







MyCreativeEdge.eu: The Creative Showcase for Europe's Northern Edge

Developing an Online Export Platform for the Creative Industries

Prepared by: Western Development Commission

Date: April 2014





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This report was written by Pauline White, Policy Analyst, Western Development Commission.





Executive Summary

In order to be sustainable and grow, many creative businesses need access to international markets. However, evidence from rural and peripheral regions has found low levels of export activity by creative enterprises. Organisations from four regions in Europe's Northern Periphery therefore came together under the *Creative Edge* project¹ to

... ensure that an open access freely available 'export platform' will be created for all the participant regions and ultimately beyond.

The aim of the export platform/website – MyCreativeEdge <u>www.mycreativeedge.eu</u> – is to facilitate access to global markets for creative goods and services from micro-enterprises and SMEs in the partner regions. Fig. I shows the process of developing this from initial idea to reality.

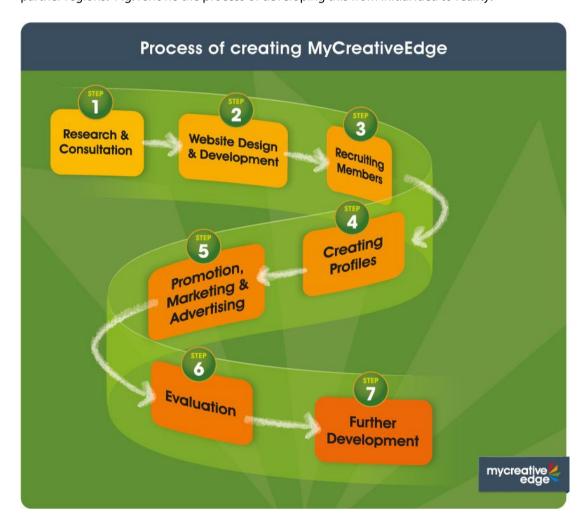


Fig. I: Process of creating MyCreativeEdge

¹ The project partners are NUI Galway and the Western Development Commission (Ireland), SEED/Craigavon Borough Council (Northern Ireland), Film i Västerbotten (Sweden) and Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences (Finland). Further details of the *Creative Edge* project can be found at www.creative-edge.eu



Step 1: Research & Consultation

The first step in the process involved researching what creative enterprises required from such a platform as well as consulting widely with stakeholders from the sector. An online survey of creative enterprises in September 2012 provided an insight into their exporting behaviour and their priorities in terms of export support. From the survey, 80% said they would be likely to use an online export platform if one were available.

The results of this quantitative research were supplemented by the establishment of an Industry Advisory Group (IAG). The IAG was largely composed of creative enterprises and support agencies and they provided their input on how the platform should be developed and what are the key exporting issues for creative enterprises, based on their experience. At the same time, all project partners consulted with the sector in their own regions.

The project partner organisations then held a detailed design workshop in November 2012 to reach agreement on the essential elements of the platform before recruiting a web designer. It was agreed that:

- There can be no cost for participation by a creative in the platform.
- It should increase visibility of creative businesses, and also operate as a sales platform.
- Emerging creative talent who wish to do freelance work should be included with creative businesses, while creative talent who are seeking employment should be featured in the talent bank. When registering they can choose which section or be in both.
- Platform must be easy to use and manage and needs to be self-sustaining creative businesses must be able to create and edit their own profile page.
- Visitors need to be only three clicks away from what they want.
- Language of the platform needs to be simple and clear (and in English).
- It needs to be the "go-to" site for information about exporting and if links to external sites are
 used, the information needs to be uncomplicated.
- Business to Business (B2B) and Business to Consumer (B2C) products/services need to be communicated differently. Platform to be primarily a B2B site, with a B2C showcase element with external links to member's own site for direct selling.
- Integrated with social media activity.
- Democratic in terms of what companies are displayed first on the Home page. When people land on the site they could be shown creative sectors from different regions on a rotating
- Need to measure tangible results from platform pilot to strengthen marketing efforts.

Step 1 concluded with agreed specifications for the export platform and terms of reference for recruiting a website designer.

Step 2: Website Design & Development

Once the essential elements had been agreed, a website designer was recruited to design and develop the platform. A detailed workplan, aiming to have the website go live in mid-June 2013, was agreed. A joint workshop was held with the IAG and project partners in March 2013 where the web



designer presented initial design ideas, and specific issues about how the site would operate and be promoted were discussed and agreed.

The platform was developed over the following months which included agreeing the domain name www.mycreativeedge.eu and strapline MyCreativeEdge: The Creative Showcase for Europe's Northern Edge as well as the logo (Fig. II).



Fig. II: MyCreativeEdge logo

The architecture of the site was also finalised and content for the site's static pages was drafted and copy edited to a web-friendly format. The site has four main sections: Creative Showcase for profiles of creative enterprises; Employ a Creative for profiles of creative talent; About MyCreativeEdge; and a Members' Area.

One of the most important tasks at this stage was developing a user friendly process for creative members of the site to publish their own online profile. An online application process for the *Creative Edge* Talent Voucher Scheme² was also incorporated within the site at this stage. Regional administrators from each of the partner organisations received training in the site's content management system and in the moderation of applications to join the site.

Step 2 concluded with MyCreativeEdge going live in mid-June 2013.

² From Q2 2014, a report on the *Creative Edge* Talent Voucher Scheme will be available to download at http://www.creative-edge.eu/publications/project-reports/



Fig. III: Top of MyCreativeEdge Home page

Step 3: Recruiting Members

The heart of MyCreativeEdge is the profile pages of the members and viewing these profiles is the central purpose of visiting MyCreativeEdge. Therefore recruiting creative enterprises, freelancers and job seekers to join the site and publish their online profile was probably the most important activity in the process of developing MyCreativeEdge. Raising awareness about the development of the platform began up to a year before it went live. This included presentations to creatives, organising seminars, attending events and engaging with organisations and leaders within the sector encouraging them to inform their networks.

Closer to the launch date, an expression of interest form was created on www.mycreativeedge.eu for interested creative businesses. The link to this form was e-mailed to trade associations and creative enterprises and it was also promoted through CreativeEdge social media. On 11 June 2013 an e-mail was sent to the 156 people who had expressed their interest, providing them with pre-launch access so they could create their profile before the website officially went live.

Step 3 resulted in 100 profiles published within one month of the site going live and 500 registered members by the end of 2013.



Step 4: Creating Profiles

Ensuring the process to create a profile is as user friendly as possible, including for those with limited technical skills, was fundamental to the design and development of the site. Fig. IV shows the steps to create a profile.

