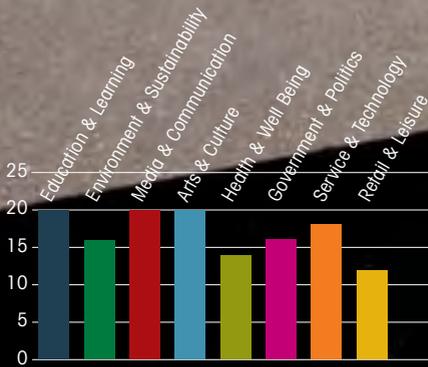
TNO also noted that many of these organisations are very attached to their independence. Most of them are not necessarily in favour of any government interference in this 'public domain on the Internet'. The report advises the government to start a fund for multimedia projects that produce cross-sector social content. The fund should focus on initiatives that cannot meet the criteria of professional media funds. This resulted in the temporary Digital Pioneers Fund at the end of 2002. The objective of this experiment was to stimulate innovative Internet initiatives from civil society, with a small investment and in a low-threshold manner.

- The Digital Pioneer Fund supports Internet initiatives of small civil society organisations that:
- Realise innovative 'civil e-services' that contribute to opinion making, information provision and e-participation of specific target groups in society;
  - Increase the availability of public content and apply, where possible, open content licenses;
  - Stimulate cooperation and exchange of knowledge between civil society Internet initiatives;
  - Work with innovative interaction design or software applications;
  - Use, where possible, open standards and open source software.

<sup>27</sup> TNO-STB, Publieke diensten op internet (2001).

# Classification supported projects in segments of civil society

(N=136)



The independent think-tank Knowledgegeland executes the project, which is financed by the media department of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science<sup>28</sup>. Since December 2002 a total of 136 projects, which received an average contribution of 15.500 euros, have been supported.

## 2.2 Plotting projects in society

Digital Pioneer projects all have their own target groups. Some focus on young blind children, other on parents (to be), citizens around Schiphol airport, Indie music bands, ethnic minority groups etc.

As the objective of the fund is to reach various groups and individuals, it is of interest to know what kinds of projects are ultimately supported. Therefore, eight segments of society were chosen (varying from *Education & Learning* to *Service & Technology*) which represent today's civil society.

For the supported projects, this resulted in the table below. The 136 projects are well divided over the chosen eight segments. They exemplify the broad presence of civil society on the Internet.

Project descriptions of all 136 Digital Pioneer projects cannot be included in this book. Therefore, 22 projects were chosen that represent the meaning and the scope of the fund and illustrate the power of civil society media in the Netherlands.

These 22 Digital Pioneer projects were plotted on the imaginary map of main railroads in the Netherlands. This map is included in

<sup>28</sup> In 2005 an evaluation was carried out by the independent research institute TNO to determine whether continuation of the fund was necessary within media policy and if the execution of the project met the expectations of the Ministry. The evaluation was very positive and extra support was given to prolong the fund.





the book<sup>29</sup>. The eight railroad lines scattered throughout the country represent the eight different segments of Dutch civil society. Some major CSM trends are also indicated on the respective lines. Thus the map presents a view of existing correlations between projects, trends and society. Moreover key intersections between the trends can be discovered as well as projects running parallel to more than one segment of society.

In the remainder of this chapter the various Digital Pioneer projects in the eight segments of society are discussed.

### 2.3 Education & Learning

The first segment to be discussed is *Education & Learning*. Since 2002 we have seen many different projects that focus on Internet applications to be used in schools, within a curriculum, or outside educational institutions. Others aim to transform an already existing project for educational purposes. In this paragraph the projects 'Kijkradio', 'Face Your World' and 'Miniconomy' demonstrate the innovative power of bottom-up initiatives in the *Education & Learning* segment of society.

#### 1 — Kijkradio giving an extra eye by listening

Kijkradio.nl (eyeradio) is an Internet application which enables children from age 8 to 12+ to create their own broadcasts. A Kijkradio broadcast consists of one or more programs, varying from news items, advertising, weather reports and individual stories. The children have great creative freedom when it comes to making the broadcasts, as they decide on their content, and create the images and spoken commentary themselves. The design is also largely up to them. The main goal of Kijkradio is to stimulate a critical media-awareness amongst children who are at the same time responsible for shaping and presenting personalized visual and audio messages.

Kijkradio started in 2003 as a project for the annual Film, Television and New Media Festival for Children called 'Cinekid.nl'. Marjolijn Ruyg began by creating an initial concept with the help of a group of children as beta testers. 'Cinekid' saw the most potential in her project and she received € 40.000 for realising the concept. Kijkradio was launched through the national Jeugdjournaal (national news programme for children) and received a lot of publicity. But, as Marjolijn notices *"We need to keep on innovating Kijkradio as many new and sometimes better applications are developed at different places. In the summer of 2005, we implemented a new element called the Voice traveller tool with the support of Digital Pioneers. This is an interview tool that enables children to interview each other in real time, which can later be viewed by other children. Now,*

29 In December 2006 Nowandnext.com and Future Exploration Network collaborated in producing a map of major trends for 2007 and beyond. The map is released under a Creative Commons license and the makers invite everybody to improve on it. Although they asked people not to take the map too seriously, the railroad map of the Netherlands is an imitation of what was done by them. See [http://www.futureexploration.net/Trend\\_Blend\\_2007\\_map.pdf](http://www.futureexploration.net/Trend_Blend_2007_map.pdf)

children can playfully learn how to cooperate while making media, and at the same time develop their editorial skills. This way they learn how to communicate about backgrounds, opinions and values." At the moment, Kijkradio has produced around 22.000 radio stations and about 10 new stations are formed every day. There are about 44.000 different items.

With the help of Digital Pioneers, Marjolijn is working on a business plan to implement a new POP (personal online promotion) tool. This is an online communication tool with which Kijkradio hopes to gain commercial interest. With the tool, users can record audio messages online, upload images, clips, text, subtitles, hyperlinks, and connotations and edit and finally publish items. Because the POP tool can be customized, Marjolijn hopes that the application will interest other companies in implementing it and thus have the possibility of making money with the tool. Marjolijn wants to focus not only on business enterprises, but also on cultural and educational institutions.

To date, Kijkradio has relied on funding from 'Cinekid', Digital Pioneers and its own investment of more than 1000 hours. Kijkradio proves the capacity of young children to create their own media environment. Although initiatives like 'YouTube' have changed the way people produce, distribute and watch content, the possibilities and the technology of Kijkradio have not been fully exploited. It could, for example, be used by schools to accompany homework assignments of pupils. This would give schools a better understanding of the daily living environments of their pupils. This is exactly what is being done in the next project discussed.

### 1 Constructing your living environment in Face Your World

FaceYourWorld.nl (FYW) is an online educational multimedia platform where youngsters from the ages of 10-16 can construct their own living environments using 3D software. They can, for example, build a new schoolyard or community garden, to name but two ideas. With this, the youngsters create a greater awareness of their surroundings and the community of which they are a part. Although it started as an art project, FYW has now progressed into a tool that can be used within a broader context. A game such as Sim City only exists in the virtual world and consists of predefined designs instead of triggering people to rethink the ideas they have about these spaces. The interaction between the real and the virtual world is what makes FYW unique.

The idea started in 2002, when Jeanne van Heeswijk was working in Columbus Ohio at the Wexner Centre of the Arts. While she was there, the Centre asked her to do a solo project for three downtown Ohio community centres in order to engage more youths. Jeanne accepted and knew that she wanted to include three main elements. First, she

www.faceyourworld.nl

www.flossmannuis.net



wanted the youths to interact with each other in the community and get to know each other. Second, she wanted bus transportation so that the youths could get better acquainted with the city. Third, the software had to be developed in such a way as to allow them to re-imagine their neighbourhood. In collaboration with philosopher and poet Maaik Engelen and the help of 'V2\_Lab', the first version of the 'Interactor' was completed.

The most difficult aspect of the project was avoiding making the project too generic. However, by making it non-generic she feared that it would become too local. This fear was put aside when Jeanne was asked to make another Face Your World in the Netherlands. Back in the Netherlands, Jeanne worked on a second version of FYW. This version was supposed to combine art, urban development, computer technology and creativity. With the 'Interactor' software, youths could interact within a virtual world of their environment. The world contained ready-made imagery, but with the help of a digital camera they could also add their own images.

As FYW has completely customised software, this exchange should be possible within any community in any country or city. With a new international online version being developed, the FYW team hopes that youths will design a global city in which cultural differences will be highlighted. The FYW Foundation is an organisation which is orientated towards improving community interaction within the living environment. It is a non-profit organisation which tries to gain project-based partnerships within the public sector. Because FYW is related to diverse social issues, the organisation has a large team. The current team consists of artists, architects, philosophers and other people working for them.

The project has been financed both privately and by the government. FYW works from project to project and tries to find financial aid along the way. They welcome any financial help, as long as the investors do not interfere with the content and inject their own ideologies into the project. The amount of time and money that the FYW team have put into the project themselves is enormous.

FYW has had trouble with the rejection of their submitted plans from specific government programmes and funds as it is non-linear, works with cross-media and does not focus on one single element. To change this, they are now writing a manual for FYW in order to make the product more tangible. Jeanne adds that she thinks that "Dutch society and government both fail to believe in people's ability to really intervene and innovate on a day-to-day basis in society. If this does happen, people are often given very little credit, or are not even thought of as credible". This makes it very difficult to upscale a successful project in the public sphere.



Due to the success of the local versions, FYW has decided to implement the tool on an international level. For FYW it doesn't matter where people are located, as the tool is easy to adapt to the cultural specifics of any local community. This online version is a multi-user computer game that enables youngsters from all over the world to build a fictitious global city of the future together.

The FYW team thinks that the government should be more involved in funding Civil Society Media projects. A lot of funds are being forced into certain categories. If an application does not fit into one of the categories, it is quite impossible to receive any funding. This is something that has to change. In the USA investment in research and development projects is much more common than in Europe. As Frank Alsema puts it *"In the Netherlands, everything has to be "sellable" and completed. This means that foundations are forced to deliver a product, not just a process. More emphasis should be put on the importance of the (virtual) public domain"*.

The following outlines a project that was started in an attic room in Almere and was subsequently developed by both private and public partners.

### 1 — **Miniconomy: the massive multiplayer online trading game**

The brothers Wouter and Mark Leenards designed Miniconomy.nl when they were fifteen. Set up as a trade game with a few dozen competitors back in 2002, Miniconomy.nl has grown into an online community with 40.000 members.

The purpose of the game is to trade with your fellow players to become as rich as possible. You can do this in several ways: by selling products, building a bank, harbour, garage, club, by offering services or by taking a job. It is also possible to earn your money as a criminal. Alongside this trading career, you can practice other jobs, such as police officer, mayor of one of the many cities, broker, bank manager or even the political leader of the country. Players of Miniconomy constantly come up with new ideas and co-design the next version of the game.

The game came to the attention of schools and an educational publisher. Various institutions acknowledged the educative value of the online trade game, but in the end didn't use Miniconomy in the classroom for financial or organisational reasons. With the help of Digital Pioneers, Miniconomy has been adapted as an educative application, directed towards the subjects of economy, management and organisation.





As the brothers state *"Miniconomy had to be employable as an educative application that benefits teachers as well as students. Using a web game as an educative tool motivates students as they are learning by doing."* The final result of the project is an inter-active online simulation game which is very accessible to secondary education students who can be monitored by their teacher through the management module. Students and teachers have a special status in the game, so that they are 'protected' against some (violent) game elements. They can also trade with each other unlimitedly.

In 2005 some private financiers who learned about the project via Digital Pioneers approached the Leenaards and decided to invest in the newborn company. Miniconomy is now used by more than ten secondary schools. In the future the game will also be offered to other educational institutions and international expansion is being researched.

#### De-institutionalising of the curriculum

It is clear that publishing companies or schools themselves are no longer the sole producers of learning material. Hence, education is medialising and de-institutionalising as young people learn on media platforms outside schools the necessary skills to find information, to create content and to interpret information. The discussed projects illustrate that Internet empowers (young) people to participate in projects that influence their direct living environment. However, the number of housing corporations, municipalities, local broadcasters and schools that really use these kinds of applications is still limited. More room for experiments and scaling up of successful projects is needed.

#### 2.4 Environment & Sustainability

In this section we discuss projects that use the Internet to gather data on environmental issues or build applications that make people's living environment more sustainable. The projects identify new roles for citizens to get involved in processes and decisions that affect their lives. The selected projects show what kind of participatory culture is evolving on the Net.

2

#### **Geluids.net: online survey of noise pollution**

Rene Post set up the Geluids.net foundation back in 2003 after reports in the media about the lack of access to data in the debate on noise pollution caused by Schiphol Airport.

Rene remembers: *"The Minister of Transport and Infrastructure, in office at that time, Tineke Netelenbos claimed that it was very expensive and probably impossible to measure the noise. I wasn't*

*sure about that and as an engineer I wanted to start a project to offer people who live around the airport a means through which they could show the actual level of noise pollution. By collecting sensor network based data on a large scale Geluids.net provides an actual base for a rational discussion about combining living, working, and transport functions in densely populated areas."*

With the help of Digital Pioneers, geluids.net developed special metering stations (antenna's) that can picture the noise pollution via a website. From day one Geluids.net aimed to set up a network of small, affordable metering stations, rather than one complex installation, so that measurements could be made simultaneously at a number of locations. The costs per metering station have indeed been kept low by use of the Internet, open-source materials and standard components such as a microphone and PC equipped with a sound card.

#### *State of the art technology*

Each metering station houses an industrial embedded computer using the free Unix variant FreeBSD, with its sound card connected to an external microphone. All data are sent real-time to a central database via the Internet connection of the premises where the meter is placed. Each unit takes measurements for 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, generating 86,400 measurements each day and over 31 million data points per year. The unit uses approximately 10W of electrical power, costing € 5 per year.

The microphones can distinguish airplane noise from surround noise. Sound Intelligence software from the University of Groningen makes the recognition possible. All these measuring data are made visible on [www.geluids.net](http://www.geluids.net). Visitors can select an area where a number of circles are plotted on a map. In the circle are numbers that represent the last measured sound levels in dbA. As more sound is measured, the circles grow and become darker. There is also a difference in colour. Red airplanes are climbing; blue ones are in descent. Green airplanes fly at high altitude (transit).

#### *Up scaling a pilot project*

In 2005 Geluids.net changed from a pilot project to a service provider, and a director was appointed to realise the shift. They drew up a business plan with support from an entrepreneurial organisation ('Stichting Nieuwe Bedrijvigheid') and partners were sought to realise the plan.

Geluids.net changed its name to Sensornet in 2006 and realised a partnership with the engineering firm DGMR. The noise meters already set up by Geluids.net are now equipped with additional





www.hierstaik.nl

sensors to measure a wide range of other indicators such as air quality, temperature, humidity, wind speed and even air constituents. The sound identification systems already in place will also be extended to quantify noise from other sources, such as road traffic, industry or outdoor events. Sensornet intends to have a network of more than one hundred such measuring stations operational by the end of 2007. The organisation now has five employees.

Rene has a long history in ICT and society. He was involved in the Digital City Leiden and started the quality and performance company iPing in 1996. He is accustomed to being very open in the provision and communication of information and content of his projects, but notices that: *"In general when you are open in your communication, content and knowledge, you will find that most organisations and institutions don't contact you directly but rather indirectly. Sometimes people are not happy with you at all. Schiphol Airport and National Advisory Councils didn't like Geluids.net. We were too open and they didn't completely trust our organisation and the quality of our information. I have noticed that if you persist in being open, many of these old opponents can become your best clients. Apart from that, a project like Geluids.net is built on the cooperation with citizens. It gives them a voice and position in a public debate. If we hadn't been open, the project would never have been realised."*

**2 — CYCLOS; building online Local Exchange Trading System**

Over recent years, local groups of people in different countries have exchanged services and second-hand goods using a system of trading points, the so-called LETS method. Although the LETS method was first introduced in Canada in the '80s, it wasn't until 1993 that the STROhalm foundation founded the first Dutch exchange service in Amsterdam called Noppes. Within the LETS circles, participants can exchange goods, services, talents etc. For any offered service, participants receive points, with which they can "buy" something else in return. Participants can then gain access to services that are usually too expensive for them, such as help with the computer, getting a haircut or a babysitter. The LETS system can thus be seen as a new form of local help service.

The number of LETS circles has grown in The Netherlands to about 80. Noppes remains the best-known LETS in the Netherlands and it has about 1100 participants. Although the LETS system worked as it should, Rinke Hoekstra of the STROhalm Foundation saw that an old-fashioned system such as LETS needed an update, as the administration was still being recorded on paper. They opted for an online system, which enables participants of the exchange system to keep up the administration themselves. As such a system did not exist, STROhalm decided to develop one. This became the Cyclos project. This open source software is intended for use in complementary currency systems such as LETS and micro finance systems such as VLC (a combination



<http://project.cyclos.org>

of micro finance with local currency). Cyclos is a transactional (on-line banking) system with several community functionalities and extended modules.

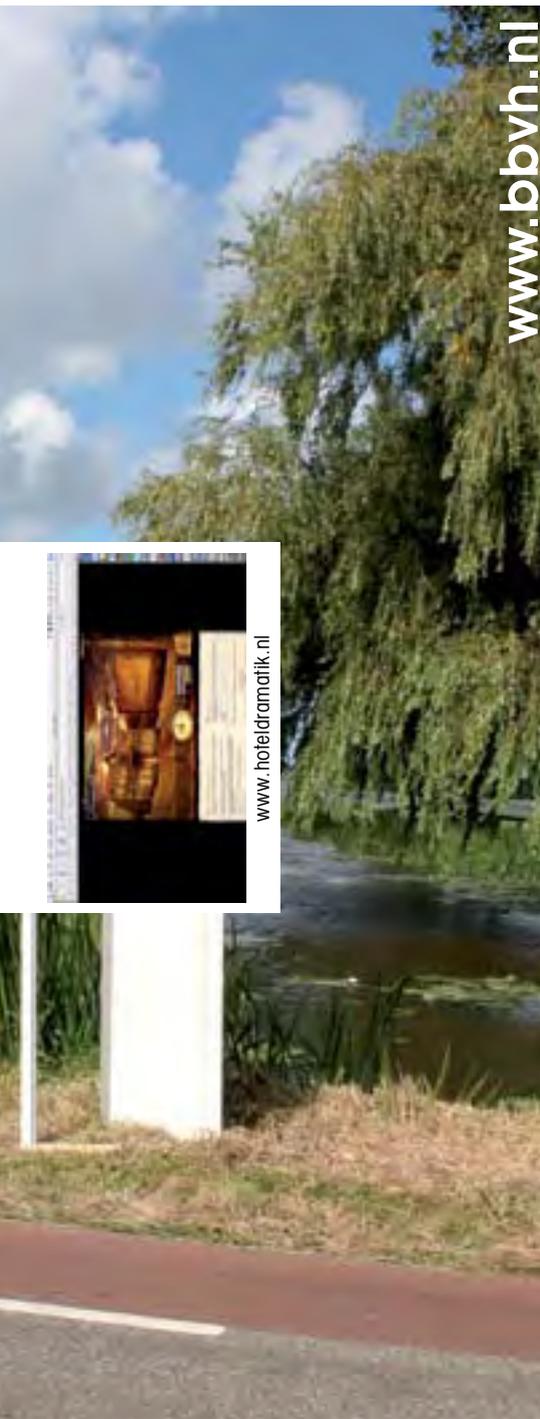
The objective is to create professional software that is modular, easy to use and maintain, secure and highly customizable. The current version offers web-based access where members can administer their accounts, view their transactions, make payments in local units, place ads and contact other members. Members can make (secure) payments via web access or mobile phone (wap1, wap2). As well as the 'digital' web and mobile payments, it is also possible to administer the emission of vouchers (scrip). The software has an extended administration section with built-in automatic functions that makes it possible to administer a currency system with minimal manual work.