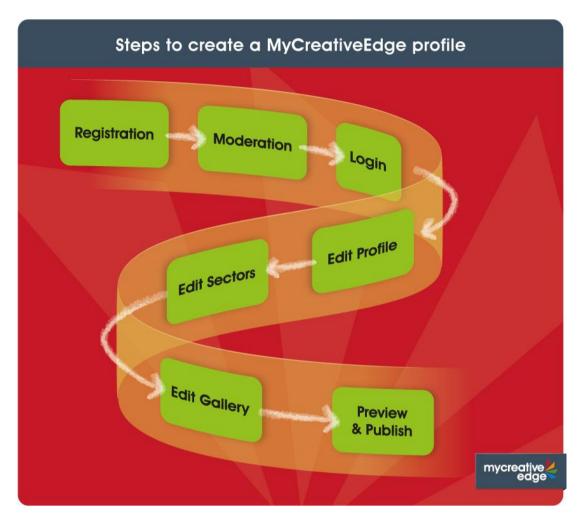


Fig. IV: Steps to create a MyCreativeEdge profile

In each region a regional administrator took responsibility for approving or rejecting all registrations on the site. This decision is based on the applicant being located in an eligible region and operating in an eligible creative sector. Once approved, a new member receives their username and password and can then login to create their profile. This takes four steps:

- 1. Edit Profile: contact details, description, profile picture, social media links
- 2. **Edit Sector**: creative sector(s), tags/skills/services
- 3. Edit Gallery: up to 20 images and/or links to video content
- 4. Preview & Publish: making the profile live on the site



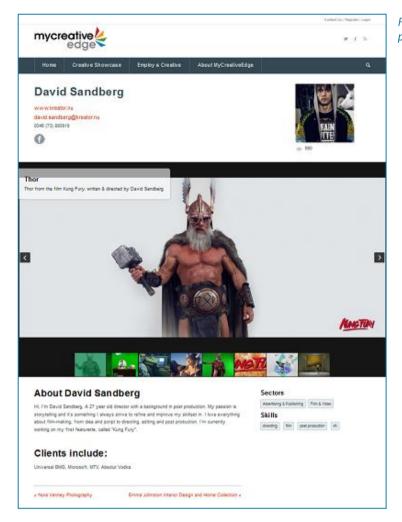


Fig. V: Example of a MyCreativeEdge profile – David Sandberg, Sweden

As members began creating profiles, a number of issues with the process arose and in response several changes were made. These included changing the image slideshow to accommodate different image sizes and establishing an automatic e-mail reminder system for members who had not published their profile.

Step 4 resulted in 84.5% of members reporting that creating their profile was Easy or Quite Easy.

Step 5: Promotion, Marketing & Advertising

Promoting and marketing MyCreativeEdge to potential members and customers was fundamental to its success. A strategic marketing plan was developed in April 2013 which identified the platform's four key target audiences and the marketing messages for each. The four audiences are:

- **Creative Businesses** established freelancers, micro-enterprises and SMEs
- Creative Talent new graduates and emerging creative talent
- B2C Business to Consumer clients for the products and services of the profiled businesses
- o **B2B** Business to Business clients for the services and products of the profiled businesses



The marketing plan was implemented during the remainder of 2013 through a range of advertising and marketing channels:

- Digital advertising: The main advertising channel used was digital and this had a number of aspects:
 - Recruiting creatives: Facebook ads were used in July-August and October-November to encourage creatives to join the site. Some Google AdWords were also used in July-August. In total there were 10,800 clicks on these digital ads. A few online banner advertisements on trade-specific sites were also used.
 - B2C buyers: Facebook ads were used to advertise the Architecture, Arts, Crafts, Fashion & Jewellery and Photography sections of MyCreativeEdge to consumer buyers in the West of Ireland, Dublin, London, Manchester, Philadelphia, Boston and Chicago during September-December 2013. In total there were 16,900 clicks on these ads.
 - Christmas campaign: Facebook ads were used to target the Christmas gift buying market in Sweden, Finland, Northern Ireland, Ireland, London and the US. In total 6,300 clicks were made on MyCreativeEdge Christmas ads.
 - B2B buyers: Google AdWords were used to advertise the Advertising & Publishing, Architecture, Arts, Design, Digital Media, Film & Video, Software & Gaming and Photography sections of MyCreativeEdge to business buyers. These AdWords targeted the West of Ireland, Dublin, London, Manchester, Philadelphia, Boston, New York and Helsinki during September-December 2013. A total of 4,800 clicks were made on these Google AdWords.
- Showcasing at events: Project partners promoted MyCreativeEdge during creative and business events across the four regions. This involved having a stand, making a presentation, having the logo included on the programme and/or networking. MyCreativeEdge was promoted at 54 events during late 2012 and 2013.
- Distributing flyers: MyCreativeEdge promotional flyers were displayed at locations frequented by creatives and the general public and were posted to creative enterprises.
- Direct promotion to creatives and associations: Presentations were made by project partners directly to creatives and students encouraging them to join the site. Trade and industry associations were also asked to circulate details to their members.
- Traditional media: A number of press releases were issued about MyCreativeEdge's launch and its progress. These received newspaper and radio coverage.
- Social media: Creative Edge established a Facebook page and Twitter account in November 2012 and ran a proactive social media campaign. This included using social media to drive traffic to MyCreativeEdge and recruit creatives. By the end of 2013 the project had 1,552 Facebook likes and 433 Twitter followers.
- E-mail mailings: Two main mailing lists were established on MyCreativeEdge members and a newsletter list. In its first six months of operation there were 19 mailings to members and those who had signed up for the newsletter with news and updates.



Fig. VI: MyCreativeEdge flyer designed to attract consumer buyers

Considerable effort and input is required to promote any new initiative. It is necessary to maintain this promotion and advertising on an ongoing basis if visitors are to continue to be attracted to the website. Only by doing so can the platform's ultimate aim of generating business for the profiled creative enterprises be achieved.

From the survey of MyCreativeEdge members, the most common ways in which they had learned of the site was directly from a MyCreativeEdge partner organisation, through social media, word of mouth and other (which included trade associations and third level colleges).

Step 6: Evaluation

By the end of 2013 MyCreativeEdge had 500 registered members. The largest sectors were Design, Arts, Crafts and Digital Media, though most members selected more than one sector. Of total membership 326 had published their profile at that time, just over 40% of these were women and about 4% were aged under 25 years. The majority of members work alone and almost all are in businesses with fewer than five people.³

In its first six months, profile pages on MyCreativeEdge received 61,700 profile views. The number of views each profile received varied depending on the length of time they were on the site, own promotion and attractiveness of imagery. A notable number had over 300 views. If someone viewing a profile took action, the most common was clicking the business's website link. In total there were 2,290 clicks on links on profile pages.

MyCreativeEdge received 36,800 visits between June and December 2013 with 27,800 of these being unique visits. Ireland accounted for just over half of visits, the US for 16% and England for 9%. This reflects the targeting of the digital advertising. The other partner countries were next highest and their capital cities were often the source of most visits. The main way visitors came to the site was by clicking a Facebook ad, Google AdWord or a link in a Facebook post. The Home page, Fashion & Jewellery, Registration, Photography and Crafts were the most viewed pages on the site and about a quarter of visits came from mobiles or tablets.

³ The data on enterprise size refers to the 103 members who completed the survey in November-December 2013.



From the survey of members it was found that access to international markets, it being a free resource and networking with other creatives/finding partners were the main reasons members joined. Over half reported not being aware of any response to their profile, with e-mails and visits to their own site the most common reported responses. Almost all members had used MyCreativeEdge to view other profiles from their own and other regions, and while three-quarters did not make contact, of those who did most did so with people from their own region or local area.

Step 7: Further Development

All *Creative Edge* project partners are committed to continuing the operation of MyCreativeEdge. Resources are available to maintain and operate the site for at least the coming year during which the options for its longer term sustainability will be examined.

The evaluation of MyCreativeEdge has raised a number of issues which are important for making it a more useful resource for members and more user friendly for visitors. In the members' survey suggestions for the site's future included: greater targeting of business events and buyers of services; recruiting creative 'reps' locally to promote the site; limiting the number of sectors a profile can be included in to improve searching; making the site more interactive with live webinars and blogs by members; more updates on available supports; organising events for physical networking between members; and providing opportunities to meet with buyers.

MyCreativeEdge will continue to be developed as the Creative Showcase for Europe's Northern Edge, providing a platform for creatives from across the Northern Periphery area to access international markets, network with others in the sector and expand employment opportunities.

MyCreativeEdge in Numbers

After its first six months of operation some of the key outputs of MyCreativeEdge are:

- 500 registered members 326 published profiles 85% said creating their profile was Easy/Quite Easy
- 37,000 website visits 1 in 3 from outside the four partner countries
- 23,000 clicks on Facebook ads for consumers 5,000 clicks on Google AdWords for businesses – 11,000 clicks on ads to recruit members
- 54 events where MyCreativeEdge was promoted
- 1,552 Facebook likes 433 Twitter followers

Key Lessons

Based on our experience of creating an online export platform for the creative sector, the key lessons the *Creative Edge* partners would like to share with others considering a similar project would be:

1. **Consult with creatives**: Consult with the end users – creative enterprises and talent – to learn exactly what they need and want from such a platform. This will increase buy-in and make sure the platform meets their real needs.



- 2. **Clarify objectives**: Be clear and realistic about your objectives and how these are prioritised. Objectives need to be agreed by all partners and clearly explained to all stakeholders.
- 3. **Build consensus**: When a range of partners and interests are involved it is vital to build consensus about the platform's essential elements before beginning the actual design and development process.
- 4. **Be flexible**: There is a need for flexibility during the design process, as many issues will arise that were not considered in the planning stages and which need to be responded to. In particular it is critical to respond to the actual experiences of end users.
- 5. **Clear decision-making**: It is important to balance consensus and partner engagement with clear final decision-making. There also needs to be one organisation with responsibility for day-to-day decision-making.
- 6. **Recruit champions**: Recruiting members for the site can be done using many methods but word of mouth and gaining the support of leaders and influencers from the sector is particularly important for the longer term sustainability of the site.
- 7. **Adequate resources**: It is important not to underestimate the staffing, time and finance required to effectively design, develop, implement and promote such a platform. Sufficient and realistic resources need to be made available from the start.
- 8. **User friendly process for members**: As members will have a wide range of technical capabilities, creating a profile on the site needs to be as user friendly as possible with minimal input required.
- 9. **Reasons to return**: There is a need to create reasons for members to return to the site and continue to engage after they have published their profile. This could include live interactive events or using the site as a route to apply for other support programmes.
- 10. **Role of social media**: For an online service the role of social media is very important in raising awareness among creatives and in driving visitor traffic to the site. But social media does need to be managed and adequately resourced.
- 11. **Sustainability**: The longer term sustainability of such a website needs to be built into the planning from the very start.



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Background

In order to be sustainable and grow, many creative businesses need access to international markets. However, evidence from rural and peripheral regions has found low levels of export activity among creative enterprises which rely heavily on local and national markets. To increase the value of creative businesses to regional economies and to improve their sustainability and capacity to provide employment opportunities, creative micro-enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in peripheral regions need greater access to international markets.

Creative Edge project

To address this need, five organisations from across Europe's Northern Periphery area came together to develop a project to support access to export markets and increase employment opportunities for the creative sector. The resulting project called *Creative Edge* received funding of €1.2m from the EU's Interreg IVB Northern Periphery Programme (NPP) and was implemented during 2012-2013.⁴

The five partner organisations, from four regions, in *Creative Edge* are:

- National University of Ireland, Galway (Lead Partner)
- Western Development Commission (WDC), Ireland
- Region Västerbotten / Film i Västerbotten, Sweden
- South East Economic Development/ Craigavon Borough Council, Northern Ireland
- Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences (KTUAS), Finland⁵

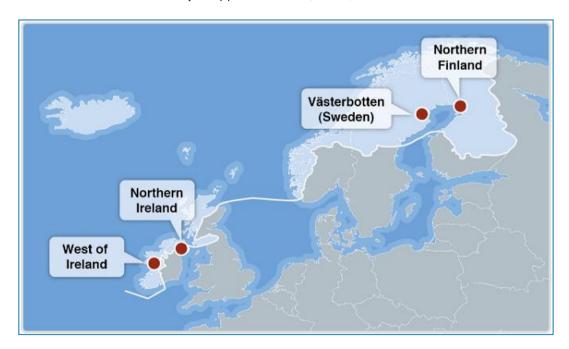


Fig. 1: Map showing the four regions participating in the Creative Edge project

⁴ See <u>www.creative-edge.eu</u> for further details on the project and reports on its other activities.

⁵ KTUAS merged with other institutions and became Lapland University of Applied Sciences from 1 January 2014.



The *Creative Edge* project included five work packages. Work Package 3 was called Access to Export Model, was led by the WDC in Ireland and involved all partner organisations and regions. Its main objective was to

... ensure that an open access freely available 'export platform' will be created for all the participant regions and ultimately beyond.

The aim of the export platform/website was to facilitate access to global markets for creative goods and services from micro-enterprises and SMEs in the partner regions.

Purpose of this report

This report has been written by the WDC to outline how this export platform was designed, developed, implemented and promoted and to assess its performance to date. The export platform that was ultimately developed is called

MyCreativeEdge: The Creative Showcase for Europe's Northern Edge www.mycreativeedge.eu

We hope that this report will be a useful resource for others interested in establishing a similar type of platform for the creative sector or for any other sector. We have tried to document the entire process including challenges which arose and how these were addressed. Ultimately we have identified a number of key lessons from this experience which we hope will be of benefit to others within the Northern Periphery area and across Europe.

Process of developing MyCreativeEdge

Developing the online export platform MyCreativeEdge from initial idea to reality involved the process set out in Fig. 2. The remainder of this report examines each step in this process.



Fig. 2: Process of creating MyCreativeEdge

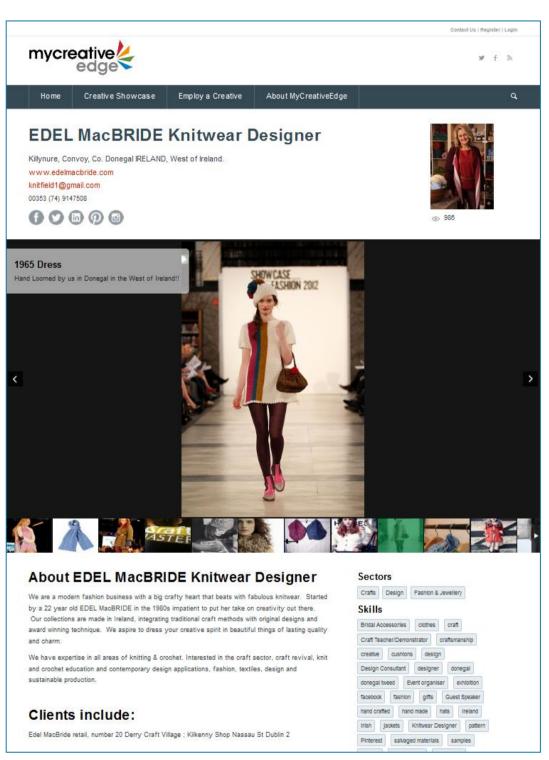


Fig. 3: Example of a MyCreativeEdge profile page – Edel MacBride, Ireland



Step 1: Research & Consultation

The Creative Edge project aimed to

... ensure that an open access freely available 'export platform' will be created for all the participant regions and ultimately beyond.