With the old LETS system, everybody seemed to have their own way of administrating the points. This meant that exchange with other LETS circles was not possible. With the Cyclos system this has changed, enabling LETS circles to exchange with foreign LETS. Rinke explains that *"the project was growing rapidly and the number of added functionalities has outgrown any expectations, which I had in the beginning. At the moment there are six LETS in the Netherlands, which are using the system, but there are about 20 other Dutch and foreign exchange circles that have also shown an interest in Cyclos."*

#### Services

The LETS organisations are run entirely by volunteers. They are not connected to each other, but work independently. The Cyclos software (<http://project.cyclos.org>) has been developed with the support of Digital Pioneers and is published under the GPL open source license. This means that it can be downloaded for free and used at no costs. Even more importantly, everybody is free to download the source code and add new functions, make improvements or modifications. On the website, visitors can submit requests for new functions and can find the specifications and manuals of Cyclos. There is also a forum where users can ask questions about the installation and functioning of the software. The Cyclos software shows the power of open source software and the possibilities of international collaborative software programming within a community. The following project originated with an idea and ended with a completely transformed company.





**2 — How serious games changed a group of architects**

In the summer of 2002 a group of young architects developed the web-based inter-active game *Baas op Zuid* ('Boss in the South') on behalf of several housing associations. The aim of the group was to give inhabitants of the districts Pendrecht and Zuidwijk in Rotterdam more insight into the urban development problems of their neighbourhood.

People interested in the neighbourhood can play the game. They receive a virtual budget and decide how they want to change the design of their neighbourhood: more trees, parking spots, more one-person apartments, extra shops or playgrounds. At the end of the game a report is presented that shows whether the proposed measures of the player are financially and socially viable. Players can leave comments and suggestions, which are all used as input by the housing corporation to decide on their final plans.

Because of the success of the project, a second version was made. At the same time, other cities showed an interest in this way of communication and interaction. With the help of Digital Pioneers, a generic version of the software was developed that made it easier to implement the project in other cities. As Joris van Hoytema, one of the initiators, states: *"we are qualified architects. When we started the 'Boss in the South' project, we thought of it as a nice ad hoc activity. But it was so successful that within a year we couldn't execute the projects within the foundation we started with. We brought the activities into our architect company BBVH that subsequently transformed into a multimedia architect company. We hired extra software developers and designers in order to be able to meet the needs of our new clients."*

On their website [www.bbv.nl](http://www.bbv.nl) you can see an overview of many of the interactive sites/ serious games they build for specific neighbourhoods such as <http://www.zeeburgemeester.nl> and of new media concepts such as the 'Woophy.com' website.

**Civil empowerment and institutional ties**

The 'Geluids.net' project is a perfect example of how Internet can empower citizens. Using low threshold technique and an open infrastructure resulted in high quality data that forced institutions to listen to this empowered group. Members of the Local Exchange Trading System now use the Internet to start cross-border trade with their own alternative financing system. The software is collaboratively developed by people who consider the 'LETS' community a meaningful environment in which they can connect with others, based on shared interests and intentions. The same goes for the online serious game built by BBVH. Playing the game makes you a stakeholder in urban development planning. The challenge for government and for public institutions is to integrate this participatory culture into their own daily line of work.

## 2.5 Media & communication

The collapse of the production and distribution chains that were the hallmark of the Industrial Age opened a new era for *Media & Communication* with the boost of user generated content. Considering that content is most effective when it resonates with local cultures and society, we have seen the increasing importance of the creative individual who is media wise and produces, publishes and distributes content via social P2P-networks. In the next section some of the most visible projects of Digital Pioneers in the Netherlands, which illustrate this shift, are examined.

3

### Fabchannel

Fabchannel.com is a streaming video platform that offers both live and on demand webcasts of concerts, performances, lectures, debates and festivals from the cultural pop podia Paradiso and Melkweg in Amsterdam. Its main goal is to promote artists who receive little or no attention on national TV and radio. Besides live webcasts, Fabchannel offers an extensive online video archive including over 700 concerts ranging from rock, hip-hop, folk music, avant-garde and everything in between. With this, Fabchannel has created one of the largest archives in the world and is unique in Europe in the field of live concert registrations on Internet. Besides this, Fabchannel is an international promotional tool for artists who do not receive media attention. In 2006, their efforts were rewarded with a Webby Award for Best Music Website. Since November 2006 a selection of concerts has been made available via Internet stores like iTunes and some concerts are even free for download via Google video<sup>30</sup>.

In 2004, Fabchannel entered into the Digital Pioneers programme. With their help, Fabchannel could improve their application of the Fabplayer with the QT edition. This finally enables the audience to actively intervene in what it sees. The viewer can put himself in the position of a band member and can experience the concert as if he is standing on stage. What's distinctive about the player is that all viewers can operate the camera at the same time. Even after the live registration, one can view the concert again with the controllable camera.

Fabchannel started at the end of 1999 when Justin Kniest worked at Paradiso for the Grote Prijs van Nederland, one of the biggest competitions in the Netherlands for popular music. He noticed that the media did not cover these starting bands as much as they used to in the past. In the early 90s there were regular recordings of less known bands, but when the media diversified this all seemed to change. Justin then started to look at possibilities

<sup>30</sup> See <http://video.google.nl/videosearch?q=fabchannel> for an overview





for recording some of the material himself. The idea for Fabchannel began when a festival was organised where a number of pop stages were connected through the Internet. Fabchannel was born out of this enthusiasm and success. It started with the cooperation between Paradiso and Internet provider Xs4all. Paradiso organized all the rights and Xs4all provided the connection.

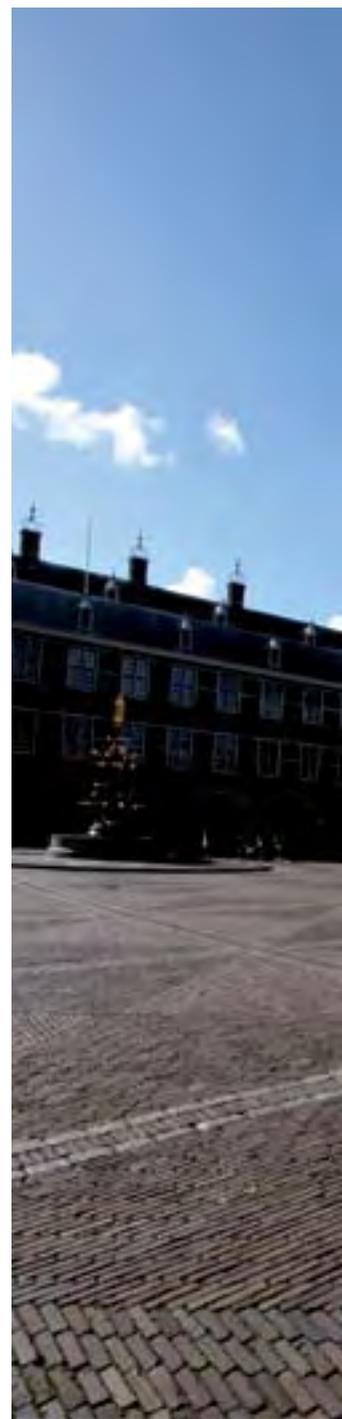
Between 2000 and 2004, Fabchannel recorded about 40 concerts with the help of the NOB. *"Whenever there was a concert to be taped, the NOB drove in with their equipment and started filming"*, Bauke Freiburg of Fabchannel says, but *"at the end of 2004 Fabchannel built their own studio with the help of Paradiso and Dutchview. From that moment we could start making good quality digital recordings. To get the most out of their investment, Dutchview sometimes added their own camera's while filming a concert. Now, with online sales, Fabchannel is becoming clearer as a brand"*, Bauke says.

For most concerts in their archive Fabchannel has the right to stream the content for an unlimited amount of time. It seems that labels are more than keen on extending these rights, when they see how often the recordings have been viewed. At the moment, Fabchannel has about 30 concerts on I-Tunes. This seems to be a way to expand the activities internationally. At the moment, about 40 percent of the viewers are Dutch and 60 percent are of various other nationalities.

Fabchannel so far has relied almost exclusively on subsidies. However, by becoming a limited company with 7 employees and 13 freelancers (plus support from interns and many volunteers) the organisation has shifted from a non-profit research project to a commercial entity.

One of the plans to generate income is to have increasing numbers of concert halls use their service. Recently the Melkweg has become part of this network. The ultimate goal is to part with the subsidies and generate income in a different way. This is a real transition as up till now, Fabchannel has been mainly a research and development project. However, the role of subsidies shouldn't be to keep a project going forever. Bauke notes that *"the sooner we are not dependent on subsidies anymore, the better. They have had interested investors from both The Netherlands and America.*

Bauke considers the development of new applications instrumental for success, *"At the moment a new application is tested with Flash Media technology. Within a menu, users can view a visible timeline where they can see exactly where the guitar solos are within a concert, where it gets exciting or where there are breaks. This*



will make the concert more viewable and you can easily pick out your favourite parts. Furthermore, users can also see who else is watching the concert and chat with each other. This will make the experience a shared one."

When asked about the community, Bauke notes that "although not directly visible, there is a large community behind Fabchannel. We receive many emails from fans who find the initiative amazing and offer to help out. This is why Fabchannel started a research project on the site where they looked at how they could create a tracklist. It turned out that within 30 minutes of airing a concert, fans had already emailed Fabchannel the tracks." This means that viewers of the concert, and not Fabchannel generate most tracklists themselves. The notion that community members can add value to the content of cultural institutions and (audiovisual) archives is widely acknowledged but hardly practiced.

A community where its members produce all content and value is discussed in the following part.

### 3 Independent media in the Netherlands

Indymedia.nl is part of a worldwide project which contests the commercialism of today's media. As an independent news platform, Indymedia provides regular reports on events happening in our society. It relies on its readers and volunteers to post and check the content of the site so it does not have to answer to shareholders or advertisers.

The Dutch Indymedia started in the year 2000 at a time when alternative media started showing up everywhere. Bart Brugmans was one of those who wanted to make a news page that was different from the commercial media. He did not want it to be just news copied from the newspapers, but instead it had to be written by independent people who wanted to share their views on events.

At first, the editors of Indymedia looked for and wrote stories themselves. But Indymedia developed. "Nowadays, the editors of Indymedia only occasionally write a feature and it is mainly the people who visit the site who contribute to the content. They do this completely anonymously, so nobody knows – not even the editors of Indymedia – who the authors of the pieces are. This is also why we can never guarantee if a story is true or not. However, anonymity is not obligatory, as writers can leave contact information if they wish. Anybody is allowed to post an article. If the Indymedia team do not approve the article – for example if it is not news or has been copied from another site – then they will remove it after it has been published."

On the website, the community not only has the option to write and post articles, but it can also react to articles. Bart notes that in

www.indymedia.nl

http://wonnogame.nl





the beginning they just let everything that was posted stay on the site. After about six months they changed this complete freedom of speech, as people were starting to complain about certain irrelevant or inappropriate posts. Indymedia then changed some of its rules. Now, if anybody wants to react to an article, it must be an addition to the article. If the community really wishes to discuss the article, they can now do this in the chat channel.

Since the year 2000, Indymedia has grown into a large independent news network. They have about 100.000 views on a normal day and 175.000 at busy times. This comes down to about 10.000 to 20.000 unique visitors. These visitors together post an average of five articles per day.

Indymedia.nl is part of an international network. This means that the project provides both national and international independent news. Any local Indymedia is allowed to be part of the network, although there are a few basic rules. First, every Indymedia has to hold a monthly meeting in which they discuss the developments within their Indymedia. Second, the authors of the published articles must have the possibility to remain anonymous. Finally, Indymedia is forbidden to make any money, let alone profit.

Every Indymedia is organized in a different way. In The Netherlands it is a virtual organisation without an office. The Indymedia.nl site has been using the free server of Freeteam since the start of the project. This means that they do not have any expenses in running the website. Furthermore, Indymedia works on a voluntary basis.

To meet the growing need of data capacity and to ensure the reliability of the network Indymedia could, with the contribution of Digital Pioneers, replace the old servers of the Indymedia network and Freeteam. The Dutch Indymedia.nl is a foundation which consists of about twenty active people who form the core of the organisation. About 25 percent of this community is active on a daily basis. Indymedia is doing extremely well at the moment. The group is very diverse and has many different network activities.

Another aspect of Indymedia is that copyright on contributions is not arranged, as Indymedia does not know who the authors are. They do not even log any IP-addresses. This anonymity is part of the international policy which, according to Bart, seems to be more an ethical question than a legal one. He thinks that anonymity is very important to the community. The content may then be used by others, but not for commercial goals.

Although, Indymedia is not linked to any governmental organisation, they do see a role for government in guaranteeing free press. But as



Bart puts it *"The only problem is that Indymedia is not seen as press. If you want to be part of a press union, then journalism has to be your profession. As the Indymedia team works on a voluntary basis, we are not considered press and don't get any press accreditation."*

This complaint is often heard from initiatives that work with professional amateurs. The fact that they produce high quality content on a voluntary basis limits their rights to get access to certain information. In the next section, the Simuze project will further elaborate on these limitations of the 'sharing economy'.

### 3 — Open Indie Music from Utrecht

Simuze.nl is a Dutch online music community that was founded in opposition to the current music industry and the way it treats music, musicians and music lovers. Bjorn Wijers of Simuze states that *"Nowadays, the musical diversity on the radio and television has decreased so extensively that it is extremely difficult for musicians to gain publicity. Furthermore, the remix culture is criminalised and labelled as illegal instead of being seen as a creative effort. Simuze has grown into an online community where we can meet each other, exchange music, remix or upload music under a Creative Commons license."*

The idea for Simuze originates from 2004, when Marten Timan started his graduation project at the HKU (interactive design). Marten wanted to create something in the field of open content and the music industry. Being a musician himself, he wanted to prove that using open content licenses and offering free music could be a good thing for musicians. Together with Bjorn Wijers, he started to put the project on paper, submitted it to Digital Pioneers and received a grant. The website of Simuze first went online in July 2005.

In the first stage of the project, Marten and Bjorn contacted many bands to promote Simuze. Marten was already known in the music scene, as he is a musician himself. *"At first, I received many sceptical responses from people who still had an ideal image of signing a record deal with a big label. Now, people are starting to see the use of open content and free music. However, it was difficult to convince them"*.

Bjorn explains: *"The current situation in the Netherlands is that by becoming a member of the collecting society Buma Stemra you'll have to transfer all your exploitation rights exclusively to them. Any musician or composer who wants to get the money collected in their name has to become a member of this organisation or else they'll never get this money. This collecting society has been granted the monopoly right to collect rights by the Dutch government. Basically this situation stinks and we want to see it changed. We want to see*

www.simuze.nl



www.kijkradio.nl

more flexible contracts (= non-exclusive) for members of the rights collecting society which allows them to choose the conditions under which to release their own music and, for instance, to use Creative Commons licenses for this.<sup>31</sup>

**Growing into a business model for an open and free music industry**

As of July 2007, Simuze had about 340 artists and 1,314 songs in their database. As can be concluded from the quote above, none of these artists can be members of the collecting society. Nevertheless the number of artists choosing Simuze is growing rapidly by the week. Simuze gets around 80.000 unique visitors every month, which means quite an exposure for the artists in the database. Although everybody can upload their own songs, Marten and Bjorn do not allow people to upload existing songs from other artists. These songs will be removed from the database.

To reach its goal to develop into a real alternative to the existing music industry, the organisation will have to become much larger<sup>32</sup>. At the same time, Marten and Bjorn have learnt to stick to what they do best, and at the moment that is offering music.

In the future, they wish to create a double agreement with community members. First of all, they want users to give Simuze the right to act as an intermediary between musicians and businesses. Second, the community must still have the option of choosing their own Creative Commons license. According the Marten and Bjorn, *"this double agreement is the only option which does not force people into choosing a certain license. It is then necessary to keep Simuze open and free. By acting as an intermediary, we envisage that independent musicians will finally have the chance of having their music heard by a larger audience. Our goal is then to provide a tool for spreading music for both musicians and music lovers. This is our model, as we will receive a commission for this service."*

Simuze is currently a voluntary organisation. However, they are expanding the team with an advisory council of business, music and open source experts. They are planning to hire more programmers, a commercial partner and an administrative employee. Ultimately, Bjorn and Marten want to make Simuze their paid jobs.

The community of Simuze plays an enormous role within the project. The community of musicians and music lovers are the initial reason for the

31 On the 23rd of August Buma/Stemra and Creative Commons Netherlands launched a pilot that will give members of Buma/Stemra the opportunity to publish their music works under a non-commercial Creative Commons licence. Composers and lyricists, who to date have only been able to publish their work under a Creative Commons license, may now opt to join Buma/Stemra and have this organisation collect their royalties for commercial use of their work. With this pilot Buma/Stemra and Creative Commons Netherlands seek to provide Dutch musicians with more opportunities to promote their own repertoire. See [www.creativecommons.nl](http://www.creativecommons.nl) for more details. Basically the pilot resolves many of the issues raised by Bjorn Wijers in this interview.

32 Jamendo.com in Luxemburg/France and Magnatune in the UK run similar initiatives.



start of the project and they offer the content and provide feedback. The community works not only online, but also offline, as they organize concerts and other events. In the future, Bjorn and Marten expect the community to play a larger role. At the moment there is not much online interaction between the members. There have been occasions where musicians work together or remix each others music. These collaborations, however, cannot now be seen on the actual site of Simuze.

According to Bjorn and Marten, we can take an example from how the music industry is organised in the USA. Musicians have far more choice in the way they organise the rights over their repertoire. Both are of the opinion that a collecting society should never gain exclusive rights to a piece of music. The creator should be able to get the rights back if he wishes to. The bottom line is that musicians should have more freedom when it comes to rights and distribution of their music. Furthermore, the current national monopoly of collecting societies should be ended and the market opened up.