The project proposal however was not specific on the nature of this platform. It was considered important to seek the views of stakeholders in the sector – in particular creative businesses – before finalising what format the export platform should take. The first step was therefore research and consultation.

As the WDC was the lead organisation for developing the export platform, it took primary responsibility for this. Each of the partner organisations however was engaged in the process and undertook consultations in their own regions. The main activities during this step were:

1.1 Contracting support services for developing the export platform

In June 2012 the WDC issued an Invitation to Tender to contract external experts to provide it with support in the development of the export platform (also called the Export Access Model).⁶ This was to supplement the WDC's internal capacity and provide expertise on the creative sector. This contract was for a period of one year and the main services to be provided were:

- Assess the needs of the creative sector in the partner regions to support their access to export markets. Explore the alternative and complementary options to reach export markets.
- Engage with regional creative sector stakeholders, designated 'regional creative champions' in each of the NPP partner regions and relevant national bodies to gain their input into the design of the Export Access Model.
- Support the establishment and operation of an Industry Advisory Group (IAG) to influence and sponsor the model through its design and implementation phases.
- Design the Export Access Model, in conjunction with the WDC. This model will be combined
 with the access to employment model (Work Package 4) to create an overall Creative Access
 Model (CAM) for the partner regions to facilitate creatives to access both export and
 employment opportunities.
- Support the WDC to prepare an Invitation to Tender for a contractor to design and develop the Export Access Model.
- Design a marketing plan for the Export Access Model and identify its target audience, initially focusing on the diaspora of the partner regions.
- Assess, with the WDC, the need for and pursuant to this, design a Talent Voucher protocol.
 Develop and position the pilot Talent Voucher Scheme within the Export Access Model.⁷

⁶ The Invitation to Tender for the 'Delivery of Creative Sector Support Services to the Western Development Commission under the NPP *Creative Edge* project' was published by the WDC on the Irish government's online tendering website on 14 June 2012.

⁷ A separate report on the *Creative Edge* Talent Voucher Scheme will be published shortly and will be available on http://www.creative-edge.eu/publications/project-reports/ and http://www.wdc.ie/publications/reports-and-papers/reports2014/.



- Support the WDC in launching and piloting the Export Access Model and in its ongoing implementation.
- Propose a sustainability model for the creative sector support function.

In total four proposals were received and following evaluation and interview Newmarket Consulting Ltd was awarded the contract. An inception meeting was held between the WDC and Newmarket Consulting in August where a workplan for the design, development, implementation and assessment of the online export platform for the period up to September 2013 (the original end date of the *Creative Edge* project which was subsequently extended to December 2013) was developed. This workplan set out the main activities which are examined in the remainder of this report.

Detailed one-to-one interviews between Newmarket Consulting and Pauline White, Policy Analyst with the WDC and Dr Patrick Collins of the Whitaker Institute, NUI Galway were held, both of whom had been involved in previous pieces of research on the creative industries sector in the Western Region of Ireland.⁸ The focus of these interviews was the key issues for the creative sector and for the design of the online export platform, as well as the questions for the online survey of creative enterprises.

1.2 Online survey of creative enterprises

It had been agreed that one of the first steps should be to conduct a survey of creative businesses focusing on what supports they needed to increase their level of export activity. An e-mail contact list of 246 creative businesses based in the Western Region of Ireland was provided by NUI Galway and a link to an online survey was e-mailed to them on 14 September 2012 and the survey was open for four weeks. In total, 91 responses were received. The questionnaire is attached as Annex 1. The online survey service Polldaddy (www.polldaddy.com) was used.

For practical purposes this survey was conducted in the Western Region of Ireland as a database of e-mail contacts was available. At a subsequent meeting with all project partners (see section 1.4) it was agreed that the survey results reflected the situation in all partner regions quite well, based on the consultations, discussions and experiences of the other partner organisations.

The most relevant survey findings for the design of the online export platform are set out in Box 1.

⁸ WDC (2009), Creative West: The Creative Sector in the Western Region http://www.wdc.ie/wp-content/uploads/reports Creative West.pdf; and NUI Galway/WDC (2011), Future Growth Trajectories: Economic Impact Assessment: The Creative Sector in the Western Region http://www.wdc.ie/wp-content/uploads/EIA-report-full1.pdf



Box 1: Results of online survey of creative enterprises, September 2012

80% said they would be likely to use an online export platform if one were available

47% were working alone, with a further 44% having five employees or fewer

56% were currently engaged in exporting, 15% had previously exported but no longer did so and 29% had never exported

The methods for exporting seen as most important were:

- Through people you know/personal networks and their experience operating in external markets
- Website/Online Export Platform

The most important barriers to export were considered to be:

- Shortage of working capital to finance export activities
- Lack of time to dedicate to exporting activities
- Insufficient state assistance
- Complexity of overseas distribution channels or distribution/shipping costs

The networking channels they were most likely to use were:

- International visit to witness best practice and make contacts
- Social media
- Creation of formal networks

The supports for exporting considered to be most important:

- Increased financial resources
- Marketing skills
- Government assistance
- Access to information about export markets
- Inclusion on a direct sales website

1.3 Establishing an Industry Advisory Group

It was considered important to get input from creative sector stakeholders in the design and development of the online export platform. Therefore the WDC established an Industry Advisory Group (IAG) made up of 15 members from the private and public sector. Their role was to provide insight and advice on the development of the export platform.

Potential members were contacted by phone and this was followed up by circulating a briefing note (Annex 2) which clearly set out the input required from members of the group. The membership of the IAG is set out in Table 1.

........

Table 1: Creative Industry Advisory Group Members

Name	Organisation
Louise Allen	Crafts Council of Ireland
Pat Collins	NUI Galway
Aideen Doherty	Donegal County Council / Donegal Film Commission
Mary Hawkes-Greene	Burren College of Art
Geraldine Gray	Leitrim Design House
Martina Hamilton	The Cat & The Moon / Martina Hamilton Jewellery
Colum Joyce	Connemara Online
Maria Kerin	Outsider Artists / Artist
David Knight	Willow Publishing / David Knight Photography
Colm MacFhionnlaoich	Enterprise Ireland
Gillian Marsh	GMarsh TV
Reenagh McCall	Embrace Lingerie
Hannah McGuinness	Donegal Designer Makers / Hannah McGuinness Jewellery
Geraldine McLoughlin	Western Development Commission
Keith McManus	IT Sligo
David Power	Cox Power Architects / Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland

The first meeting of the IAG was held on 8 November 2012. An overview of the *Creative Edge* project was followed by a presentation of the results of the online survey as well as the one-to-one interviews. A document setting out the key issues and barriers for the design of the platform was also circulated. This had previously been discussed by project partners.



Fig. 4: First meeting of Creative Edge IAG, Ard Rí House Hotel, Tuam, Co Galway, Ireland, 8 November 2012



While the IAG's discussions were intended to focus on the design and format of the online export platform, they also included broader issues for supporting and developing creative businesses and increasing export activity. While some of these were outside the immediate scope of the *Creative Edge* project, they were useful in terms of identifying the support needs of creative businesses and for the development of future support programmes.

The IAG agreed on some key issues and possible solutions for encouraging creative enterprises to become more export active.

Table 2: Issues to be considered in increasing export activity by creative enterprises as well as possible solutions

Issues to be considered	Possible Solutions
Support needed for designing	Product development bootcamp, working on a real life
products/services for export markets	export project.
High cost of shipping	Creative enterprises to collaborate to export in bulk.
No strategic view for creative	Creative industries' strategic development could be guided
industries/creative collectives	by the development of a strong creative brand.
Resistance to provision of external	Local Business Development Manager needed to liaise with
export support	creative enterprises locally.
Differing levels of internet skills	Mentor to assist creative enterprises to get their products and services online.
Online export platform launch	Platform should be populated with content before it is
	launched. Members can be attracted initially through
	promotion of their products/services on the platform to
Diff: It is a six of a six	existing networks (e.g. WDC's diaspora network).
Difficult to get information on export	Export information can be provided through platform, it
procedures (e.g. tariff codes) Lack of capacity (e.g. manufacturing in	should take fear out of exporting for creatives. Online export platform should be a platform for
Ireland)	transnational collaboration to meet capacity requirements.
Lack of funding to build exports	Structure to enable creative enterprises to access loans is
	needed.
Difficult to get and monitor IP	"Don't be afraid to be copied"
protection internationally	
Lack of cross-discipline opportunities	Need to foster ideas across creative sectors (e.g. craft and architecture).
Mobile usage/Apps	Decision as to optimum platforms for the export platform is
	critical to design. Must also take internet access issues into
	account.
Lack of joined-up thinking amongst	Awareness of creative industries among traditional
non-creative/traditional sectors	industries needs to be increased via promotion on the
	platform.

1.4 Creative Edge project partner workshop

The *Creative Edge* project partners held a partner meeting in Derry/Londonderry, Northern Ireland on 15-16 November. This included a half-day design workshop on the online export platform. Newmarket Consulting facilitated the workshop and it included a presentation of the survey results as well as the outcomes of the IAG meeting.



The goal of the workshop was to reach a consensus among all project partners on the key issues for the design of the platform so that a web designer could be recruited. It was at this meeting that the essential elements and basic functionality of the online export platform were agreed.

What **must** be included in the online export platform:

- There can be no cost for participation by a creative in the platform.
- Platform should increase visibility of creative businesses, and also operate as a sales platform.
- Language of the platform needs to be simple and clear (and in English).
- Platform needs to be the "go-to" site for information about exporting and if links to external sites are used, the information needs to be uncomplicated.
- Business to Business (B2B) and Business to Consumer (B2C) products/services need to be communicated differently. Platform to be primarily a B2B site, with a B2C showcase element with external links to member's own site for direct selling.
- Must have a professional look.
- Integrated with social media activity.
- App only required if it is going to offer something more than the website/mobile website.
 App would only be relevant to specific sectors, in a B2C capacity.
- If eCommerce function is to be included in the platform it would be a massive step-up, requiring extensive management. This may not be feasible for the platform.
- Marketing of platform without eCommerce function will be more difficult for primarily B2C businesses, can be sold to them as B2B site to get into retail stores abroad.
- Need to measure tangible results from platform pilot to strengthen marketing efforts.

Functionality of the online export platform:

- Needs to be highly customisable for each company each company should be able to re-skin their profile page within the platform.
- Platform must be easy to use and manage potentially based on a WordPress system.
- Micro-enterprises will not have a lot of time, so contributing materials must be made easy.
- An online platform is important for Audio-Visual (main sub-sector in Sweden) and Digital (main sub-sector in Finland). Platform will need to handle moving images and easily embed existing platforms (e.g. Vimeo, YouTube).
- Needs to be self-sustaining creative businesses musts be able to create and edit their own profile page. This requires quality control for site. Also, inactive companies should be removed/archived quickly.
- Platform needs to be mobile/tablet compatible.
- Needs to be democratic in terms of what companies are displayed first on the Home page.
- When people land on the site they could be shown creative sectors from different regions on a rotating basis or could showcase different "alpha" companies participating in the platform.
- Visitors need to be only three clicks away from what they want.

1.5 Wider consultations with stakeholders

Throughout the research and consultation phase, all partner organisations were conducting individual meetings and discussions with stakeholders in their own regions to gain their insights and raise awareness of the development of the platform. For example this included meetings with representative bodies such as the Crafts Council of Ireland, the Lodge in Sweden and local authorities in Northern Ireland.



Also to coincide with a series of briefing sessions on the new WDC Micro-Loan Fund: Creative Industries, seven presentations were made on the *Creative Edge* project to creative enterprises and support agencies in the West of Ireland during July 2012. The presentations provided an overview of the project and attendees were asked to complete a questionnaire on their export activities and needs. The results fed into the design of the online export platform.

Craigavon Borough Council also organised a series of three export seminars across the South East Economic Development area of Northern Ireland during April and May 2013, each focused on a different creative sub-sector. During these seminars details of the upcoming platform were provided.



Fig. 5: Revisiting Modern Architecture seminar, F E McWilliam Gallery, Banbridge, Northern Ireland, 23 May 2013

1.6 Conclusion

The research and consultation step concluded with a clear agreement among the project partners on the functions and requirements of the online export platform, informed by widespread consultation with creative sector enterprises, associations and support agencies. This agreement on the platform's essential elements underpinned the next phase of designing and developing the platform.

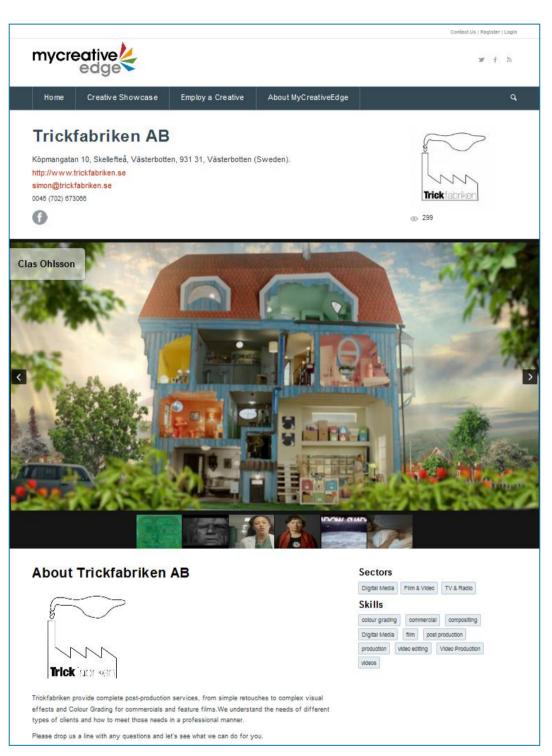


Fig. 6: Example of a MyCreativeEdge profile page –Trickfabriken AB, Sweden



Step 2: Website Design & Development

Based on the research and consultation, the WDC had a far clearer idea of the expectations of the project partners and the export needs of creative enterprises. The IAG meeting and project partner workshop had both allowed considerable discussion of the issues involved. As agreement had been reached on the essential elements of the online export platform, the next step was its design and development. The main activities during this step were:

2.1 Recruiting a website designer

Draft terms of reference to design and develop the export platform were written by the WDC with Newmarket Consulting. These were discussed with the *Creative Edge* partners in Finland in late January 2013 during the Creative Steps programme.⁹ The extent of discussion between partners prior to issuing an Invitation to Tender ensured it was very specific about the functionality of the platform and what was required from the web designer.

The Invitation to Tender was issued in January¹⁰ and the main requirement was

...to design and develop an online export platform (website) under Work Package 3 of the NPP Creative Edge project. The main objective of the online export platform is to increase sales, both trade and final consumer, of the goods and services produced by creative businesses and individuals in the Creative Edge partner regions. Another objective is to increase collaboration and networking between creative people and businesses in the regions and increase employment opportunities for emerging creative talent.