Marten and Bjorn are very clear about their ambition. To put it simply, they have an extremely activist streak. They wish to create an open and free music industry where musicians can receive money for their work without giving up their rights to it. As Bjorn puts it, *"Simuze is authentic, transparent, open and the focus is not only on money."*

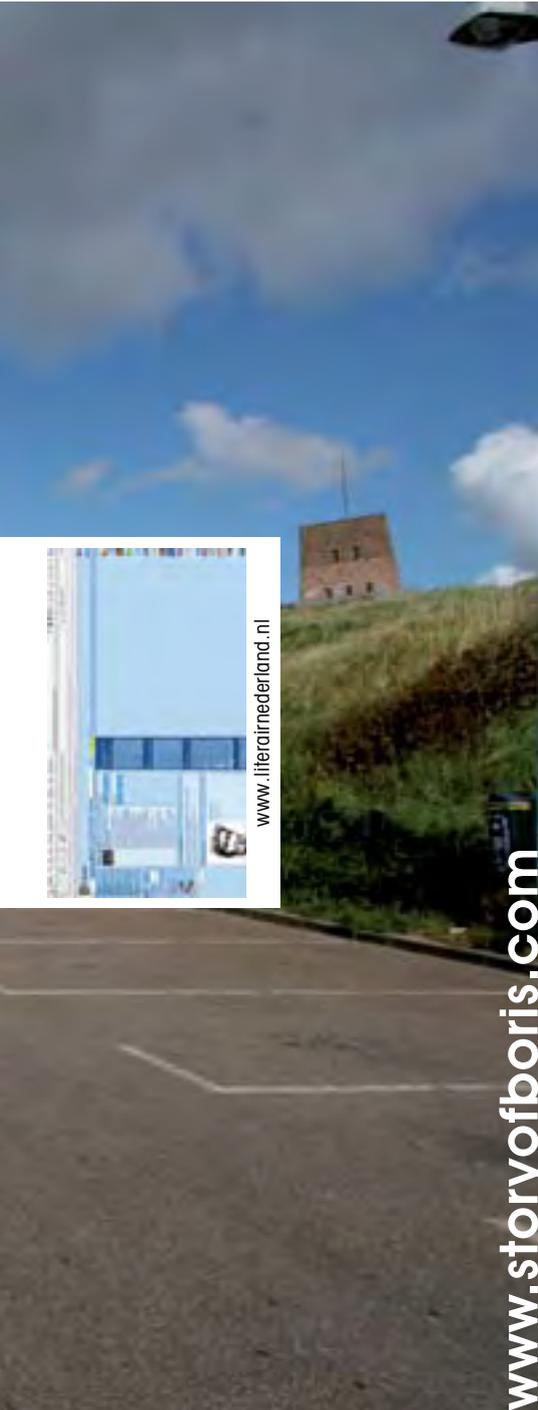
### Reclaiming the media

The role of media in our day-to-day lives is uncontested. On a global scale, the total value of the media and entertainment sectors is estimated at \$1.8 trillion<sup>33</sup>. Many are driven by digital content, such as the Internet, games, or business information. Others, such as music industry and broadcast archives, are moving to this phase rapidly.

The discussed Digital Pioneer projects show that members of content communities add value to different kinds of media and entertainment concepts. 'Fabchannel' uses folksonomy principles; a bottom-up taxonomic methodology where members of the community collaboratively categorize concerts with freely chosen tags. 'Indymedia' illustrates the power of decentralized and independent media. Together with the 'Simuze' project, it shows new models for open, legal, independent and high quality media productions. All were initiated by people who wanted to do things differently and took the chance to challenge old orders in

<sup>33</sup> Australian Entertainment and Media Outlook 2005–2009, PriceWaterhouseCoopers.





the media industry. All the projects mentioned are successful thanks to thriving communities. The value of these communities is difficult to measure but ultimately they will certainly wake up archival and cultural heritage institutions in the way they view their passive live and online visitors.

It is these kinds of projects, deriving from creative industry, which stimulate the reconsideration of media policy. The creative industries originate in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property<sup>34</sup>. The kinds of open services the Digital Pioneer projects develop are, in many cases, contrary to common business models in the media sector that rely on the exclusive exploitation of their Intellectual Property Rights.

Media policy should stimulate the production and the availability of open content realised by civil society media initiatives as it stimulates creative legal re-use and will lead to new open business models in the Media & Communication sector.

## 2.6 Arts & culture

With the new role of the creative individual in the Net era, the landscape of arts & culture has also changed. Mass consumption on the Internet, collaborative creative projects without time and place barriers, the recognition of cross-media and remixing productions and technical innovations like GPS and wireless networks are increasing the possibilities of arts and culture projects (in civil society). Three projects ('The Story of Boris', 'Soundtransit' and 'MILK') were chosen for discussion as they contain many of the trends discussed in this section.

### 4 — The Story of Boris

When Jan Pieter Tuinstra and Thomas Blom met at the audiovisual department of Art school Sint Joost in Breda, they did not start working together immediately. At the time of his graduation, Tuinstra was already thinking about writing a script, as well as holding down a job. He wanted to create something – a monologue – that was free from the usual problems of financing a film project. Once he decided he wanted to combine films and Internet, he started writing the concept for the Story of Boris. The idea was to create a jam session of a story from which new variations could be made. A theme had already been chosen: the war in former Yugoslavia. This was a topic close to his heart. He had discovered that war traumas

<sup>34</sup> This definition is based on the 'UK Creative Industries Task Force' report from 1997



often led to fragmented storytelling by the victims, when searching for the truth in their memories. When Tuinstra received a grant for the research and scenario, he approached Blom to co-operate on this subject. They thought about how they wanted to use Internet to tell a story and decided that fragmented narrative is perfect for the Internet.

Once the approach to Story of Boris had been chosen, they started looking at the story from a certain angle in order to make the idea accessible for a larger public. They chose a combination where the documentary would be shown on television or in the cinema, and the website would provide the visitor with further information. The website was launched on May 1st 2005 and the documentary followed in the summer of 2007.

On the website, they tried to remain objective and thus offered the visitor clips of sessions and files on the history, treatment and life of a psychiatric patient. This created an online dossier which reconstructs Boris' past.

Blom and Tuinstra hope that this methodology helps to *"make the complex subject of war trauma accessible to a large public. We are objective, as the public has to dissect the story for themselves. It is a non-hierarchical way of telling a story through the Internet. The most important part is that the story is told in fragments, which allows the audience to make up their own story. This way we want to give a new voice to the refugee problem as traumatised refugees are often accused of not telling the truth because a single narrative structure is often lacking in their story."*

The StoryofBoris.com project is a particular type of cross media production, which addresses important issues in our society. The project tells the story of Boris. The website shows the sessions of a traumatised war refugee with his psychiatrist. Edited sequences of the latest session are uploaded weekly, along with other files on the history, treatment and life of the patient. In this way a dossier is created to reconstruct Boris's past.

The story is not spelled out for the viewer, but he is left to make up his own mind about Boris. Should we, for example, see Boris as a victim or an offender? What are his personal circumstances and why and how would one deal with such experiences? The main character, Boris, is suffering from PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder) as a result of fleeing from the war. Because of his disorder, the story is fragmented. In order to recover, his memories and the reality of war have to be disclosed. What are the events that Boris went through? What role did he play during the war?

The audience is free to investigate Boris's past by browsing the files at this website and by taking an independent view in the search for the truth.

Although Blom and Tuinstra have tried to involve the users in the making process to adapt the films themselves, they mention *"people see the project as something which belongs to somebody else. Not as something*



to contribute to. Within the Story of Boris, the images are not very forceful but are open instead. People aren't used to this, because with television they are normally taken by the hand and led in a certain direction."

The Story of Boris, financed by grants from Digital Pioneers, the Dutch Film Fund and the VSB Fund, is an example of a project where the Internet complements television. Blom and Tuinstra often find it difficult to adapt to all the things that the 'television world' wants. They compare it with having to make a type of split. They have to make concessions, but on the other hand they want to remain authentic. However, although the tv-channels are very specific about what they want, they do not make clear to outsiders how they want it. It is extremely difficult to get a production approved and financed, especially if you do not have insider connections. An intermediary who would bring the world of broadcasters, tv-net coordinators and independent producers together could be one answer to this problem.

The following project – 'SoundTransit' – is one that lives for its independent producers, but listens less to its visitors

4 — Making a Soundtransit voyage

Soundtransit.nl is an online, collaborative soundscape project dedicated to field recording and phonography<sup>35</sup>. As a joint production of Sara Kolster, Derek Holzer, Marc Boon and the international phonography community, SoundTransit is a tribute to the sounds of our environment. These often unnoticed sounds vary from those heard in natural or urban environments to improvised situations and "soundwalks"; to the resonance of solid objects or the Earth's atmosphere. On the website it is easy to book a trip from Amsterdam to Moscow with stop-overs in Guadeloupe and Belgium. The database combines these with the more than 1200 sound recordings, ranging from bird sounds to cityscapes from over 300 different phonographers. As a visitor, you may choose from all the files, which have been recorded between Amsterdam and Moscow, all of which have a description of the recorded sound.

Kolster states that she hopes that SoundTransit "will activate a sense of hearing which is mostly asleep. It will make people aware of their own environment and stimulate the imagination." The community of SoundTransit provides the recordings and shares a strong common interest in sound. The community consists of both amateur and professional sound recorders ranging from 25 to 60 years old. They originate from 40 different countries, and 10 % comes from Asia, South America and the Middle East. Furthermore, the site offers the possibility of searching the database if you are looking for something

35 For more info on phonography see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Field\\_recording](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Field_recording)



www.link.nl



www.soundtransit.nl

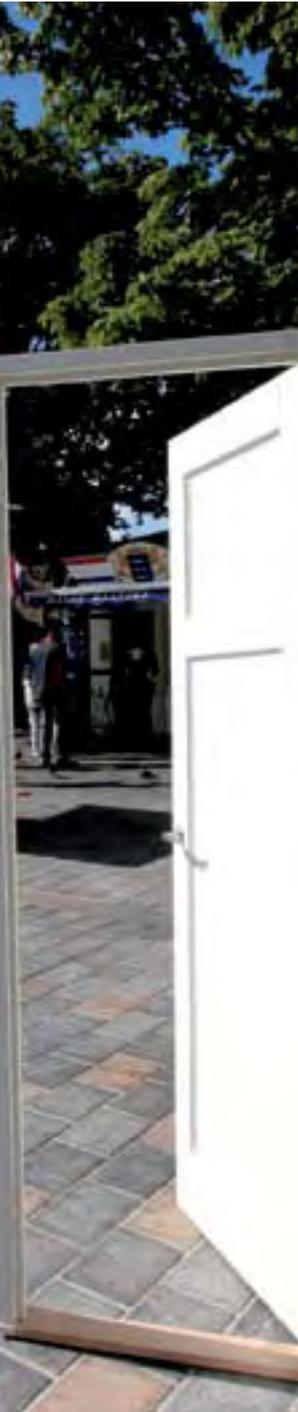
in particular. If you are a photographer, you can also contribute your recordings for others to enjoy. All sounds are licensed under Creative Commons attribution 2.0, which encourages the sharing and reuse of all sounds on the website.

SoundTransit started in 2004 when the initiators were invited to a project at a media festival 'Garage' in Stralsund, Germany. After further updating the project during the Transmedial festival in Berlin and at Soundscape-fm, Kolster and Holzer came up with the idea of further development by creating a flight planner. This is how the SoundTransit project, financed by Digital Pioneers, came into being. It didn't take long before others discovered and implemented SoundTransit in New Zealand, Japan and South-Korea. Kolster says she can't really explain how she ended up there, but that it all seemed to happen virtually. Besides the active user group, SoundTransit has a vast amount of listeners who have made a total of approximately 15.000 sonic journeys, the so-called 'transits'.

The organisation behind SoundTransit is called Umatic, which was founded in 2003 by five media artists. Holzer and Kolster, who have a lot of experience in the world of new media, mainly run this non-profit organisation. A large international network of designers, programmers, artists, festivals and educational institutes supports the foundation. As SoundTransit has managed to receive enough funding to cover the costs, no private money has been spent on the project. Furthermore, the time investment is not very high. Kolster explains that this is because the website is fully automated and the community behind the site organises itself. Kolster and Holzer spend an average of 7 hours per week on the communication with SoundTransit members, updating the website, publicity and problem solving. Kolster emphasizes that *"freedom is very important within the project and that she does not want to be dependent on funding. Freedom of content is particularly important. On this aspect, she will definitely make no concessions."*

In the future, SoundTransit hopes to enlarge its community by expanding the current website and launching customized projects. The SoundTransit team believes that once a larger community has been created, more sounds and interactions will follow. Through sponsorship, public funding and donations on a project basis, SoundTransit aims to finance these plans. They are, for example, planning the first customized product, which will be a listening booth. Within the listening booth, visitors of, for example, airports can spend their time listening to sounds of their travel location and relax.

New ways of visualising routes and maps is the subject of many projects. The 'MILK' project combines this with GPS technology.



#### 4 MILK: picturing dairy transports with the help of GPS

MILK is Esther Polak's follow-up project to Amsterdam REALTIME<sup>36</sup>, which experimented with the GPS (Global Positioning System). During this first project participants, while watching their individual GPS tracks, started to tell extraordinary stories quite spontaneously about their relationships with the city of Amsterdam.

With the MILK project Esther wanted to further explore these storytelling possibilities with the help of GPS. For this purpose, she decided to map out the European milk transport routes. *"The MilkLine is one of the countless movements of the international food trade, in this case milk, produced by Latvian farmers, made into cheese by a local factory with the help of an Italian expert, transported to the Netherlands, stored in a charming Dutch cheese warehouse to ripen, sold at the Utrecht market and finally eaten by Dutch citizens"* Esther explains.

The project follows a dairy transport from the cow's udder to the consumer's mouth. Everybody involved in this chain is followed by GPS. The GPS tracks are visualized with specially developed software and shown to those involved. This visualization, combined with the sound recordings of the participants' responses and photographs, is shown on [www.milkproject.net](http://www.milkproject.net) that was realised with the support of Digital Pioneers.

The MILK project is a form of 'locative art'. The project explores the visual and documentary possibilities of GPS technology and therefore positions itself along the boundaries of the visual arts, anthropological research, film-like documentary, and innovative cartography. MILK received extensive media attention in the Netherlands and Latvia, and offered many presentations on national and international conferences. The project won the prestigious Golden Nica 2005 award for interactive art at the Prix Ars Electronica<sup>37</sup>.

#### Increasing value of arts & culture

Many Internet based arts and culture projects are multidisciplinary or cross-media productions. They combine social phenomena with artistic creativity. In many cases, as with the 'MILK' project, they want to bring new media art to the attention of the ordinary art sector, the general public or specific target groups. They present tangible issues in inspiring environments and contribute to a more pluriform media landscape. Moreover, many of the projects invite users to remix their work – an initiative that may eventually lead to new media concepts.

#### 2.7 Health & Well-being

The social midfield plays a significant role in the health and well-being sector. The effective participation of individuals and communities in all dimensions of the networked information economy, through their access to ICT and social Internet services, stimulates social cohesion.

<sup>36</sup> See <http://realtime.waag.org>

<sup>37</sup> See [www.aec.at/en/index.asp](http://www.aec.at/en/index.asp)



Many small-scale organisations build social capital by interconnecting health related interests in society with communities and networks on the Internet. This section tells the story of three projects; three individuals who transformed simple ideas into national communities or easy- to-use applications that improve the health and well-being sector in the Netherlands.

### 5 Meet the parents

Ouders Online ([www.ouders.nl](http://www.ouders.nl)) is an independent information source on the Internet for parents and future parents in the Netherlands. They can exchange information, ask experts questions and search for relevant information on the upbringing of children on more than 20.000 pages.

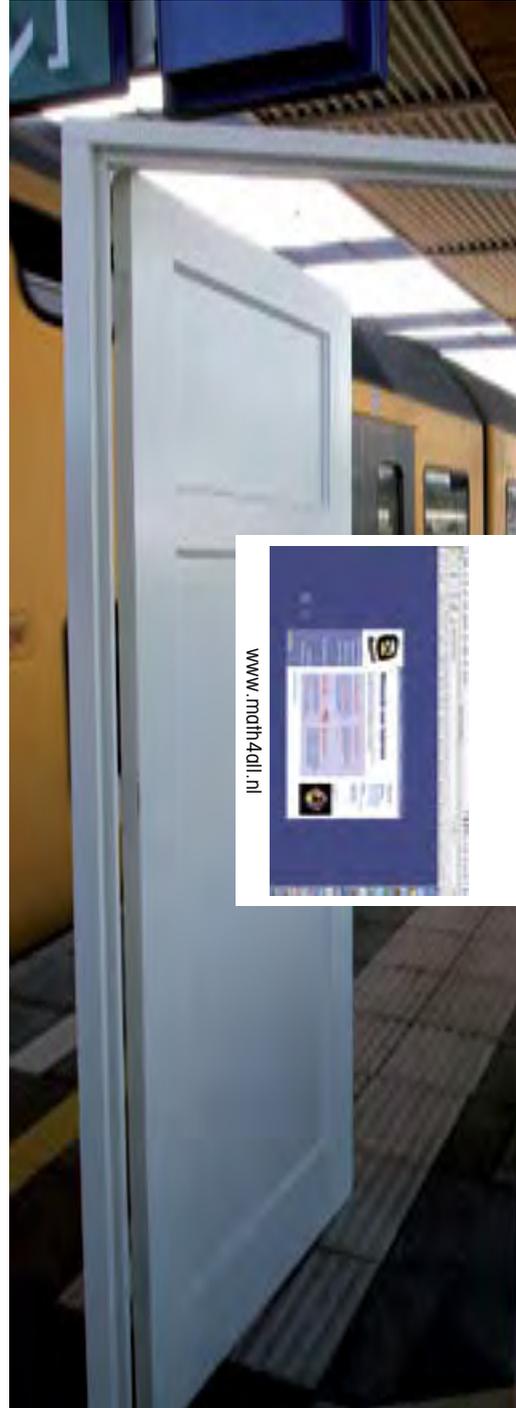
Henk Boeke, co-founder of Ouders Online, used to work for a communications consultancy agency. He often travelled to the US to visit clients who worked in the ICT industry. During one of these visits in 1994, he had his first close encounter with the Internet. At the time, he did not understand exactly what it entailed, but realised immediately *"this is going to change the world"*.

He made an appointment with the leading American Internet magazine *Wired* to get a better understanding of the communicative value of the Internet, but it was still not clear to Henk what the possibilities were. Because of his motto that you can only learn something by putting it into practice, Henk decided to set up an Internet project himself in the Netherlands. This became Ouders Online.

Although Henk set up a website which focused on parenting, he claims that he chose the topic at random. His motives for the project were not on a content level, but more on an experimental level. He started with concepts and explored what worked within this new medium. For example, the website started out with a newspaper format. Every month they had a new front-page and they placed letters from visitors on the website.

Back in 1996, 86 % of the Internet users were male and the formula for the website was primarily aimed at a male audience. It started from the idea that men still lack a platform to learn and exchange information on the subject of parenting. Nowadays the target group has changed, as can be noticed from reader surveys.

Boeke describes three types of developments. First of all, the amount of women visitors has continued to grow every year and they are now the majority of visitors. Secondly, there has been a change within the social and welfare background of visitors. The site is visited not only by highly educated individuals, but also by the less well-educated. Thirdly, today 8 percent of the visitors are of immigrant origin.





### *A dedicated organisation with experts and friends*

The organisation of Ouders Online consists of a general manager, a chief editor, ten experts (dealing with topics such as nutrition, babies, child raising) who work as freelancers and four forum managers. Furthermore, Ouders Online has many volunteers. Ouders Online was first set up with Henk Boeke's savings. However, as the site grew (and is still growing), further financing was needed in order to pay for the servers, data costs and employees. As the income from advertisements did not cover the costs, a loyal visitor of Ouders Online decided to start the *Friends of Ouders Online Foundation*. This foundation collects donations from visitors in order to keep Ouders Online up and running. The Internet provider Info.nl hosts the Ouders Online website (including server maintenance, data traffic etc.) for free. These initiatives keep the structural costs of ouders.nl relatively low.