The Invitation to Tender stated that the successful contractor would be expected to develop an online export platform which met the following specifications:

- Allow creative businesses from across the partner regions to showcase and promote their creative products and services in an engaging and interactive way.
- Have both a B2B and B2C element. It is envisaged that the platform will be used primarily in the B2B/Trade context for both creative services businesses and for creative goods producers. However the platform must be designed to also attract consumers wishing to learn about and purchase (through the creative business's own eCommerce platforms) creative goods and services where appropriate.
- Be designed for ease of use on smartphones, tablets and other mobile platforms.
- Have a clear and easily navigated user interface (i.e. visitors to the site should always be at
 most three clicks away from the information they need). The export platform will contain
 details of creative businesses from several creative sub-sectors and across various NPP
 regions so ease of navigation will be key.

⁹ Creative Steps was a programme run under the *Creative Edge* project during January-February 2013 to support the development of young creative talent. A report on Creative Steps can be downloaded at http://www.mycreativeedge.eu/creative-steps-way-idea/

¹⁰ The Invitation to Tender for 'Development of an Online Export Platform (website) for the Creative Sector under the NPP *Creative Edge* project' was published by the WDC on the Irish government online tendering service on 29 January 2013.



- Be designed with a high level of creativity. Given that the online export platform will be showcasing the creativity of the partner regions, it will have to be characterised by a creative and highly professional design. As many of the potential businesses that will be featured on the site are involved in digital media, graphic design, audio-visual etc, the site will have to be of a high technical and creative standard.
- Democratic Home page in terms of what creative businesses are given prominence. This should be designed and developed to allow companies from different creative sub-sectors and NPP regions to be rotated onto the Home page.
- Be built with the capacity to be scaled up in the future, including expansion to additional NPP regions.
- Be capable of carrying static and dynamic content, images and videos. The platform also needs to be easily integrated with existing platforms (e.g. YouTube, Vimeo, Pinterest).
- Be built using an easy-to-use Content Management System (CMS) which allows creative businesses to upload and edit information, videos, images of their creative products and/or services. Creative businesses should have the capacity to customise their own business page within the export platform to some extent.
- It is envisaged that consumers visiting the online export platform who wish to purchase creative goods or services will be re-directed to the creative business's own eCommerce site. However, the online export platform should be developed so that an eCommerce solution can be easily integrated with it in the future if required.
- Include a membership/login element where creative businesses can access export
 information and training and can network with each other, share exporting experiences and
 tips, explore potential collaborative possibilities and search for business partners.
- The online export platform will need to include a facility to allow businesses to apply for the *Creative Edge* Talent Voucher Scheme online.
- Be developed in line with the marketing plan.
- Integration of analytics package to allow for easy measurement and analysis of visitor traffic.

By the deadline, ten proposals were received and three were shortlisted for interview. The interview panel included two staff from the WDC, one from NUI Galway and an external interviewer with expertise in web design. Following interview the contract was awarded to JDK Design (with Electric Mill) (www.jdkdesign.ie).

2.2 Developing a workplan

At an inception meeting between the WDC, JDK Design and Newmarket Consulting, the services to be provided by the web designer were clarified and a timeline and workplan agreed. The aim was for the platform to go live in mid-June 2013 to coincide with the Creative Summit conference being held in Skellefteå, Västerbotten, Sweden.

Following this meeting an online project management service called Asana (www.asana.com) was used to manage the project with tasks assigned to various members of the team. All Creative Edge project partners were members of this online project management group with access to all information and assigned tasks. The main tasks in the workplan are set out in Table 3, though these were not necessarily carried out in sequence.



Table 3: Phases and tasks in the design and development of MyCreativeEdge

Phase	Tasks
Design Phase	Develop wireframes for templates of web pages
	 Finalise design specification after IAG/partner workshop
	Agree domain name
	 Develop brand/logo (submit options)
	Prepare visual mock-ups
	Review and approve mock-ups
	• Coding
	Styling of all site templates
	Finalise all content, imagery
	Population of all static content
	 Population of 'test' member profile pages
Information Gathering & Website Content	Agree sectors and search criteria
	Define site structure
	 Identify stories for site
	Recruit members to join site
	 Write content for static pages of website
	Write region content for each region
Development Phase	Server set up
	 Build front end pages based on agreed templates
	Develop back end functionality
	 Incorporate Talent Vouchers application form
	Build front end site structure into CMS
Testing Phase	 Testing of functionality and content
Training Regional	 Set up four regional accounts
Administrators	 Train regional admin from each partner region
	Provide admin user manual
Release & Go Live	Migrate to live server
	 Limited access for pre-launch members
	o Go live
Post Go Live	 Content for member resources section
	 Documentation for use of site

2.3 Joint Industry Advisory Group and project partner workshop

One of the initial activities in the design and development process was a joint half-day workshop with the IAG members and the project partners which took place in Sligo, Ireland on 13 March 2013. In total 30 people participated in the workshop including IAG members, each of the five project partner organisations, the Irish participants on the Creative Steps¹¹ programme, as well as the web designers and support services contractors.

¹¹ Creative Steps was a programme run by KTUAS under *Creative Edge* for young creative talent. For further details see http://www.mycreativeedge.eu/creative-steps-way-idea/



Fig. 7: Participants at the joint IAG/project partner workshop, Clarion Hotel, Sligo, Ireland, 13 March 2013

At the workshop the web designer presented initial ideas for the architecture of the site (Fig. 8), some wireframes for the layout of various web pages (Fig. 9 and Fig. 10) and examples of websites with a similar look and feel to what he was going for. The workshop progressed the development of the platform's design and helped to build understanding and consensus among project partners and stakeholders.

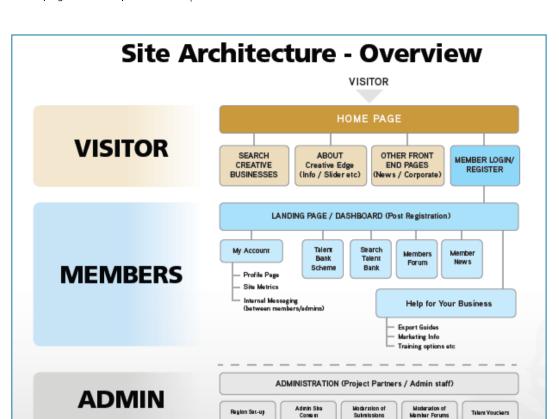


Fig. 8: Initial proposed site architecture



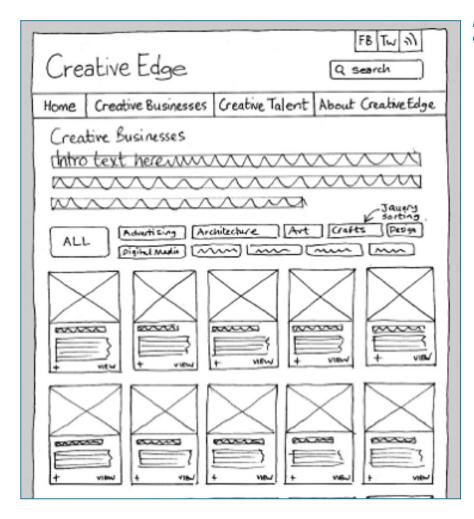


Fig. 9: Initial wireframe of top of home page



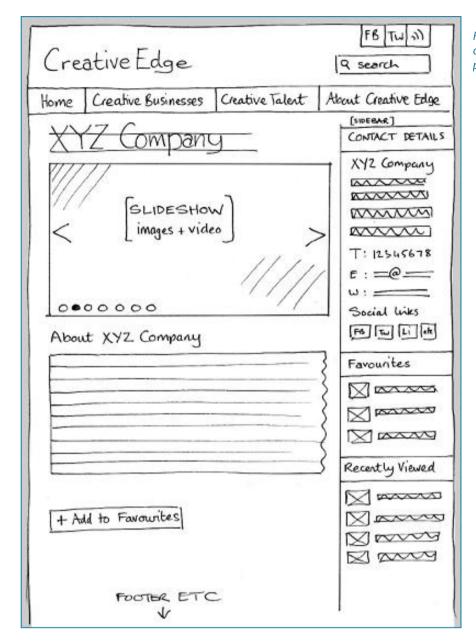


Fig. 10: Initial wireframe of a creative business's profile page

Some of the ideas and agreements reached at the workshop were:

- Platform will be in English but future possibility of translating it and having different language sites.
- Important to present information, businesses and sectors in a clean and unbiased way.
- Platform could include Likes/Recommendations/Favourites options.
- Need responsive web design for different platforms.
- Export platform should be designed with the needs of the customer/website visitor in mind.
- Needs to represent all four regions potentially have a flag/name included showing region for each business.
- Consumers need to be funnelled down to get to the information they want quickly, but website should also be open enough to allow web visitors to browse.



- New phrase is needed instead of "Talent" perhaps "Jobs" or "Work Opportunities".
- There will be two types of creative talent freelancers and job seekers. Need to have tick box for talent registration asking if they are looking for projects, jobs or both. Talent looking for projects should be included with creative businesses. Talent looking for jobs should be included in talent bank/search. Search for talent should be available to all site visitors, not just members.
- The "story" of the platform will be important with the "Edge" and "Edginess" playing a key role in the story development.
- o Partner in each region will be responsible for management of platform for their region.
- Holder site should be created to allow expressions of interest before the site launches.
- Marketing: Key marketing messages needed for the three markets consumers (B2C), trade (B2B) and creatives.
- Consumers (B2C): Products offered to consumers need to link to the consumers' environment. Landing page needs to be sharp and upbeat to reflect the "Edge" concept.
 Products and services available from the platform are unique and individual. Access to four distinctive and non-marketed regions.
- Trade (B2B): Opportunity to collaborate and network. Need to define what success is in terms of B2B visitors. Products and services online are at the bleeding edge of creativity.
- Creatives: Opportunities for collaboration and networking. Need to identify success stories and add to site early and use as a hook to get businesses to sign up. Mix of what is picked as 'success'. Tick box could be added so that businesses and talent can indicate they are open to collaboration/barter. A lot of business will be carried out away from the platform (e.g. on Facebook). First paragraph on platform needs to eliminate the fears of businesses exporting for the first time.
- Quality: Need to create a bar for quality for creative businesses on the site. Need to ensure
 quality and consistency of imagery used on site. This could be funded (e.g. Crafts Council) or
 could be done by freelance photographers looking to develop their portfolio.
- Marketing Opportunities: Finland will be running training events (including online) with companies from region, would like promotion materials and timetable to know when is right time to inform their companies about platform. Push Creative Edge at arts festival events. Potential to promote platform with grant application bodies. Marketing synopsis of platform to be developed, to be sent as e-mail. Incentivise artists to share with their networks. Can be promoted during Business Weeks in colleges and through umbrella bodies.

While not all of the suggestions discussed at the workshop were possible to include in the final design of the export platform, many were. The workshop allowed consensus to be built on the objectives, target audience and format for the site.





Fig. 11: Joint IAG/project partner meeting, Clarion Hotel, Sligo, Ireland, 13 March 2013

2.4 Agreeing the domain name, logo and website structure

Following the workshop, revisions were made to the wireframes and proposed architecture of the site. Also the wireframes were created online to allow testing of the functionality.

Agreeing the domain name to be used for the online export platform led to considerable discussion. As the *Creative Edge's* project website was named <u>www.creative-edge.eu</u> a different domain was needed for the platform.

An agreement was reached among the partners to use the name MyCreativeEdge (www.mycreativeedge.eu). It was felt that this name served a number of purposes:

- For creative members of the site it gave a personalised feeling that they could express their own creativity.
- For visitors to the site it created an idea that they could get something creative and edgy that would be unique to them.
- It was close enough to the project name to maintain consistency.
- o It maintained the concept of the 'edge' of Europe and the Northern Periphery area.

As well as the .eu domain, which is the primary one, the .ie, .co.uk, .se and .fi domain names were also purchased. All would direct to the site e.g. www.mycreativeedge.se directs to the main site. Unfortunately the .com domain name was not available and already in use.

A strapline was also required. It was agreed to use **MyCreativeEdge: The Creative Showcase for Europe's Northern Edge**. This strapline is included on the site's home page and also on various promotional material as it explains the purpose of the site.

Following agreement on the domain name it was necessary to develop a logo. The colour scheme of this logo would then follow through to the palette of the website's design. Agreement on the logo



took considerable time and involved all project partners. Many iterations were developed, commented on and amended. The idea was to try to convey the concepts of edge/edginess, four partner regions, the domain name and also make it amenable to social media avatar size limitations. Ultimately consensus was reached on the following logo.



Fig. 12: MyCreativeEdge logo

Meanwhile the architecture of the site and the layout of pages continued to develop and there was considerable interaction between the web designer and the WDC on this topic throughout April and May. Other project partners were consulted on major issues for the site's design and functionality. The architecture of the site that was eventually agreed is set out in Fig. 13.

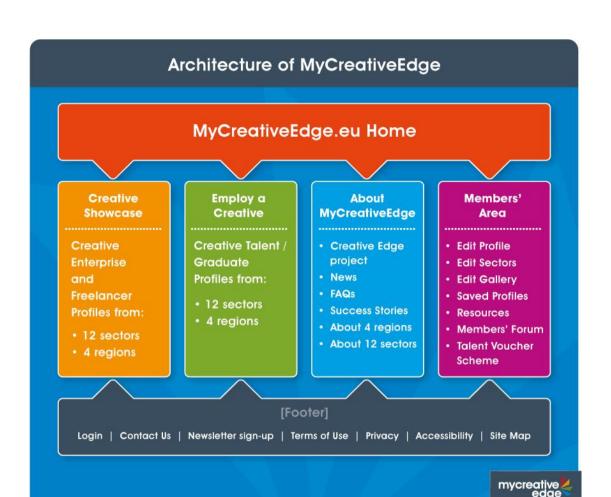


Fig. 13: Architecture of MyCreativeEdge website

The process for creating profile pages by members, and making it as user friendly as possible, was a key element of the development of the site at this stage (this process is described in Step 4: Creating Profiles). So too was the number of static pages, the terminology and page titles to be used and navigation of the site.

2.5 Writing content for website

While MyCreativeEdge was being designed and developed the other key activity was writing content for its static pages as well as introductory and linking text for all other pages.

The WDC took responsibility for drafting most of the content, with each of the partner organisations preparing the text for their own region page. Given that writing for the web is a specific skill, the WDC issued a Request for Quote to contract a copywriter to copy edit the draft text into a more web friendly style.¹² This contract also involved providing metadata and keywords for each page. This contract was awarded to Bua Marketing (with Diarmuid O'Connell).