### *Collaborations and services*

Over the years, Ouders Online has become a respected, independent organisation. Because of their unique market position, other private and public parties often wish to collaborate with Ouders Online and use the independent position of ouders.nl to conduct surveys among community members.

A couple of years ago the financial situation of Ouders Online was troublesome. Thoughts turned to selling the organisation, but as most of the potential buyers wished to turn the project into a marketing tool Henk abandoned this idea.

It was at this time that Ouders Online, with the help of Digital Pioneers were able to code all the available questions and answers within their database. This database makes it easier for the experts to answer certain questions and for the editors of the site to concentrate on content instead of becoming an 'answering machine'. Furthermore, this database also helped to conduct research on the available site data. This is carried out for internal purposes or at the request of clients. Statistics from the site on, for example, nursing are gathered and extrapolated.

Collaborations with commercial entities often develop into further assignments. For example, ouders.nl is now involved in creating an independent online movie database where parents can see if certain movies are suitable for their children. Henk sees these collaborations as part of their business model. They offer many products and services on the site, such as information on depression and physical ill-health or, on a lighter note, birthday parties.

Ouders Online is now financed through advertising, merchandising, fund raising, syndicating content, selling products (books, brochures etc.) and knowledge and collaborating with other projects. Where Ouders Online once made a loss, turnover is now increasing.

### *Community value*

An important aspect of Ouders Online is its large community of (future) parents. This community is organized through the forums and chat functions on the website, where the community members can discuss information and share experiences. It is the community that asks the questions and the experts of Ouders Online who provide most of the answers. At the moment, ouders.nl has more than 300.000 unique visitors each month, of which 95 percent return to the site. Of these visitors 96 percent are women.

Henk finds it difficult to define which type of project Ouders Online is. It lies somewhere between semi-public and commercial. On the one hand they have to make money to keep on running, but Henk does not find this truly commercial as they remain independent, transparent, open and justify every choice they make with their community and stakeholders.

Where ouders.nl is a community of many-to-many, other projects in the health sector focus on 1-to-1 support, as is the case with the 'Child Line'.

### 5 Chatting with the 'Child Line'

Kindertelefoon.nl is a telephone network specifically for children. By calling, they can anonymously discuss problems with trained volunteer staff. The organisation was founded over 25 years ago, but only recently did it discover that children also wanted to communicate with them digitally.

Frank Schalken, a volunteer working at the Kindertelefoon, started a chat pilot project in 2000 to reach target groups that rarely use the Kindertelefoon: children between the age of 13 and 18 and boys in general.

During the first phase of the project, the Kindertelefoon used an Internet chat application which did not meet the general security standards. Consequently, a super secured 1-on-1 chat has been developed with the support of Digital Pioneers. Since day one, the chat has been a big success; in fact the number of young people using the labour intensive chat application, stretches the capacity of the organisation.

For the Kindertelefoon the chat's success also meant developing new methods to oversee the chat conversations, as phone didactics and pedagogics do not apply to chats. Going digital really transformed the work of the many volunteers at Kindertelefoon. It took Frank and other colleagues some time to convince the board of the organisation of the advantages and the innovation of the chat.

Now, all 20 regional Kindertelefoons are using the chat. The chat application was programmed on top of the open source Jabber software. Others can therefore use the chat too if they want to offer help online. The national social welfare organisation Humanitas and many other groups are now using the software. They can build and innovate, using it as a base. Frank started his own organisation E-Hulp ([www.e-hulp.nl](http://www.e-hulp.nl)) that has grown into a knowledge centre for online (medical) assistance issues.

The project illustrates how persistent individuals can change and innovate organisations and even sectors in the way that they operate their services and train their staff. These kinds of pilot projects need a few strong believers who support the project unconditionally. In the case of the Kindertelefoon, many people and organisations offered help on a

[www.kindertelefoon.nl](http://www.kindertelefoon.nl)



pro bono basis. This is also the case for the 'Fruitdate' project – the brainchild of a student.

### 5 — Fruitdate: a healthy way to meet people

In the Netherlands, just as in many other countries, obesity of young people is causing more and more health problems. Government organisations start campaigns but to date, the results have been negligible.

Inge Lub created the project Fruitdate, because she wanted fruit that would be available in her own high-school. Fruitdate is a project that stimulates fruit consumption amongst high school students by connecting an online dating/friendship service to the consumption of fruit. As the students buy a piece of fruit in the school canteen, they gain a sticker with an access code. After they have finished their fruit, they can surf to [www.fruitdate.nl](http://www.fruitdate.nl) and answer ten multiple choice questions in the categories sports, chat or love. When they are ready, they can enter their fruit code and the computer matches them with three other students who gave the same answers. These students can then start a chat, e-mail and maybe even date.

Inge received funding from Digital Pioneers to realise her ideas in 2004 after she was scouted at a sustainability congress in Amsterdam. Since then, she has implemented Fruitdate in four schools in The Hague. After this trial run, Fruitdate was also implemented in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen where about 6000 students took part in the project. This was followed by 16 schools in The Hague in 2006.

In the period after the pilot phase, Lub notes that the largest barrier was getting the schools to cooperate. *"By taking it a level higher and contacting the caterers immediately instead of the schools, things started to be much easier. These companies would like to extend their collaboration with Fruitdate in the future."* So all in all it seems that after many years of struggle it has finally come together. Lub states *"The government should put more effort into getting people to live a healthier lifestyle - not by making rules, but by starting up projects and giving more public information."*

Lub now cooperates with commercial partners such as The Greenery and Sportfruit and the national nutrition centre. With the help of various health centres, institutes and experts, she hopes to launch a national version of Fruitdate in the near future.

### A vital society

Easy-to-use applications on the Internet help visitors to become part of social networks, and eventually to become active participants instead of passive consumers. 'Ouders Online', 'Fruitdate' and the 'Kindertelefoon' exemplify the reinforcing power of the Internet for social capital.



[www.mimoo.eu](http://www.mimoo.eu)

[www.fruitdate.nl](http://www.fruitdate.nl)

These projects have services that are centred on citizens and specific communities, instead of being consumer products of companies or (government) institutions. They have developed and implemented civil e-services. The initiators have become social entrepreneurs with a sustainable business model.

However of real interest is that many of these models which were developed in a Dutch national context, can easily be transported to other countries. This notion would accord well with the EU policy objectives for inclusion, as laid down in the Riga declaration, that agrees on policy to: *"Enhance active participation in the society and economy and self-expression, through innovative ICT-enabled access to goods and services, and relevant content, to facilitate interactions with public and private entities, entertainment, and social contacts."*<sup>38</sup>

While stating these objectives in a EU-framework is an important step, turning them into reality is much more demanding. As for many of the successful initiatives, it is still very difficult to upscale their services internationally as culture, values and communication vary from country to country. The needed investment remains difficult to realise as no real European financing mechanisms exist for small-scale civil e-services that contribute to these objectives.

For this reason, the European Commission will publish the Communication on "eInclusion 2008" at the end of 2007. The policy objective is to contribute to the inclusion in the information society of all Europeans, by policy, research & development, deployment, and implementation in the area of 'eInclusion'.

The 'eInclusion' programme acknowledges the demographic shift in Europe, where the percentage of people above 60 will increase from 18% in 1990 to 30% in 2030<sup>39</sup>. For the 'Health & Well-being' segment, projects such as 'ouders.nl' and 'kindertelefoon.nl' offer tools which can be of great help to the elderly to support their participation and communication in society. These projects will enrich their personal networks and contribute to more social capital.

## 2.8 Government & Politics

Citizens who are gathering on the Net and collectively pooling their voices and political clout become increasingly influential. Abroad,

<sup>38</sup> Ministerial Conference *ICT for an inclusive society*, 11 June 2006, Riga, Latvia. See also the publication *Vital Society: the new social use of ICT*, published in Riga in April 2006 and downloadable at: <http://www.peabody.org.uk/pages/GetPage.aspx?id=134>

<sup>39</sup> See [europa.eu.int/information\\_society/policy/accessibility/](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/policy/accessibility/) for more information on the eInclusion programme.





initiatives like 'MoveOn.org', 'MySociety.org' or 'DoWire.org' illustrate the convergence of democracy and the Internet around the world. Some of the Digital Pioneer projects also focus on this domain. The website [www.150vv.nl](http://www.150vv.nl) enables voters to become better acquainted with Members of Parliament. On the site, visitors can select their own personal, political and voting behaviour preferences and then search for politicians who meet these criteria. This is a helpful tool to find your own political flavour in the diverse political make-up of the Dutch Parliament. A complementary tool to influence policy making and political decisions is 'petities.nl' that is discussed hereafter.

**6 Start a petition**

Petities.nl is a website where Dutch citizens can start and sign petitions in order to put political issues on the public agenda. It should be seen as a communication tool for both citizens and government officials. Its main goal is to act as an interface between citizens and the formal, rule based administration. Petities.nl is the place where people and organisations can start their petitions, as they often do not have the money or the technical know-how to organise petitions independently. In addition, the site can also be seen as an instrument for local and national politicians and civil servants to see what sentiments are becoming apparent in society.

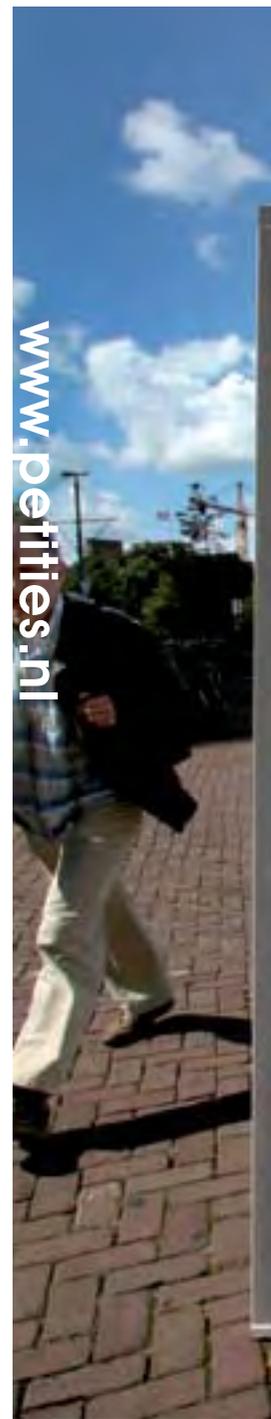
The idea for Petities.nl started when Reinder Rustema<sup>40</sup> was annoyed by the way social initiatives tend to organise themselves. For example, people still send letters or emails individually to the government to get their points across. But, according to Reinder, *This is not the way to make a breakthrough. Through the old-fashioned way of petitioning you do get a lot more attention. This is why I set up a website for online petitions back in 2004.*

At the moment, Petities.nl has about 20.000 people registered in the database who have signed at least one petition. Petities.nl has about 230 unique visitors a day and about 10% of them sign a petition.

Petities.nl has received some criticism from other people and organisations that start petitions on an individual basis. When Reinder approached them they were not very keen on organising a petition via his website as they felt they could organise it better themselves. Reinder explains: *"The problem is that many of these organisations aim at governments. They lobby at the national political level to realise their goals. Starting a petition is an extra instrument for their lobby instead of being an extra instrument for citizens to have their voices heard."*

The idea of Petities.nl is that it will become the independent national website for any local or national petition set up by individuals or social groupings.

40 Reinder wrote his MA thesis in 2001 on *The Rise and Fall of the Amsterdam Digital City*. He now lectures on the future of television at the University of Amsterdam, Media & Culture. See <http://reinder.rustema.nl>



### Sustainable model

The organisers of Petities.nl do not want the organisation to be structurally financed by government. At the moment, Petities.nl is financed by the five euros that each petitioner has to pay to start a petition. In addition to raising funds for keeping the site running, it also serves as a threshold to useless or non-serious proposals for petitions. Also, the aim is to keep the organisation as small as possible. The workload is kept to a minimum as the website runs itself. Reinder hopes that in the future, Petities.nl will organize itself through a community of citizens. According to research done by Petities.nl, one in every 1000 people who sign a petition also start a new petition.

### Impact on policy

For Petities.nl to be an effective instrument, the government will need to receive the petitions. As Reinder notes, *"it is impossible to find out which petitions are being received by the government and if they are doing anything with them. In most cases they put aside anything that originates from citizens. This is why Burgerinitiatief (Citizen Initiative) started. It is another initiative that makes sure that petitions are taken seriously by delivering content in the format that the government wants."*

Following the above, a logical question to ask is why anybody would start a petition if nothing is done with it. According to Reinder, this is where the media comes in: *"If a petition gains attention from the press, the issue can not be ignored by the government. The instrument of receiving petitions is not an issue that is on the political agenda at the moment. If it becomes newsworthy, however, it will gain attention and something will have to be done about it. This will also attract more people to the site, who will sign or start petitions."*

One of the biggest problems of Petities.nl is that it does not fall under the so-called 'citizen initiative' because signatures have to be on paper, which is very expensive. Petities.nl wishes to continue sending in petitions using digital applications. For this to be possible, the government must acknowledge this method. With her digital application, Petities.nl wishes to share a database with the citizen initiative to increase the reach and relevance of the project.

Together with some other Digital Pioneer projects and experts, Reinder was part of the advisory group on eParticipation for the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This group is looking into policy measures to further support civil society projects in government and politics. Another project that may well fit into this programme is the Virtual Integration Counter.



## 6 Playfully integrating in Dutch society

Over the last 20 years, the Dutch population has become more diverse. Nearly half the people living in the major cities are first or second generation immigrants. The *Virtueel Inburgeringsloket* ("Virtual Integration counter") foundation informs immigrants via centrally managed Internet websites and digital screens in public places. It aims to enable them to function in Dutch (knowledge) society as quickly as possible.

Jan Vos started the initiative back in 2000 with the vision that *"This change of society obliges large organisations to communicate with a range of cultures. Many companies make some kind of effort at 'ethnic marketing', but the systematic adaptation of all communication to the needs of contemporary Dutch society is still a challenge to most organisations. Central and local government institutions are increasingly aware that integration is not just a job for the immigration authorities, but has to be an integral part of the way organisations communicate with the public."*

In 2004 an open online virtual integration game was released with the support of Digital Pioneers. Before and during the production, initiator Farshad Soleymani did extensive research into potential users and their needs. The game aims at encouraging migrants, in a playful manner, to work independently at their integration processes. The results of the game have helped to further develop the information and the interface of the integration counter in public spaces.

This led to the introduction of the Virtual Integration Counter Foundation in Amsterdam, The Hague, Eindhoven and Deventer. It became clear that the Virtual Integration counter Foundation, with its burgeoning activities, had outgrown its initial status and it became the limited company GovWorks ([www.govworks.nl](http://www.govworks.nl)). Vos explains that the success is due to the fact that they *"make information accessible to everyone by using the latest technology, clear pictograms and other media. In this way, the system can easily be used by vulnerable groups, as the functionally illiterate, handicapped people, the elderly and immigrants."*

By 2006, GovWorks had more than 200 clients in the public and private sectors. Most of them are large and small local authorities. In the past it would have been unthinkable that non-governmental organisations would provide such a public service. With the increase of civil e-services from projects like the 'Virtual Integration Counter', some public services are now provided by private entities.



### Convergence of democracy and the Internet

More and more citizens participate online and projects such as 'Petitions.nl' and the 'Virtual Integration Counter' give people simple and tangible applications to improve civil and community aspects of their lives. If applied properly, a petition tool can reduce the often-criticized gap between politics and society on both national and local levels. The integration counter increases the level and quality of participation of minority groups who are usually difficult to reach. Government should further stimulate the development of these civil e-services. It will increase the media wisdom, the inclusion of major minority groups in Dutch society and, above all, these services will contribute to more social capital.

The projects also show that it need not be the government which initiates or executes these services. Independent, professional private companies and civil society organisations take the initiative to implement many services that otherwise would not have been realised within government itself. The private character of these enterprises does not have to be a limiting factor. When using these civil e-services, people often provide privacy-sensitive information to the company. It is striking to see the level of trust that many of these organisations apparently have built up. At the same time, one can question whether these people are media wise enough to understand the potential privacy risk in sharing their private information.

### 2.9 Service & Technology

Every day, new open source software programmes based on open standards are published and result in new open platforms. 'Open' appears to be the magic word. In July 2007, 'Google' urged the American Federal Communications Commission to adopt four types of open platforms for its auction of wireless spectrum<sup>41</sup>. These entail open applications, devices, services and networks. 'Google' thinks that if these four conditions are adopted, together they would promote a spirit of openness and spur additional forms of competition from web-based entities. In this section we will look at some projects that take the open motto seriously.

7

#### Bliin YourLIVE;

bliin.com is an open platform dedicated to creating a fluid social network for sharing personal experiences - photos, videos, sound & text - in real-time, located on a world map. bliin YourLIVE! envisages a navigation service driven by user experiences while being on the move. In this new navigation space bliin offers a ubiquitous service to share and discover location experience, which, according to the initiators Stef & Selene Kolman, "enhance the feeling of intimate communication".

41 <http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2007/07/our-commitment-to-open-broadband.html>





www.muziekzorg.nl

In order to make it all happen, the user must have a bliin set: a GPS receiver combined with the pocket-bliin software enable a user to connect to the Pocket or DesktopClient and position him on a map.

The concept for bliin originated with the realisation that we are on the threshold of what has been coined the Satellite Economy. With tremendous speed and increasing accuracy people, animals and objects are transformed from 'stand alone units' to 'networked devices', and are presented – in real-time – against some form of graphic representation of this planet. With the notion that car drivers were the first consumers in our society to come into contact with these modern technologies. - just think of contemporary cars equipped with satellite navigation and communication technologies -, the project was initially targeted towards the automotive community. Along the developmental process this focus shifted towards the GPS-enabled mobile community in general. With bliin, Stef and Selene wish to introduce their users to these new technologies and create an awareness of, and an opinion about, the new possibilities of locative media, as well the risks and potential disadvantages.

*Start of the project*

In 2001, Stef and Selene Kolman were asked to do a study in the context of moving images in a public space in a square in Amsterdam. Early in 2002 they proposed visualizing the tracks of car drivers via GPS technology. What the Kolmans particularly wanted in this period was to look at the possibility of an open, non-proprietary platform. When Google Maps API arrived on the scene, the Kolmans saw the possibility of creating an interface for their platform.

Initially powered by the open source architecture of Just van den Broecke and built on KeyWorx, as developed by Waag Society, they started building the platform with the financial and organisational advice of Digital Pioneers. The challenge was to convince others to create a multi-purpose, fun and sharing platform, as opposed to a single-issue, utilitarian platform (for example, pizza courier tracking, or police cars). As Selene notes *"it should be an open tool with which users can create their own usages, not just utilize it in a specific way. We do not want to predict future uses of the service, but instead invite people to play with the options and possibilities and come up with new applications themselves. This is why bliin has to be open, and not directed and steered towards a single-issue platform."*

In November 2006 bliin allowed access to a group of students, Radius2Dakar, who drove to Morocco using bliin. Viewers could trace every move in real time. Selene finds it *"a persistently fascinating idea that you can trace somebody on a map. She notes that it has something magical to see your friends move through town on the other side of the planet and to experience what they see, when they see it*



.... This type of navigation experience is still in its teething stage." There are many things to be discovered and looked at scrutinised, such as privacy, security, and communication with people who may be on the other side of the planet.

bliin is just starting up and the Kolmans are only now beginning to get an idea of what this application could mean to them and to the rest of the world. As Selene says "where space has become very abstract, bliin is going to bring back the intimacy of space. New spaces are being created and given back to the people. They call this the winning back of public space." Their fascination is, however, a complex one, as they have to do research, focus on marketing and create the product. But their mission is to become the leading brand for inspirational live and location-based social networking.

Last year (2006) Digital Pioneers advised the Kolmans in further defining their services and unique selling points in a business plan. During this process, the project has been brought into contact with different financiers. The Kolmans are now considering the various scenarios of how to further develop bliin.

Another project that has just started with the help of Digital Pioneers and is in continuous development is FLOSS.

#### 7 FLOSS Manuals

FLOSS Manuals is a platform for the collaborative development of user friendly manuals for Free Libre Open Source Softwares (FLOSS). It provides quality, free-of-charge manuals about free software.

Adam Hyde started the project, [www.flossmanuals.net](http://www.flossmanuals.net) in 2006 because "There are a lot of people that know a lot about software. There are also a lot of people that need to know about software. FLOSS Manuals aims to connect the two by making writing and reading about software easy." FLOSS Manuals aims to fill the gap between newbie and geek as much as possible to get you started with great FLOSS software as fast as possible on any platform.

The manuals have a clear icon language, and can be viewed online or taken away in PDF format. The manuals can be re-written or re-mixed. They are aimed at individual users, NGOs, trainers, and educational institutes with the purpose of bridging the gap between ideology, functionality, and utility. With this service, FLOSS will accelerate the acceptance and wider use of open source software within groups that normally would not start using open source software, as the usability and interface of the software is often too complicated for them. For organisations the cost reduction is considerable as they do not have to pay for proprietary licensed software, are less dependent on service agreements for this software, and are able to build an archive of information based on open standards, thus ensuring accessibility to it indefinitely.

The 'Wireless Leiden' project is based on the same principles but takes them one stage further.



## 7 Wireless Leiden

Volunteer technology pioneers founded WirelessLeiden.nl in 2002. They built an innovative wireless network, based on a license free radio band (WiFi), open source software, open standards and a cooperative organisational model in the city of Leiden and its surroundings. WiFi technology plays a major role in the way ubiquitous wireless connectivity is changing our daily lives. WiFi is very low cost, present in every modern notebook and can be used freely by everybody.

Today, the Wireless Leiden network has grown to such a scale (covering areas up to 25 kilometres outside Leiden) that commercial and non-commercial parties are showing an interest in participating in and using the network for their operations and business applications. Spin-offs and other companies see commercial opportunities for new products and technologies. The buzz word is 'Leiden as a Living Laboratory' for wireless communication technology, based on the Wireless Leiden network. The network is unique in its combination of size, free- of -charge usage, volunteers and voluntary contributions.

Currently, the network is mainly used by students, business visitors, tourists, elderly and low-income citizens as a free broadband Internet connection. In 2005 the 'Open Church' project was completed with the support of Digital Pioneers. It realised a wireless real time streaming from church to care centres for people who find it difficult or are not able to go to church. Live video images of the services are shown in the recreation hall of the care centre for inhabitants, staff and visitors. This service is made possible by the wireless infrastructure of Wireless Leiden.

Many other new uses can be envisaged, such as for example location based services, free mobile telephony via voice over IP, and the up streaming of video or data communication with ambulance personnel. The Wireless Leiden network can be used for developing and testing such new applications in an open innovative environment, a 'living lab'. As Huub Schuurmans, one of the founding fathers clarifies: *"Businesses and organisations are expressing their interest in using the network for this purpose. Hogeschool Leiden, in close cooperation with Wireless Leiden, has started a regional innovation programme to establish a knowledge centre for wireless communication, to develop applications and to improve the quality of the network. So far the network has been built and maintained by volunteers only. The challenge is to improve the coverage and reliability of the network and the organisation without losing the community character of the organisation which has been and will remain essential for the success of Wireless Leiden."*



www.wirelessleiden.nl

For the development of a new organisational model and a long-term strategy Wireless Leiden involved all its volunteers and stakeholders. For the organisation to become sustainable, the long-term planning includes the further expansion of the network, financed by sponsors, commercial partners and professional users.

Although it does not sell any services, the Wireless Leiden network is a unique asset for the city of Leiden and its suburbs. It provides opportunities for:

- Job creation, business growth and economic development.
- Enhancing the attractiveness of the city for students, teachers, tourists and professionals.
- Providing universal and affordable high speed Internet access for all residents, businesses and visitors to the city.
- Improved efficiency of government service delivery.

These indirect effects of open platforms are difficult to measure quantitatively. Their impact cannot be translated into economic indicators, such as Return on Investment or job growth. They are rather an accelerator of social innovation or better yet a living lab.

### Open platforms and open innovation

Jorma Ollila, Chairman of Nokia's Board of Directors has recently stated: *"Open standards and platforms create a foundation for success. They enable interoperability of technologies and encourage innovativeness and healthy competition, which in turn increases consumer choice and opens entirely new markets."*

'bliin' and 'Wireless Leiden' both show what kind of new innovative civil e-services can emerge if pioneering volunteers group together and build these kind of platforms. Users rather than companies are taking the lead in what Eric von Hippel calls 'Democratizing innovation'.

At the same time, it is difficult for many of these innovative platforms to design open business models. While 'open' starts with free access by definition, it needs to develop towards open, but not gratis, civil e-services. The challenge is to find a way to do justice to the characteristics of an open network and keep your user-group on board, while developing the means to make a profit.

Jimbo Wales, founder of the open online encyclopaedia Wikipedia, will launch 'Wikia Search' in December 2007. This search engine incorporates editorial judgements of community members to mark the relevance of a page to a specific search topic. In contrast to the non-profit Wikipedia site, this search engine will be a profit driven company. Wales believes that *"Users will not object to helping a profit-making project because it is fun to share knowledge and because community members want to reduce the power of the search giants Google and Yahoo"*<sup>42</sup>. For the future development of open platforms, it will be extremely important to see if one of the most successful projects in this field will accomplish combining a profit-based project with a non-profit community, while at the same time preserving its loyal contributing super-large community.

<sup>42</sup> The Times, September 3, 2007, Wikipedia boss believes he has the knowledge to challenge Google.



## 2.10 Retail & leisure

The increase in the use and the number of social networks on the Internet has been enormous the past few years. People link with other people within these networks as easily as gathering in a stadium to support their favourite football team. They share personal information, reveal their interests and date each other. Networking is often considered as a leisure activity, but many networks are very specific groups which share fundamental interests or cultural backgrounds. Two Digital Pioneer projects 'Nobodyhere' and 'Maroc' are examples of such specific networks.

8

### Maroc.nl

Since its foundation in the year 2000, Stichting Maroc.nl has been managing one of the largest virtual platforms for Dutch and Belgian youth with Moroccan roots: [www.maroc.nl](http://www.maroc.nl) has over 60.000 members and over 300.000 visitors a month.

With the help of Digital Pioneers, Maroc.nl now offers voice functionalities to make the online community more exciting, more accessible, closer, more interesting, and bigger. Spoken and written texts mingle with each other. The voice chat has broad application possibilities, such as supervising homework in a native language. Maroc.nl has become a source of inspiration for Dutch youth with a Moroccan and/or Islamic background.

To date, volunteers have been managing Stichting Maroc.nl. All members of the board have a full time job or pursue a study and work on the activities for Maroc.nl in their spare time. The success of Maroc.nl threatened to become it's downfall. Therefore the board had to take a strategic decision to professionalize the organisation in order to continue the platform and to realize the full potential of Stichting Maroc.nl.

Mohamed El Aissati, one of the founders of Maroc.nl explains: *"Our new road does not just include internal organisational changes, but also a new approach to our target audience. Young people with an Islamic background increasingly feel excluded by Dutch society. When you are young and migrant, the process of gaining an identity is confusing enough already! Where do I really feel at home? is a continuing question. Over the past years, Dutch society hasn't made things any easier; 9/11, the Madrid and London bombings, the Theo van Gogh murder, they have caused (more) tensions in society."*

With its new strategy, Maroc.NL is now growing into an innovative Internet company, providing a community environment incorporating a wide variety of discussion forums (text-, voice- and video based) and blogs. It will start a news magazine with daily news grab and a bi-monthly in-depth magazine with multimedia, an exclusive peer-to-peer music-sharing network and much more.



[www.nieuwsflits.org](http://www.nieuwsflits.org)

[www.maroc.nl](http://www.maroc.nl)



Mohamed stresses that "Without the community most of our other business activities will eventually dry up, because most of our activities are directly related to our community. Advertisers, ethno-marketeers and other media are interested in the members and visitors of our community to communicate their message/product/service and to apply market research. Social and governmental institutions want to cooperate with us because we have access to the community and because we have expertise based on the behaviour of our community-members. When we started, we sometimes experienced difficulties with the government as they didn't understand how our community worked. They didn't like the uncontrolled way members could post their thoughts on our forum. This has changed over the past few years and even the Police is now advertising on our site to recruit for new personnel."

#### Membership value

While Maroc.nl is the first Dutch ethnic community-website, its success has led to many comparable initiatives. Due to technical evolution and falling costs, it is increasingly easy to set up and run a community. These developments have forced Maroc.nl to cast a critical look at itself and the market and to define its unique selling point. The answer is innovation. To date, Maroc.nl has differentiated itself from its field of competitors by exploiting the latest technological and conceptual developments. In this, 'membership value' is an important innovation for Maroc.nl. It binds customers to its site by providing a higher value content than other sites. Membership value is based on a credit registration system, developed by Maroc.nl. Basically, active participation is rewarded with credits. Users can spend these credits on a variety of products or services on Maroc.nl: they can buy extra credit for their mobile phones, send SMS's, download popular ringtones or order tickets for concerts or events.

Maroc.nl has proven that they have the ability to raise social awareness and to organise change within the community at large (members, their families and friends). This has led to support from various sources. "Our main approach and ambition is to empower the growth of our community. We are able to do this now with the financial support of many public and private funds in order to realise our goals and to become a true but non-profit media company."

Based on shared identity, Maroc.nl builds social capital for its members. This is in contrast to the next project, 'BugPool', where community members choose an avatar to design and build the community together.





8

### The BugPool of Nobodyhere: collective designing

Nobodyhere.com started in 1998. At this time, Jogchem Niemand-verdriet (pseudo name of the initiator) already knew how to program and design, but also wanted to do something with text. On the site of Nobodyhere, Jogchem combined his programming, writing and animations: "The visitor can get lost in the thoughts of Jogchem. In the guestbook and forum, visitors can take the form of insects and interact with each other. This guestbook started out as a way to find out what visitors thought of the site, but it really became a community. It seemed that everybody who visited Nobodyhere wanted to fulfil a personal task. Furthermore, the 'bugs' started meeting offline, organizing parties, printing t-shirts. One couple even had a baby."

As more and more people kept coming to visit the site, the community continued to grow. Jogchem notes that people came back because they liked the structure of the site and the world in which they could wander. However, there were also hackers intruding on the site. At first he did not interfere as he wanted to see how the community would react to the fact that somebody was invading the site. In fact, one hacker changed his ways and revealed the security flaw, just to stay accepted in the community. Jogchem calls this the self-cleaning structure of the community.

#### BugPool

NobodyHere.com, which won a Webby Award in 2003, will now be expanded with BugPool. In 2000, Jogchem first thought of the idea of giving the 'bugs' their own website where they could build and maintain sites together. He then started working on the BugPool system and at the moment he is still busy developing it. People who are talented in programming can add scripts, writers can provide the content and those skilled in graphics can create images and designs. This is possible due to the construction of the pages, which are divided into separate blocks. As everybody can work on a different block, there will be no interference within their own specialty. This means that visitors can work on their individual projects or enter into joint efforts.

All in all, BugPool is a grand experiment in collective designing, where unexpected forms and cooperation grow out of a structured exchange of images, scripts, and, to a lesser degree, sound. Furthermore, within the new BugPool site, the "bugs" can lay eggs for each other with pop-up messages or make appointments. The programmed gossip-bug will report any new activities, such as private messages made public. Bug-Pool should become a diverse and lively community in which collective experiment plays a central role.

#### Surprising moments

At the moment, Jogchem primarily works alone. The largest investment that Jogchem has made is definitely the amount of time spent on the site. Apart from his job, Jogchem has spent his free time working on

Nobodyhere and BugPool. Jogchem wishes to become independent of funding. Maybe he will employ other people, so that he can give something back to society. He feels that he has something valuable to offer and that his research and development project will improve the quality of life. He is reminded of a day in Rotterdam when he met a 17-year-old boy from Belgium. They had arranged to meet at the station, and the boy said that meeting the mind behind NobodyHere was the best day of his life (so far, he added wisely.) He knew Jogchem's texts by heart and had even written some of his own. *"It is touching that my words can mean so much to someone"*, Jogchem explains.

He does however feel the need for guidance and structure within his work. Hopefully, interesting collaborations are just around the corner. However, he does not want an office and becoming an entrepreneur is not his main focus. This is still unfamiliar territory for Jogchem, and time will tell how he is able to combine his creativity with business.

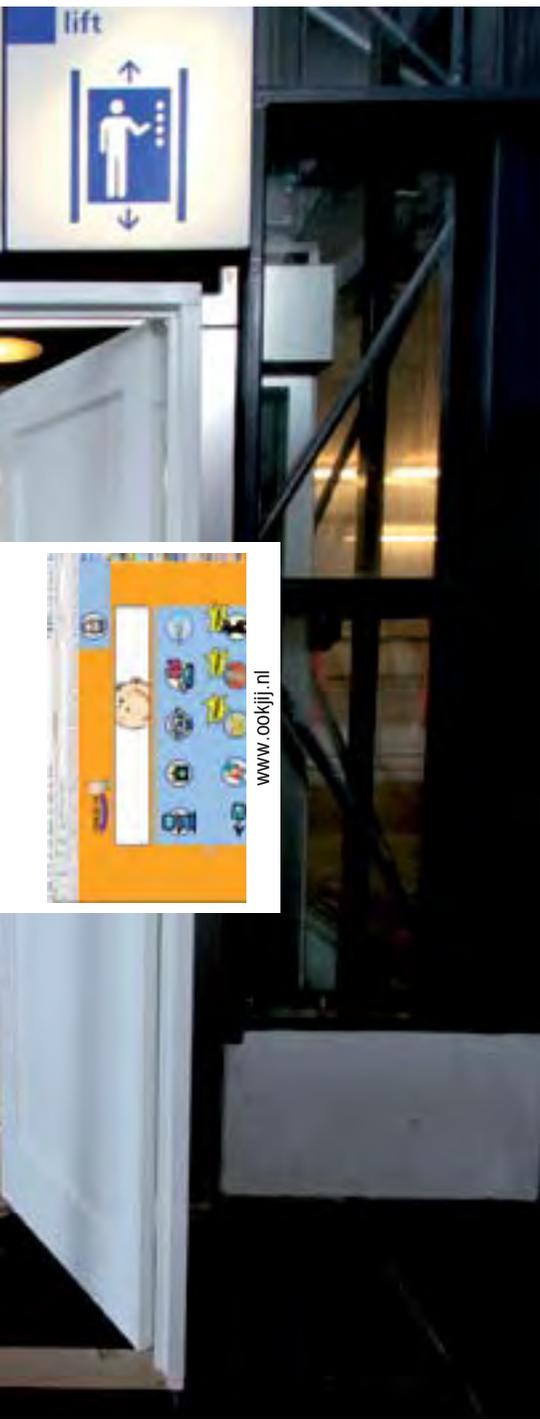
#### **Individualism versus participatory culture**

In December 2006, the American magazine TIME elected YOU as person of the year. The reason was clear. An ever-growing group of people in developed countries take part in online social networks. They create their own environment for information gathering, start their own initiatives, and create and distribute their content. The platforms offer a place to share interests and ideas. Members contribute in search for recognition.

Individual flavours are combined with an increasing level of participation in online social groups. In his book 'The Wisdom of Crowds', James Surowiecki shows that a group as a collective is, under certain circumstances, more intelligent than may be expected. He defines four requirements for this to happen: diversity, independence, decentralisation and efficient aggregation of data.

Many open social networks meet these requirements. They bring people together, and it is to be expected that in the coming years, platforms will further develop instruments to let the wisdom of open social networks flourish.





On the other hand, we also see the rise of closed social networks. Opinions are shared without much criticism. "It is clear that the Internet permits radical groups from both Left and Right (...) to construct inexpensive virtual counter-public opinions (...). The opinions of these groups have traditionally been excluded or marginalised in the mass-media public sphere. The Internet offers them a way not only of communicating with supporters, but also the potential to reach out beyond the 'radical ghetto' both directly (disintermediation) and indirectly; through influencing the mass media<sup>43</sup>."

This gives minority groupings a voice and contributes to their inclusion. It could also lead to further segregation of these groups. A topic which needs further research and monitoring.

**2.11 Programming Civil Society Media**

The 22 projects analysed in this chapter prove how our civil society has medialised. People express their opinions and concerns via civil society media. They discuss, co-create and publish their own work. Projects such as 'Simuze', 'Indymedia', 'Maroc.nl', 'BugPool' and 'Kijkradio' illustrate the transition to a peer-production mode of media. The 'few to many' way of communication of commercial and public service media seems out of date.

Digitisation is everywhere and will lead to the transformation of learning methodologies, the implementation of new online treatments for all kinds of illnesses, other ways of policy making and to a new media environment.

This is all part of the participatory culture in our networked information economy. The imaginary railroad map of the Netherlands on the first pages of this book shows how integrated civil society media is incorporated into our daily lives. It is of the utmost importance that citizens are media wise enough to participate and to contribute.

Civil society media is programming itself but needs support on both the supply and the demand side of the system. In the remaining chapters of this book, this is further elaborated on.

43 Downey, J and N. Fenton, *New media counter publicity and the public sphere*, p.198 (*New Media & Society*, 5: 2, 2003). Quoted by Tamara Witsche in *Reclaiming the Media*, p.130.

# 3 Digital Pioneers: the way it works

## Some basic statistics

YEAR	Call for projects	Nr Applicants	Nr supported	% supported projects	Total budget	Average per project
2002	1	101	22	21,78%	€ 361.000	€ 16.409
2003	2	76	13	17,11%	€ 206.000	€ 15.846
2003	3	108	10	9,26%	€ 175.000	€ 17.500
2004	4	74	13	17,57%	€ 216.000	€ 16.615
2004	5	56	9	16,07%	€ 149.000	€ 16.556
2004	6	68	10	14,71%	€ 122.000	€ 12.200
2004	7	76	11	14,47%	€ 143.000	€ 13.000
2005	8	115	12	10,43%	€ 146.000	€ 12.167
2006	9	77	10	12,99%	€ 113.000	€ 11.300
2006	10	43	7	16,28%	€ 109.000	€ 15.571
2006	11	40	6	15,00%	€ 127.000	€ 21.167
2007	12	37	7	18,92%	€ 110.000	€ 15.714
2007	13	67	6	8,96%	€ 123.000	€ 20.500
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>938</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>14,50%</b>	<b>€ 2.100.000</b>	<b>€ 15.441</b>

www.opennile.org





**The previous chapter outlined some Digital Pioneer projects in various segments of society. Project leaders explained how their initial idea has grown to self-sustaining communities, the implementation of innovative civil e-services and media productions.**

This chapter focuses on the methodology of the Digital Pioneer programme. Apart from being a financier of the projects, the specific ways in which projects are scouted, selected, advised on and monitored within the programme are discussed. Aggregated data of the projects and financial statistics are presented to further clarify how the programme has stimulated social innovation on the Internet.

We invite people to comment on, copy, adapt or improve our methodology. This transparency will hopefully lead to new ways of collaboration, co-creation and other initiatives.

**Some basic statistics**

Lets start with some basic figures for the fund. The first 'Call for projects' was sent out in November 2002. Since then, 938 applications have been submitted in thirteen consecutive calls. This means that on average, 72 project proposals per call have been submitted.

Since 2002, the Digital Pioneer Fund has supported 136 projects that have received, on average, € 15.441,=. In total the financial contributions up to July 2007 amount to € 2.100.000,=

**3.1 Working methodology**

The main characteristic of the Digital Pioneer fund is the low-threshold approach in communication and management with the target group. In this way, a dynamic, open and trustworthy cooperation between the fund and its projects is built up. In this section the working methodology of the Digital Pioneer fund is explained.

**Application procedure**

Each call for projects is open for around six weeks. Three instruments are available to help applicants with the submission of their proposals:

- 1.Guidelines Digital Pioneer Fund<sup>44</sup>: a five-page document outlining all aspects of the fund. It includes the criteria for judging proposals, outlines the way projects are monitored, and clarifies financial rules. Most of the framework of the fund is laid down in the guidelines, which have been improved from time to time.
- 2.An application form in both Word and ODF format with very straightforward questions on background, objectives, products, dissemination, reach and organisation of the project with limited space to answer (on average up to 150 words per question). Furthermore,

<sup>44</sup> The 'guidelines' and application form are available in both Dutch and English at [www.digitalpioneers.org](http://www.digitalpioneers.org).

applicants use easy formats for planning and templates for the budget. No prints or signatures are required to apply.

- In the first four weeks of the call, anybody can submit a draft proposal to KnowledgeLand (KL). They receive oral or written feedback within a week and can afterwards finalise and re-submit their proposal.

Research carried out by TNO in 2005<sup>45</sup> shows that more than 60% of all projects finalise all steps for application in four hours or less. In these figures, there is no significant difference between supported projects and projects that are not selected for financial support by Digital Pioneers. These seem to be acceptable figures, although they have not been compared to other funds.

### Criteria used to judge proposals

All submitted proposals are reviewed with a set of criteria. If projects meet these criteria they are eligible for support. However, this does not mean that a project will actually be supported. The criteria are:

#### Content

- The project contributes to democratic opinion shaping, social participation, social cohesion, or is a valuable addition to public information on the Internet;
- The project aims at a specific topic or a defined target group and the needs of that target group;
- The project has a national range and is aimed at the Netherlands;
- Existing projects only qualify if the requested contribution is meant for broadening, professionalizing or internationalizing current activities.

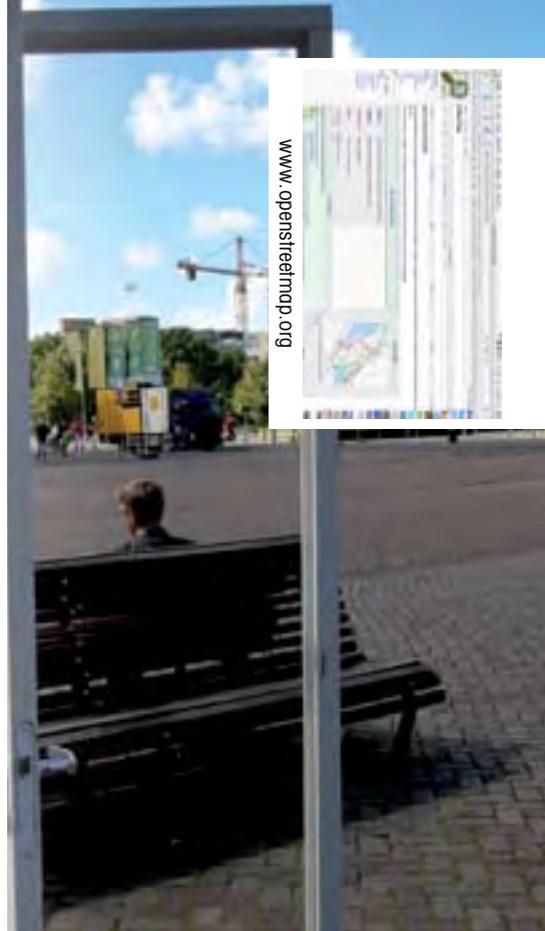
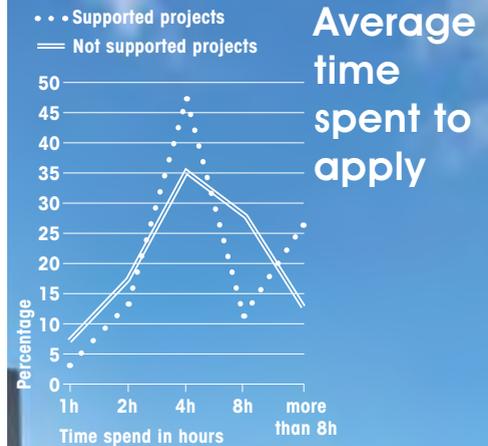
#### Organisation

- The applicant is a small-scale, non profit-making organisation;
- The project is partly maintained with the help of volunteers;
- The organisation has sufficient organisational capacity to implement the project and realize the intended results;
- The organisation has a clear affinity with the defined target group;
- The organisation is a legal entity or can become one in the short term.

#### Plan of action

- The proposal is sufficiently formulated, including a clear goal and a definition of the target group, realistic planning (in phases), tangible targets and a specified budget;
- The project uses, if available, existing (open source) software applications;
- The project language is either Dutch or bilingual in its set-up;

<sup>45</sup> Pionieren op meer manieren, Evaluatie tijdelijke stimuleringsmaatregel Digitale Pioniers, TNO, 2005, p. 19



- The organisation makes applications, knowledge and experiences as publicly available as possible;
- Software developed with the support of the fund is, wherever possible, published under an open source license;
- Produced content is freely accessible and, where possible, published under an open content license.

**Selection procedure**

The fund manages the selection procedure with a three-step-procedure that will be discussed in detail:

1. Pre-selection list compiled;
2. Shortlist drafted by group of experts;
3. Intakes with project leaders on the shortlist.

*Pre-selection*

Out of the total submissions per round the KL project team pre-selects the twenty most promising projects. A standard score card based on the criteria in the guidelines is used to compile this list with pre-selected projects. Each proposal is judged by at least two project team members.

KL then composes a document summarising the twenty projects. This document, including guidelines and further background information, is sent to a group of experts.

*Expert shortlist*

During the 'Call for projects', five to seven people are invited to act as experts and to advise KL on the selection of the projects. The experts do so on a pro-bono basis. The composition of the group of experts changes per call. Depending on the theme of the call, experts represent different fields of knowledge in civil society, new-media, software or finance.

Ten days after closure of the call, the group of experts comes together in an evening session with the project team of KL to discuss the pre-selection list. All projects on the pre-selection list are meanwhile invited to submit a short video film to introduce themselves and their project in two minutes to the group of experts. This introduction is combined with a short presentation by a KL team member who summarises the main goals, the strengths and the weaknesses of the project proposal. The experts then discuss for five minutes various points of the proposal and conclude by giving an individual score on the scale of one to ten. At the end of the evening all scores of all experts are cumulated and average scores (and standard deviation) per project are presented.

Projects with an average score of above 6.0 are eligible for support. These projects are placed on the shortlist. Since 2006, a budget of 120.000 euros per call has been available. This normally reduces the twenty proposals on the pre-selection list to around nine projects. Up to now, the budget has been enough to support all eligible projects.

*Intakes with shortlist projects*

The project team conducts an intake with every project on the shortlist at the working space of the project. Visiting the applicants instead of inviting them to come to us is highly



appreciated by the supported projects as it lowers the barrier between project and financier. Many of the intakes take place at the kitchen table with the group of people working on the project.

This is the time to make the final judgement whether the team behind a proposal is capable and ambitious enough to carry out the project. Technical, organisational and financial details are discussed. It is also the starting point for KL's advisory role. Advice is given on possible partners to co-operate with, knowledge on available open source software that may be used is shared and a detailed planning and dissemination plan is created. The result of the intake is a revised and final project plan.

#### *Contract and initial payment*

More than 90% of the intakes result in financial support given to the project by Digital Pioneers. Few projects receive a contribution of less than € 5000,= and no more than eight projects received funding of around € 30.000. On average the financial support per project is € 14.500,= Typical eligible costs are website design, the development of open source software applications, production and distribution of digitised archive material, marketing and dissemination activities. In many cases the team of a supported project works on a (partly) voluntary basis to realise the project. If team members are financially compensated for their efforts, the tariff per hour is kept to an absolute minimum.

In many cases projects do not have the in-house expertise to realise all parts of the project and hire third parties to do the job. KL ensures that anyone working on the project is compensated at a reasonable rate to exclude heavy overheads. Commercial tariffs by third parties (anything above € 700,= a day) are simply not accepted. On average, this means that the original budget is downscaled after the intake. The difference between the initial budget proposals of all 136 projects and the



financial support granted ultimately by Digital Pioneers is 25%.

No later than four weeks after closure of the call, projects are informed of whether or not they will be supported. If the green light is given a contract between KL and the project is then drawn up. This contract consists of a letter including all details of the applicant, financial contribution and any specific arrangements. The final project plan is part of the contract. At this stage projects that are not legal (around 25% of supported projects) need to become so, as this is a prerequisite of the fund. Associated legal costs may be included in the project's budget.

After finalisation of all legal documents, KL immediately transfers up to 80% of the allocated budget to the bank account of the project. If the project encounters no problems during its execution, an overview of financial figures suffices for closure of the project.

*Auditing of costs*

This way, KL aims to keep the administrative burden as low as possible. It is difficult enough to meet all the obligations that are demanded for by many of the other funds, particularly for small organisations, the load of paperwork, long waiting periods and incomprehensible procedures often discourage small, but potentially innovative projects.

Digital Pioneers starts from the perspective that there should be a balance between the amount of money obtained by the applicants and the administrative processes and control behind it. Therefore, if projects receive an amount above € 10.000 and KL is not certain that the budget was spent on the products and activities as agreed in the contract, an audit report is needed. However, if everything seems in order, an overview of the eligible costs, plus invoices up to 80% of all costs, will suffice<sup>46</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> Standard formats for financial reporting, auditing and evaluation are available at [www.digitalepioneers.nl](http://www.digitalepioneers.nl)



If projects cannot meet the agreed deadline or delivery of the products and activities as agreed in the contract, they normally will not receive (parts of) the last 20% of their contribution. In addition, some projects did not spend their entire allocated budget.

To date, 21 projects have concluded the project and repaid (or did not receive) parts of their grant up to a total of € 100.000,= . This way of auditing the costs has never caused problems for KL or the projects in question.

The figure on the right summarises the different steps up to initial payment.

### **KnowledgeLand project management**

KL invests approximately 1800 hours per year in the Digital Pioneer programme. The project team consists of three people who also work on other projects within KL. Personnel costs for the execution of all facets of the project are around 19% of the total budget.

As part of the programme, an advisor is appointed to each selected project to give solicited, but also unsolicited, advice. KL advisors never decide on any artistic or content part of a project. They act solely as a supporter of the project: they help with network-building; give advice on how to solve organisational problems, or propose ways to strengthen ties with the target group. The responsibility of all parts of the project remains with the project itself.

KL strives to engage with the supported projects as a partner and not as a financier. The connection with such a diverse group of projects helps KL to a better understanding of what is happening in civil society and how Internet is changing the way groups communicate, educate and organise. For this reason it is important that projects represent and reach as many different groups in society as possible.

### **Reaching civil society**

Since the start of the fund KL has chosen to focus on national initiatives rather than on local projects. The reason is that Internet initiatives in general have a national or international character. Many of the local civil society initiatives may use Internet, but so sporadically, that Internet is not the core of the activities.

Looking at the geographical distribution of the Digital Pioneer applicants, the figure next page illustrates that 80% of the projects come from the 'Randstad' region, which encompasses the provinces of North and South Holland and Utrecht and where almost half of the Dutch population lives. The fund gets very few applicants from more rural areas such as Zeeland, Friesland and Drenthe. This is not





## Different steps up to initial payment

Timeline: start call for projects until initial payment												
80% Payment												
Contract												
Intakes												
Experts shortlist												
Pre-selection												
Feedback												
Call for projects												
Days	0	28	36	42	47	52	53	64	68	70	74	

## The chance of a project to be supported by Digital Pioneers does not differ that much from province to province

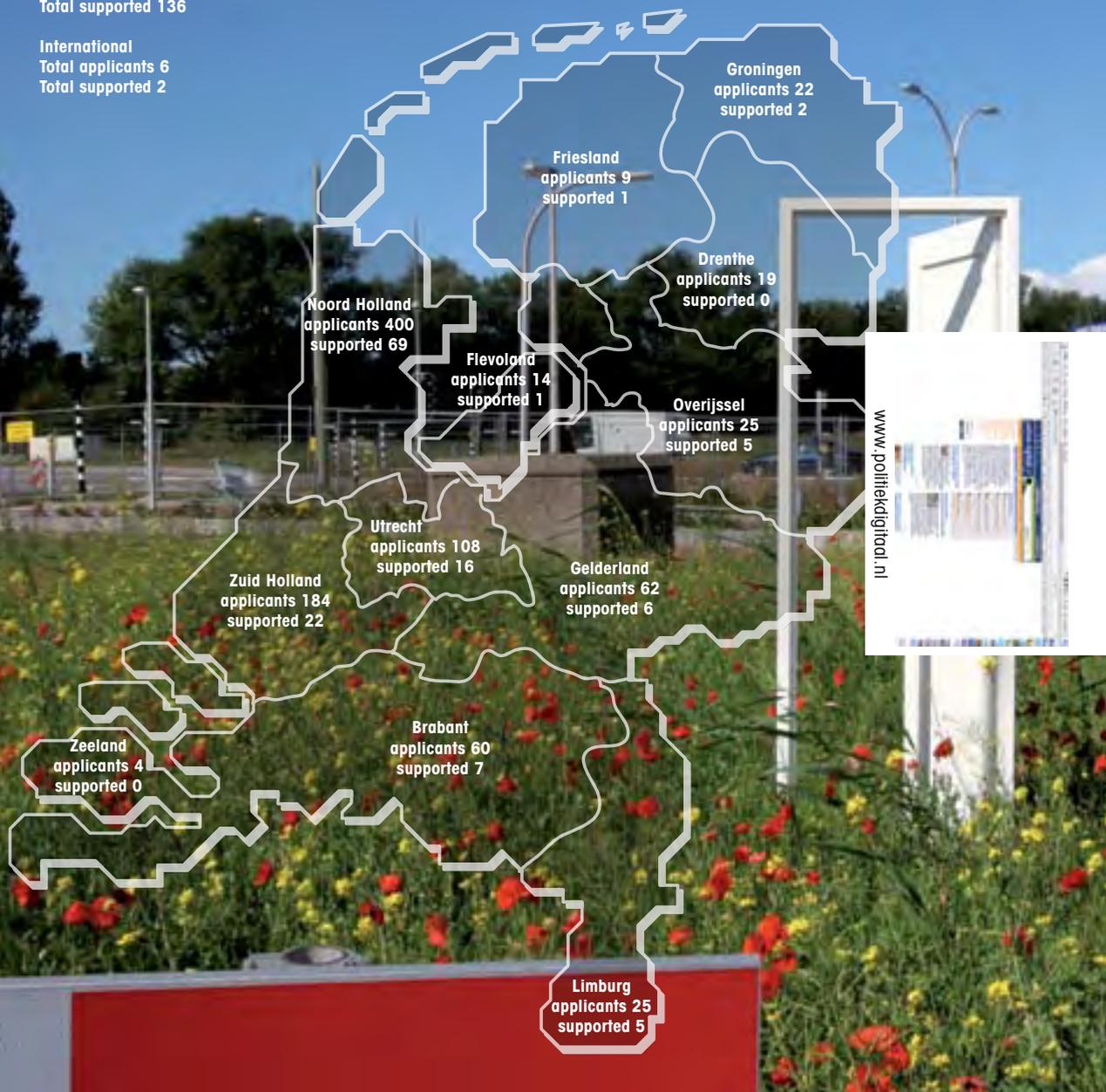
Total applicants 938

Total supported 136

International

Total applicants 6

Total supported 2



surprising, as most creative industries are centred in the bigger cities. As these cities are more densely populated than the outlying areas, the proportion of creative individuals living there is correspondingly higher. The figures also show that the chance of a project being supported by Digital Pioneers does not differ that much from province to province.

One important characteristic of the fund is the scope of the supported projects. Many projects, such as Ouders.nl or Fabchannel.com, have a broad-based community and their members and visitors come from all parts of society. Other projects, such as Geluids.net or Soundtransit.nl have a limited but very specific target group. A conservative estimate based on our monitoring process reveals that the total number of projects reach more than two million unique visitors every month.

### 3.2 Promote learning and sustainability of projects

Shortly after the final selection of projects in one call, KL gathers the project teams of the supported initiatives. In our experience, project leaders are eager to start but, at the same time, feel insecure about the technical and social viability of their ideas. All project leaders present their project to the other Digital Pioneer projects, often expressing both eagerness and concern. This has turned out to be a relevant starting point to further define the project, to start collaboration with others and to share network and experience.

It is also the important moment when many project leaders realise they are 'not alone out there' and that other Digital Pioneer projects are based on the same sets of values and ideas. Amongst peers they share the ambition to improve and change their own environment and society in general.

It cannot be said that Digital Pioneer projects are always proof of good entrepreneurship. Many of them lack the basic knowledge and skills to run an organisation in a professional way.

The fund feels responsible for helping projects to become self-sustaining. This does not necessarily entail transforming a project into a profit-based company. The main focus is to develop a model that ensures the sustainability of the project. Beyond the initial support, this may well be a community that does not realise any turnover, but it should be capable of running a zero-cost based project or a small-scale organisation that provides some services. Many of the applied models do not measure the performance of the projects in profit, but first and foremost in social returns.

To help projects to develop such models, KL organises specialised workshops to train project leaders in specific entrepreneurial skills. However the fund is not meant to become a training centre for entrepreneurs.



www.polifix.nl

Our workshops are therefore tailor-made for the specific needs of the Digital Pioneers projects.

The fund recognizes the character of the projects, their initiators, and the specific civil society issues they deal with. In the workshops the projects learn about traditional entrepreneurial principles to organize, create, and manage their projects and to make a social change. Workshops deal with themes such as user experience, interaction design, the applicability of open source software and open content, or with more rudimentary topics such as tax law, intellectual property or licensing schemes for software. For these workshops, all supported projects are invited to participate.

Many of the supported projects are still connected to the fund years after the support has ended. Some are invited to be part of the group of experts that judges project proposals; other organise workshops for the fund and give advice to new projects. Most give updates on how their project is developing.

The figure on the right illustrates that a majority of the projects succeed in keeping their project going. Out of the 117 projects that have been supported by the fund in the period up to 1 January 2007, 68% still exist, have an active community and/or have grown into self-sustaining organisations. More discussion on the economic aspects of these projects follows in the next chapter.

Some 14% of the projects are still on the Internet but only contain static information. They provide information on a specific topic, have made available a digital archive, channel a specific cross media production or have published an educational game. However, no new content is added and no further investment (both financially as in time) in the project is made.

A mere 18% of the projects has ended, either because they could no longer bear the costs of the project, or because the project did not have enough support or active visitors and members to continue.

### Digital Pioneer Academy

Although the number of 68% 'live projects' is more than acceptable, the fund wants to do more. It has become apparent that many projects have a common problem: after a successful initial phase to develop their idea into a project, it has proven to be difficult to scale up their initiative and to build a sound financial and organisational basis for the support of the project. Hence, KL started the Digital Pioneer Academy in 2006

In an intense working period of six months, a group of initiators of 10 to 12 projects each write a business plan. Under the guidance of





experts and coaches, they further define, research and develop their projects in order to raise them to the next level. At the end of the Academy the best three business plans are rewarded with a prize. Projects that meet the following criteria can apply:

1. Contribute to opinion making and social participation;
2. Develop or implement an innovative service or product;
3. Have a proven track record within a defined target group;
4. Are ambitious to upscale an originally non-profit project to a self-sustaining organisation;
5. Are eager to expand knowledge and to exchange experiences;
6. Are open-minded.

With the Academy, KL essentially developed a steep learning curve for project leaders to develop sound business plans. Anyone, even projects that have no earlier connection with the fund, can apply. The objective of the Academy is straightforward: the Digital Pioneer fund develops ideas into projects and the Academy helps projects to become social entrepreneurs.

Many of the projects discussed in the previous chapter (including 'Wireless Leiden', 'bliin', 'BugPool', 'Maroc.nl' and 'Fruitdate') have participated in the 2006 Academy. Writing a business plan forced them into disciplined thinking. Many discovered that an idea may sound great in theory, but when you put down the details and numbers, it may fall apart and need further development.

The participants ultimately decide on the curriculum of the Academy. They make an inventory of topics and issues they want to discuss; experts are then invited to contribute. The meetings are designed as an interactive process. Instead of considering members of the group as competitors, they are encouraged to motivate and to help each other to optimise their ideas.

The Academy consists of ten sessions of six hours. During each session, external speakers are invited to talk about subjects such as 'social entrepreneurship', 'open and creative business models', marketing techniques, intellectual property, unique selling points or presentation skills. Participants prepare each meeting by reading the provided literature and working on assignments. This way, they work step-by-step towards the ultimate goal: the completion of a sound business plan.

During a final pitch, which is open to public, the participants will each present their project plans to a group of experts and compete for three prizes (one of € 25.000, one of € 15.000 and one of € 10.000).

Overall participants and experts evaluated the first Academy venture positively. Since then many of the Academy projects have moved towards a sustainable business model.





# 4 In search for open models

The open source software movement has revolutionised the creation and consumption of software. Major companies in the business of making money out of software, such as Sun, IBM and Novell, have embraced open source business strategies, in which certain intellectual property rights are ceded to the commons<sup>47</sup>.

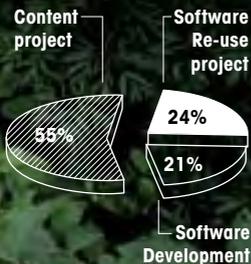
Many Digital Pioneer projects, such as 'LETS' and 'Kindertelefoon' have become a success by adopting 'open' principles. Typically, this implies a business model that uses the open source General Public License<sup>48</sup> (GPL) for developed software. In some cases the scope of the model already supersedes the narrow definition of 'code' and extends from its original software context to all content underlying a creative project, as seen in Digital Pioneer projects like 'Simuze' and 'Soundtransit' that distribute content with a Creative Commons license.

The creation of open platforms, where projects such as 'bliin' and 'Wireless Leiden' provide civil e-services, is one step further along the line of progressing insight on the possibilities of 'open models'.

#### 4.1 Different types of projects

To stimulate and realise open projects within the Digital Pioneer fund, the fund distinguishes three types of projects:

1. **Content project:** A content project aims primarily at the exchanging and sharing of information (text, picture, video or sound) or at offering a social service wherein content is produced, published and accessible for everybody. Although it is not compulsory, KL strongly advocates the use of open content licenses. Content projects can obtain a maximum contribution of € 15.000<sup>49</sup>. Typical supported costs include design, archiving and production of content. Examples of content projects are 'Story of Boris', 'Ouders online', 'BugPool' and 'Simuze'.
2. **Software development project:** A software development project programs software code that is not yet available elsewhere. The fund requires that the project results must be distributed on the basis of a Open Source Software licences, for example under a GPL license and that the software is programmed for a specific project and target group. The maximum contribution for a software development project is € 30.000. Typical Digital Pioneer software development project are 'LETS' and the 'Kindertelefoon'. The fund pays specific attention to dissemination activities to stimulate usage and further development of the software.
3. **Software re-use project:** These projects are almost the same as software development projects. However, they focus on already existing software (generic/open-source) that is re-used in the context of a new project to foster the further development and improvement of the software. The maximum financial contribution is € 15.000. Projects like 'Geluid-snef' and 'Wireless Leiden' have been supported in this way.



<sup>47</sup> On [http://wiki.icommons.org/index.php/The\\_OpenBusiness\\_Guide](http://wiki.icommons.org/index.php/The_OpenBusiness_Guide) the 'Open Business Guide' is published. An initiative by [www.openbusiness.cc](http://www.openbusiness.cc) to collect and describe the best entrepreneurial open business ideas.

<sup>48</sup> See [www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html](http://www.gnu.org/licenses/gpl.html) for more information and license conditions.

<sup>49</sup> In the first eight calls for projects no distinction was made between software and content projects. The maximum amount for any kind of project was € 25.000.

By making it compulsory for applicants to define what type of projects they are, they are better able to define the final products. At an early stage they are forced to describe the software product, the amount of content to be produced or the service they develop. This also means that they have to decide at the start of the project under which license they will publish the software and the content. As the figure shows, more than half of the supported Digital Pioneer projects fall into the category of content projects. This number is not surprising as content production and information provision have always been the nucleus of the fund.

Applicants also have to choose which category/theme applies with regard to their own project proposal.

### Themes & Categories

The fund has two standard categories *Mobility* and *International*. Projects that apply for *Mobility* focus on, for example, locative media, the use of GPS systems and Wireless applications. The category *International* was initiated in November 2006 in collaboration with OpenBusiness.cc.

The idea is to foster the bi-directional exchange of open business models between the Netherlands and other countries. The collaborative aim is to increase the success of Internet based projects producing social innovations. The Digital Pioneers fund solicits calls in the Netherlands for (international) organisations or persons to replicate successful projects (which meet the criteria of the fund) from around the globe.

Apart from these two categories, each 'call for projects' has a specific theme, which is chosen on the basis of relevance. Past themes have been, for example, *Freedom of speech*, *Learning*, *Sustainability*, *Identity*, *Social software* and *Collaboration*. This enables the fund to focus on those specific trends in society it deems essential for realisation of the objectives of the fund.

### 4.2 Building social entrepreneurship

After the completion of the project – in general projects are completed within one year – the final products and results are presented at the KL office. Projects show which media productions, software applications, reports or manuals are produced and can be made public under an open content license or open source software license. Apart from the individual project website, the Digital Pioneer website publishes as many of these final products as possible.

On completion, projects are evaluated on the basis of the original project plan. In combination with the presented results, all projects are given a score: very good, good, average or insufficient.





Of the 115 finished projects to date 47% were evaluated 'good'. This means that the project exceeded expectations and delivered more than set down in the original project plan.

The 25%, which have scored a 'moderate', did what was laid down in the project plan, but did not really get more out of it. Just 10% of all projects scored under expectations and were categorised 'insufficient'. This means that the agreed targets were not realized. In some cases this happened because, during the implementation of a project, it became clear that the plans were not realistic. In other cases projects ceased to exist due to organisational problems.

Of all the finished projects, 18% are labelled 'very good'. These projects have not only realised their plans, but have managed to build a sustainable basis to support their project independently. In these cases, the target group continues to use the developed services extensively. These are the 'pearls' of Digital Pioneers that exemplify what the fund stands for. Many of the projects discussed in the previous chapter fall under this category.

To better understand the real impact of the Digital Pioneers fund, it is important to get a picture of the social, economic and cultural value of the activities discussed here. What are the social benefits of two million unique visitors per month? What is the economic value of the projects, their communities and the content they produce? These are difficult questions to answer, but in the remainder of this chapter, some answers are given.

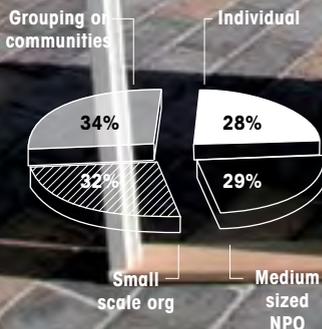
All Digital Pioneer projects are placed within a category according to organisation type, when support by the fund begins. There are four different types:

1. **Individuals:** Individuals, who do not have an organisation, community or network to begin with, set up around 20% of the projects. They simply want to realise ideas, and are ambitious enough to invest large amounts of time in their realisation. The sensor network of 'Geluids.net' and the healthy eating site 'Fruit-date.nl' belong to this category.
2. **Small-scale organisation up to two full-time employees:** Project proposals from this group come from small organisations that want to improve aspects of society encountered through their own working environment. Usually these people see possibilities of the Internet and ICT, but lack the financial resources or cannot fit them within regular budgets. In most cases these organisations combine voluntary work with ad-hoc financed projects. Projects such as 'Maroc.nl' and 'Ouders.nl' belonged to this category when they started.



## Type of organisation at start of support

(N = 123)



### 3. Medium sized non-profit organisation:

The third category consists of medium sized organisations that initiate innovative projects within their own organisations. These proposals are often temporary projects, which do not fit into the normal activities of the organisations. These could for example be an issue-based campaign, a cross-media production or the development of a new social service. The chat application of the 'Kinder telefoon.nl' and the concert archive of 'Fabchannel.com' belong in this category.

### 4. Groups or communities:

Many projects become non-profit foundations, when they receive funding from Digital Pioneers. They were not yet legal entities at the time of the submission of their proposals. They start the foundation in order to realise the project proposal. Sometimes projects already have a community and have already existed as a virtual organisation for some years. In these cases, support from Digital Pioneers is a first step towards professionalizing the community. The sole objective of setting up a foundation is to realise the projects and, maybe in a later phase, to upscale the projects into social entrepreneurship. Examples are the game project 'miniconomy.nl' and the community of 'Nobodyhere.com'.

The figure on the left shows that almost one-third of all supported projects were groups or communities when they applied for support, although they were not legal entities. Another 20% operated alone in starting the project. Only 50% of the supported projects derive from existing organisations.

These figures show that the fund clearly stimulates the initiation of new civil society based organisations. But how do they develop?

In the summer of 2007 the same 123 finished projects were labelled once again to see whether their organisational type had changed or had remained as it was.





The projects were labelled on the basis of how the original initiative is organised nowadays. In some cases the initiator left the original project and started his own organisation or commercial entity. If he took the project to this new organisation, then the new organisation was labelled. However, if the project or service still existed and remained with the old organisation, then the project is labelled under the old organisation.

Two extra categories were added to the original four, leading to the following six categories:

1. **Small-scale organisation:** the website and the project are still developing. One or more people invest time in the further growth of the organisation and the project.
2. **Medium Sized non-profit:** the project is structurally embedded in an organisation. A project team works on a daily basis to maintain, update and improve the project.
3. **Commercial entities:** the original project is transferred to a new entity that develops (social) services and products.
4. **Self-sustaining community:** the project is still a flourishing community, but it has no real physical organisation. Community members and visitors produce content and work on the further development.
5. **Static project:** the content and website were realized with the help of Digital Pioneers. They still provide information on a specific topic, make available a digital archive, channel a specific cross media production or publish an educational game. However, no new content is added and no further investment (time or money) is made in the project.
6. **Stopped:** the project has ceased to exist. The content is no longer available.

By comparing the two figures illustrating the different types of organisation at the start of support by Digital Pioneers and at the second moment of labelling them, we can make a number of observations:

1. Out of 123 Digital Pioneer projects, fifteen new commercial entities have emerged. They started primarily as small-scale organisations or as individuals and now employ between two and twenty people. Many of the civil e-services provided by these initiatives were extensively described in the second chapter.

Most of them are still expanding their businesses and show increasing earnings. This can be considered quite an achievement. It was never the core objective of the Digital Pioneer fund to turn initiatives into commercial enterprises. It means that more than 10% of the supported projects are capable of developing their original idea to a market driven company.

2. Many of the projects that started as a group have become self-sustaining communities. Taking the character of the fund into account, this is quite a logical outcome. The fund was started to provide support to small-scale Internet initiatives that realise innovative social services. If the initiators and the community are able to maintain the project without relying on generating revenue to cover heavy overhead costs, it means the project has a sustainable basis.
3. A few small-scale organisations that were successful with their project, remained non-profit organisations and grew into medium-sized non-profit organisations. The support by Digital Pioneers functioned as an accelerator in the further development of their civil e-services and subsequently the size of the organisations.
4. Some of the groups and individually started projects became small-scale organisations, combining the employment of a few people with the work of volunteers. This typically occurs when the community itself does not manage the project and the initiators have enough ambition to keep the project going. The support of the fund was the start of these organisations. Some projects are so successful, that they expand to become commercial entities in only a few short years.
5. Quite a few of the projects originating from medium-sized organisations were ultimately taken away out of the mother organisation and were continued as self-sustaining communities. This usually happens when one or two people within an organisation, which does not see the activities of the project as core business, run a project. The mother organisation then offers the employees the opportunity to continue the project independently in another organisation set up exclusively for the project.

Of course, when interpreting these data, one should realise that the Digital Pioneer fund has only partially contributed to the development of the individual projects. Many other funds, government programmes, private investors, community members and above all the initiators of the projects have been instrumental in the advancement of the projects.

### 4.3 Nurturing pearls

In the last part of this chapter we examine whether the 22 projects discussed earlier, correlate with the data presented above. Basic data on the 22 projects are presented in the table below and summarises the current organisation and



the provided civil e-services. The amount of support received from the Digital Pioneer fund<sup>50</sup> has also been mentioned.

Year of support	Project	Financial support	Organisation & Civil e-service
2002	<b>Ouders.nl</b>	<b>€ 20.000</b>	Has grown to a limited company offering independent consultancy services, cooperation and advertisement possibilities. Its value derives from the vast community of 300.000 young parents (to be).
2002	<b>Boss in/at</b>	<b>€ 22.500</b>	Group of architects designed a serious game as an ad-hoc project to include citizens in urban planning strategies. Now integrated as core activity of their company.
2003	<b>Kindertelefoon.nl</b>	<b>€ 11.500</b>	Innovative chat service experiment set up by an individual for the child-line. Service is now standardized in organisation and has resulted in a spin-off company.
2003	<b>Maroc.nl</b>	<b>€ 18.325</b>	Dedicated community for Moroccan youth. Developed from a chat and forum channel to a full service provider for its community members.
2003	<b>Wirelessleiden.nl</b>	<b>€ 10.674</b>	Pioneering group of volunteers deployed wireless network in the City of Leiden region. This 'living lab' now offers innovative wireless services to public and private partners.
2003	<b>LETS</b>	<b>€ 25.000</b>	Local volunteer networks that exchange goods and services with an alternative financing system. Now many of them work with open source software to exchange and administrate their products on a global scale.
2003	<b>Miniconomy.nl</b>	<b>€ 20.339</b>	Set up by two brothers as a trade game with some friends. Now a limited company with a massive multiplayer trade game offering educational modules and other possibilities to its 40.000 members.
2003	<b>Integration Counter</b>	<b>€ 17.533</b>	Started as small private initiative and has grown to a company (with more than 200 public and private clients) that informs immigrants via centrally managed Internet websites and digital screens in public places.
2004	<b>Fruitdate.nl</b>	<b>€ 13.921</b>	Started by a student to reduce obesity in young people by offering a healthy dating site. Now she is cooperating with various institutes for a national launch.

<sup>50</sup> The projects BugPool and bliin received an additional € 25.000 gift as winners of the Digital Pioneer Academy 2006.



**2004 Petities.nl € 13.776**

Website where Dutch citizens can start and sign petitions in order to put social issues on the public agenda. Now a self-sustaining community.

**2004 Story of Boris € 22.000**

Cross-media production by independent producers. Episodes of the life of a war-refugee can be followed on the internet. The series on Internet will be followed by a TV-documentary. Episodes remain accessible on the website.

**2004 Geluids.net € 25.000**

Initiated by a pioneering engineer to measure the level of noise-pollution around Schiphol airport with the help of citizens. Now a limited company based on sensor network services and measuring all kinds of data.

**2004 BugPool € 20.000**

Avatar based community of bugs. Started as the art project 'Nobodyhere' but has developed into a thriving co-designing community. The software is licensed for tailor-made projects.

**2004 Milk € 24.135**

Locative art project that visualises with the help of GPS technology, the route of milk from the cow's udder to the consumer's mouth. Available on the Net to further build on.

**2004 Fabchannel.com € 23.500**

Project set up by pop-stage Paradiso and transformed into an independent video platform that offers both live and on demand webcasts of concerts, performances, lectures, debates and festivals.

**2004 Kijkradio.nl € 16.988**

Started as an idea for a new media festival for children now enabling 22.000 children from age 8 to 12+ to create their own broadcasts.

**2005 Simuze.nl € 15.250**

Developed by two friends and offering independent musicians an online platform to share, re-use and remix music licensed under Creative Commons. The platform presents more than 1300 tracks to the more than 80.000 visitors per month.

**2005 SoundTransit.nl € 9.000**

Art collective started a collaborative soundscape project dedicated to field recordings. All archived sounds are freely available for the global community.

**2005 FaceYour World.nl € 15.000**

Initiated as an ad-hoc project in the USA, has now developed into an online educational multimedia platform where youngsters from the ages of 10-16 can construct their own living environments using 3D software.

**2006 Indymedia € 5.600**

This local node in a global network provides independent news on events happening in our society written by its readers and volunteers.



**2006 Bliin.com € 16.800**

Brother and sister designed an open platform dedicated to creating a fluid social network for sharing personal experiences in real-time, located on a world map. Project is now a limited company with a daily growing community.

**2007 FLOSS € 14.200**

Individual started a twiki based website for collaborative editing of open source software manuals in order to make the software more user-friendly for civil society.

**Concluding remarks**

This overview illustrates that many of the projects which received support four or five years ago have progressed and have become commercial entities. A closer look also reveals that many of the now commercial entities, such as 'ouders.nl', 'maroc.nl' and 'geluids.net', still have their independent and public functions.

Choosing for a market driven company does not necessarily mean losing the position of independent provider of civil e-services. These projects are managed as companies, but still remain completely faithful to their public mission.

Taking all the presented statistics into account, it can be concluded that stimulating CSM by means of a funding programme such as Digital Pioneers, creates jobs, spurs social innovation, realises professional media productions and civil e-services.

More difficult to measure directly is the positive influence on the overall 'media wisdom of society', as large parts of Dutch civil society participate, contribute, co-design and learn in many of the discussed communities. However, both the direct and indirect results of Digital Pioneers, gives the programme a decidedly positive influence on the Internet and media landscape in the Netherlands.

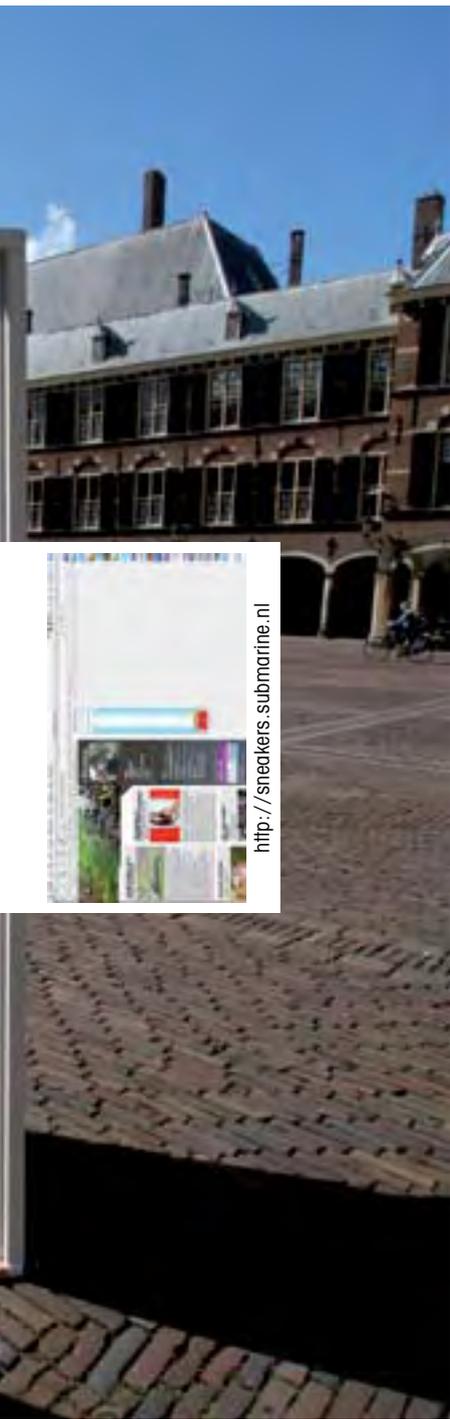
This not only counts for the discussed projects but for most of the in total 136 supported Digital Pioneer projects. For this reason a small booklet that can be separated from the book, is included. It presents screen-dumps of all projects with their website address. Many of them could as well have been included in 'Open doors' and it is to be expected that many will the coming years further develop into thriving communities with innovative civil e-services.

The last chapter presents a scenario and some recommendations on how the positive energy of Digital Pioneer projects can be continued and further enhanced in order to contribute to a strong, independent, pluriform and social innovative media landscape.





# 5 Building an open media society



The first chapter identified some important trends in civil society which carry different backgrounds:

- Economic: innovative civil e-services, open business models and rethinking of Intellectual Property Rights;
- Cultural: media wise citizens, unlocking the potential of digitised cultural heritage; and
- Social: new ways of building social capital and the rise of a sharing economy. The concept of Civil Society Media (CSM) was also introduced in the first chapter. It encompasses organisations, groups and projects, which fit into the basic non-state-non-commercial model of civil society. CSM projects produce civil e-services. The services are not market or profit driven, but are intended to have value for a specific community of users.

The second chapter showcased 22 supported projects of the Digital Pioneer fund. They represent the variety of CSM in different segments of society. The imaginary railroad map of the Netherlands that is included in this book combines the major trends in today's media landscape with these projects.

The Digital Pioneer projects illustrate how the combined activities of modest organisations on Internet have a huge impact on many segments in our society and change the old landscape of commercial and public service media. Chris Anderson, editor in chief of 'Wired' magazine might call it 'The long tail of civil e-services'.

The map and the projects together prove the importance of CSM in three areas:

1. Small-scale bottom-up CSM initiatives contribute to a pluriform media landscape and a more media-wise society;
2. CSM projects often transform into social enterprises, which develop implementation and market successful civil e-services;
3. It further underpins the theory that media-wise citizens can more easily increase their social capital in the networked information economy we live in today.

**5.1 Bottom-up initiatives create a pluriform media landscape**

One could say that CSM is the research & development department of our society, as these virtual labs influence many social processes. People who start CSM projects often share specific characteristics.

1. Innovation: they operate from the idea that innovation is social and dynamic and that new forms of interaction create knowledge. These notions are disruptive in nature and originate from those who want to realise their ideas. If they succeed, others will follow;

2. **Identity:** their status and identity are not necessarily related to the material goods they possess. Rather, the quality of what they experience defines the quality of their lives. People working on CSM projects are motivated by the possibility of working autonomously and at the same time realising social innovation. They are on a 'passionate quest for experience';

3. **Society:** they want to improve the quality of life in general. This may relate to social welfare, working conditions, the environment, or community development. They do not need to be organised in the real world and preferably operate in a virtual community. Many CSM projects on Internet are motivated by a problem-solving attitude and not, as is often thought, by an idealistic mind-set;

4. **Community:** they understand that a process of innovation on Internet needs a strong and committed community to further build on the work of others. Members consume, produce and innovate. In this way, new services and products emerge, together with unexpected business models for civil e-services.

These characteristics reflect the transformation of CSM on the Internet since the nineties. Many of the initiators of CSM projects were already Internet pioneers at that time, and the 'Identity' section described above tended to be the most significant for them. They were often experimenting with the supposed infinite possibilities of the Internet. Internet was new, cool, avant-garde and often less driven by social motives<sup>51</sup>. Many of the then imagined possibilities of the Net are the same ideas that we see realised today: social networks, location based services and user generated content. But in the nineties, these services were difficult to realise as technique, infrastructure, software and widespread Internet usage were not developing at the same speed as their ideas.

Now, ten years later, the true implications and impact of CSM initiatives are becoming clear. Most people in the Western world have broadband access to the Internet and have the basic skills to use the variety of services offered. CSM initiatives can reach their online target group. As the necessary software and knowledge are widely available, the projects are set up with more realistic goals and with fewer technical constraints.

This has led to a spur of social innovation on the Internet. CSM contributes to the strengthening of the basic principles of Dutch media policy: reliability, pluriformity, accessibility and transparency.

<sup>51</sup> See also Richard Florida, *The rise of the creative class*, p.166 (New York: Basic books, 2002) and the report by Rosalind Gross', *Technobohemians of the new Cyberariat?* (Amsterdam: HVA, 2006).



## 5.2 Social entrepreneurship and the diminution of public services

The hybrid character of Internet has shifted some of the 'public services for all' to services that are specific for a particular group and provided by CSM. They are coined 'civil e-services' and Digital Pioneer projects like 'Geluidsnet', 'Ouders Online', 'Kijkradio' and 'bliin' demonstrate the variety of the services offered, their impact and widely accepted usage.

Although the quality and independence of the services cannot be guaranteed through a system of accountability – as would generally be the case with a government 'public service' in the sense that governments are publicly accountable – its users apparently trust the services provided.

This means that the networked information economy not only improves the capacity of individuals to cooperate with others through informal or organized groups that operate outside the market or governmental sphere, but also successfully provides civil e-services based on voluntary commitment and mutual agreement.

## 5.3 Building blocks for social capital

CSM enables other methods of organisation, interaction and participation in civil society. It redefines the relation between citizens and government and between citizens themselves. It also opens new business models for civil e-services and encourages constant innovation. The conducted case study research of Digital Pioneer projects has resulted in a model of how CSM implements and realises its objectives<sup>52</sup>:

1. **The prosumer mode** in which everybody is basically working for themselves in using and customizing productive abilities. This is often the case with media productions such as 'the Story of Boris' and user generated content initiatives such as 'Soundtransit';
2. **The swarm mode** in which people are loosely aggregated to perform tasks, either for themselves (the 'Simuze' project and 'LETS') or for an external object that uses the way of the least resistance ('Geluidsnet' and 'petities.nl'). The swarm mode projects are often the ones that provide civil e-services;
3. **The community mode** in which participants team up in new forms of voluntary social organisation. The value of projects in the community mode is based on shared identity and the 'brand' of the community (for example the 'Maroc.nl' project). Other (commercial) organisations are eager to team up with successful projects in the community mode.

<sup>52</sup> Parts of this model are extracted from the work of Charles Leadbeater in We Think and the presentation Michel Bauwens, founder of the P2P-Foundation, gave at the Digital Pioneer Academy on 16 September 2006.



These three modes are mutual enablers which, in combination with each other, are building blocks for social capital.

#### 5.4 A perspective on the role of government

A clear role can be defined for government to stimulate the further growth of open civil society media projects in the Netherlands and abroad.

By definition, CSM projects only flourish in an open environment. They represent the empowerment of civil society in the Net era. They are the living labs that foster social innovation. Therefore, cooperation of CSM projects with commercial, public sector media or governmental institutions should not be forced but only stimulated.

It is no exaggeration to claim that much unrealized social value in CSM is still waiting to be unlocked. Although in itself not equipped to fill the role of CSM, government plays an essential role in creating the right environments to stimulate this process to its full capacity.

As discussed in the first chapter, the needs of media-wise citizens go beyond ordinary school and education as citizens have to deal with media information and communication in health care, politics and safety issues. Increasingly, citizens are expected to have the skills to create and produce media content themselves. This means they need to have a critical attitude to and a total awareness of their impact, when they actively use and participate in media for both themselves and others.

Promoting both CSM and media wisdom should therefore be a structural part of media policy. The recommendations made by Digital Pioneer projects in the second chapter, plus the analysis of the results of the Digital Pioneer programme in the third and fourth chapters, make it possible to extract elements that contribute to such policy.

Government should stimulate further development of CSM and media wisdom by:

1. **Facilitating CSM initiatives in their start-up phase.** Many CSM projects will not get off the ground (or at least they will do so with less of a bang) without independent financial and organisational support. A low threshold approach in supporting CSM projects, as described in the third chapter of this book, is a prerequisite for successful bottom up change.
2. **Creating and building stronger relationships between CSM projects.** Not only amongst supported projects but also with international counterparts or even not-supported projects. Furthermore, experts who wish to advise CSM projects on a pro-bono basis, and potential financial or organisational investors (be they public/private funds or





venture capitalists) should be included in the networks. This could well be a virtual platform working like the international bidnetwork.org combining and integrating features of the social funding website zopa.com and fundable.org;

3. **Fostering the exchange of knowledge and skills** of commercial and public service media and CSM projects by starting training programmes (varying from content management to quality standards for journalism);
4. Providing a **hallmark for civil e-services** on the Internet that have proven to be useful, independent and of good quality;
5. Promoting constructive forms of **cooperation between commercial and public service media and CSM**. This could, for example, take the form of public service media teaming up with CSM for audiovisual co-productions on specific social issues or cross-media campaigns to raise awareness on public debates;
6. Assuring the use of **open standards, open source software and open content licenses** for all works produced by supported CSM projects;
7. Starting up an extensive detailed **research and monitoring programme** of supported CSM projects with various involved stakeholders (government, non-governmental organisations, commercial & public service media and investors). This will ensure recognition and identification of relevant and successful projects, which should be developed and supported further to upscale them into social entrepreneurship.

**5.5 Monetizing the value of the core**

The presented results of the Digital Pioneer projects, the recommendations in this chapter and the methodology used by KL in executing this fund, all share the resonances of the specific characteristics of Dutch society. Our society has developed historically in a strong pillar system that gives space for the self-organisation of groups with various cultural and ideological backgrounds.

At first sight, it may seem that many of the projects are focused exclusively on their own target groups or communities. However, together the projects show a fundamental shift in the top-down structure of media production by commercial and public service media. It is the collectivity of CSM media, rather than the creative individual that shifts the balance of power within the media industry. Under the influence of CSM, new media products and innovative civil e-services are implemented and made available for the general public.

This is not Dutch, it is global and it concerns monetizing the value of the core: civil society.





# 6 Literature and interviews



[www.inuiscopstad.nl](http://www.inuiscopstad.nl)

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www.timeforum.nl

### Online resources

- For peer to peer systems visit [www.mpi-sb.mpg.de/departments/d5/software/minerva/index.html](http://www.mpi-sb.mpg.de/departments/d5/software/minerva/index.html)
- Franz Nahrada, [www.globalvillages.info/wiki.cgi?GlobalVillages/FranzNahrada/Workspace/RomeSpeech](http://www.globalvillages.info/wiki.cgi?GlobalVillages/FranzNahrada/Workspace/RomeSpeech)
- On [http://wiki.icommons.org/index.php/The\\_OpenBusiness\\_Guide](http://wiki.icommons.org/index.php/The_OpenBusiness_Guide) the 'Open Business Guide' is published. An initiative by [www.openbusiness.cc](http://www.openbusiness.cc) to collect and describe the best entrepreneurial open business ideas.
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### Interviews & research

Between 1 November 2006 and the end of May 2007 Syb Groeneveld and Nicola van de Velde conducted a series of interviews for this publication by. Below is a full list of all interviewees and their organisations.

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- 08 November 2006, Frank Alsema, Dennis Kaspori & Jeanne van Heeswijk, Face Your World
- 08 November 2006, Reinder Rustema, Petities.nl
- 08 November 2006, Bart Brugmans, IndyMedia
- 15 November 2006, Marjolijn Ruyg, Kijkradio
- 16 November 2006, Thomas Blom and Jan Pieter Tuinstra, Story of Boris
- 16 November 2006, Yvette Cramer & Femke Meijer, Boekenmijn
- 16 November 2006, Stef & Selene Kolman, bliin
- 22 November 2006, Jogchum Niemandsverdriet, NobodyHere and BugPool
- 23 November 2006, Rinke Hoekstra, LETS/STROhalm
- 24 November 2006, Bjorn Wijers and Marten Timan, Simuze
- 24 November 2006, Sarah Kolster, Soundtransit
- 01 December 2006 Huub Schuurmans, Wireless Leiden
- 01 December 2006, Bauke Freiburg, Fabchannel
- 05 December 2006, Rene Post, on Geluidsnets and Cleanbits
- 08 December 2006, Mohamed El Aissati, Maroc.nl
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- 20 April 2007, Paul Vermeulen, adviseur Mediawijsheid
- 11 May 2007, Hans Maarten van den Brink, Stimuleringsfonds Nederlandse Culturele Omroepproducties (Stifo)
- 11 May 2007, Taco de Neef, Mondriaan Stichting
- 15 May 2007, Andries Mulder, Amsterdams Fonds voor de Kunst (AFK)
- 15 May 2007, Lodewijk Reijs & Sofia Felix, European Cultural Foundation
- 22 May 2007, Hans van Straten en Thijs Tromp, Prins Bernard Cultuurfonds





### Thanks

The subject and the methodology of the Digital Pioneer fund was new ground for the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science. Most of their support programmes for media productions are targeted at media-professionals and not at civil society media initiatives.

The Ministry gave KnowledgeLand the possibility and freedom of designing the used methodology for project selection and support. At the same time they were always close enough to advise on the selection of projects (as part of the expert group) and to discuss possible improvements with us. The past five years have been an iterative process that helped us both to a better understanding of how civil society works. I wish to thank Hermineke van Bockmeer, Bart Hofstede, Marjan Hammersma, Andra Leurlijk and especially Chantal Olfers for their trust and for this unique cooperation.

At KnowledgeLand we have always worked with enthusiasm on Digital Pioneers. During the early years Joeri van den Steenhoven, Farid Tabarki and Minouche Besters helped to build the programme as it stands. Geert Wissink, Hester Ezra, Jolein Baidenmann, Lobke van der Meulen, Sandra van Vliet and Corline van Es have all supported and advised the Digital Pioneer projects in a terrific way and have played a significant role in the consolidation and improvement of the working methodology of the fund.

The Digital Pioneer team now consists of Chris Sigaloff, Corline van Es and Paul Keller to whom I am thankful for their advice and constructive criticism when writing this book. Special thanks go to Jan Willem Hoogstraten who, as an intern, did extensive research, and to Nicola van de Velde who accompanied me to all the interviews.

Credit also goes to Karin Langeveld from *Trapped in Suburbia*. She understood from the beginning the spirit of the book and designed it as it now stands. In addition, a special thanks goes to Jane Milne-Colling who, without ever meeting me, edited my 'Dunglish' in a perfect way.

Although the idea of writing this book originated a few years ago, it has been written in a period of less than two months. Halfway through chapter two, I moved to Moscow, together with my wife Tanja Röling and one year old son Ilan. During the long evenings of our first weeks in Russia, Tanja gave me all the space and love necessary to keep on writing (and she also designed the railroad map!).

But first and foremost all credit goes to the Digital Pioneers and to all those experts who make Digital Pioneers such a great project to work on!

Thanks!

Syb Groeneveld  
Moscow, 10 September 2007

## Colophon

Published by:  
 KnowledgeLand, PO Box 2960, 1000 CZ,  
 Amsterdam, The Netherlands,  
[www.knowledgeland.org](http://www.knowledgeland.org) + 31 20 5756 720

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[www.trappedinsuburbia.nl](http://www.trappedinsuburbia.nl)

Printed by: Drukkerij Moretus, [www.moretus.nl](http://www.moretus.nl)

ISBN: 978-90-78236-04-7

Tags: 1. Civil society, 2. Social innovation, 3.  
 Open business models, 4. Media policy

This publication was made possible by the generous support of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

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Since 2002, the Digital Pioneer fund has supported 136 civil society media projects. The book 'Open doors' shows how the combined activities of small-scale organisations on Internet have a huge impact on many segments in our society and changes the old landscape of commercial and public service media.

The author, Syb Groeneveld (1971), is a member of the board of KnowledgeLand. He initiated the Digital Pioneers fund in 2002. Syb is interested in anything that has to do with transformations: from nation states, legal systems to media environments.

A political scientist by training, he has focused over the past few years on copyright and Internet. Since 2004 he has been co-public project leader for Creative Commons in the Netherlands. This initiative offers a flexible range of protections and freedoms for authors and artists. CC has built upon the 'all rights reserved' of traditional copyright to create a voluntary 'some rights reserved' copyright.

### **KnowledgeLand**

The Digital Pioneer fund is a KnowledgeLand project. This independent Dutch think-tank was founded in 1999 to help establish the Netherlands as one of the key regions in the international knowledge economy, in a way that creates both economic and social value.

KnowledgeLand (staff of 15 people) brings together a network of government, private sector, knowledge institutions and civil society. With this network KL develops public innovation strategies, takes action through projects and experiments and supports learning networks. It executes the Digital Pioneer Fund with the financial support of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

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