¹² The Request for Quote for 'Copy Writing for new MyCreativeEdge.eu Website' was issued to three service providers on 26 April 2013.



In total, content for 26 pages was written and copy edited (see Fig. 13 above for an indication of pages with content). The website was then populated with the final copy edited content. The metadata of the page title, page description and keywords, to assist in search engine optimisation (SEO), was also incorporated.

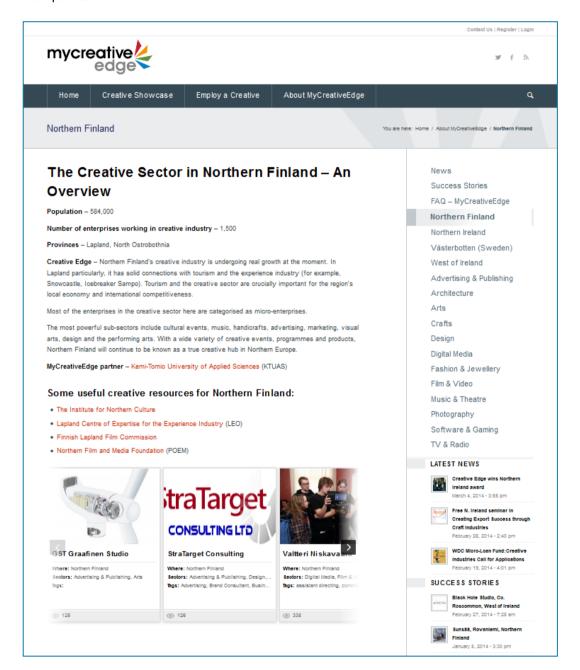


Fig. 14: Example of one of the four region pages on MyCreativeEdge – Northern Finland

Given the mid-June launch deadline the content for the public elements of the site was prioritised. It was decided that writing content for the members' resources section would be postponed until after the launch in order to prioritise the front end elements. The content and links for the members' resources page was compiled over July-August and went live in September.

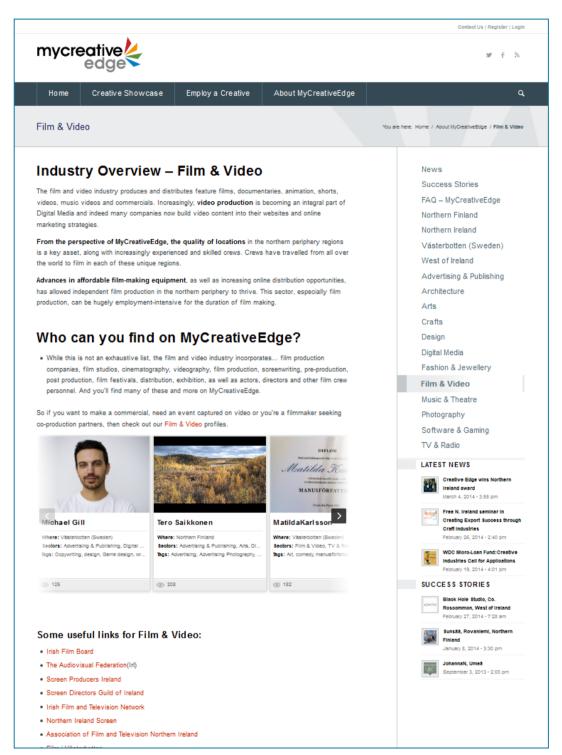


Fig. 15: Example of one of the 12 sector pages on MyCreativeEdge – Film & Video

2.6 Incorporation of Talent Voucher Scheme application form

Work Package 3 of the *Creative Edge* project also included a pilot *Creative Edge* Talent Voucher Scheme. The aim of the scheme was to allow emerging creatives to gain experience by providing a

.



voucher to a maximum of €2,000 to allow a creative business to contract them to undertake a specific assignment.¹³

It was agreed that it would be most efficient to incorporate the application process into MyCreativeEdge as:

- It would reduce the administrative burden if applications could be made online.
- If membership of MyCreativeEdge was a condition to apply for or be chosen to work under the Talent Voucher Scheme it would be an incentive to join the site.

Therefore an online application form consisting of four questions was created within the members' area of the website. The form and Terms and Conditions were developed by the three participating project partners (Film i Västerbotten, KTUAS and WDC). The application form was created on the site and a system established for any completed applications to be automatically e-mailed to the relevant partner organisation e.g. an application from a West of Ireland member was sent to the WDC.

2.7 Training in content management system and administration

In May 2013 training was delivered on the content management system for the site and the administration of registrations. Training was conducted by the web designer and had been included in their original contract. The main activities for partners in using the site would be to upload news and success stories to the site, as well as make changes to the static content. Each region appointed a regional administrator to moderate applications to join from their region.

Training of one Swedish and two Finnish regional administrators was done online using Skype. It lasted approximately a half day with each. A face to face training session for the Irish and Northern Irish partners (six in total) was held in Sligo, Ireland. A regional administration user manual was also produced which means the administration function can be undertaken by those who have not received training.

The training sessions also allowed the regional administrators to test the process for creating a profile on the site. This was conducted before any creative businesses had been invited to join the site and allowed bugs in the process to be identified and rectified. Therefore the training also served as a testing of the site's functionality and ease of use for members.

2.8 Website goes live

In mid-June 2013 www.mycreativeedge.eu went live. This coincided with a number of events being held in Skellefteå, Västerbotten, Sweden. On 10-11 June the FilmArc Masterclass was held, followed by the Creative Summit on 12-13 June and a *Creative Edge* project Steering Committee meeting on 14-15 June. Film-makers from Sweden, Finland and Ireland attended the Masterclass, while a broad range of creative practitioners from Sweden, Finland and Ireland, as well as all of the *Creative Edge* project partners, attended the Creative Summit. It was therefore considered that this would be a good opportunity to launch the site.

¹³ See footnote 7.

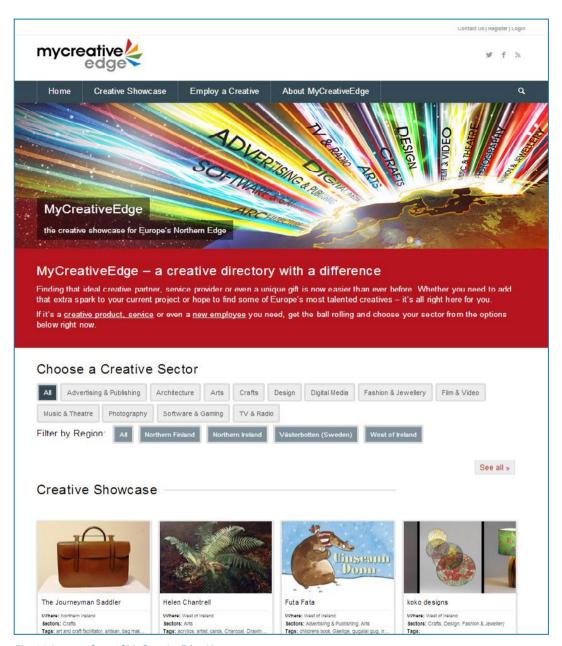


Fig. 16: Image of top of MyCreativeEdge Home page

This was considered to be a soft launch of the site. As the number of creative profiles was quite low, it was felt the focus through the remaining summer months needed to be on recruiting members, as well as testing the site. Attracting website visitors would not be the focus until a sufficient number of profiles was uploaded (see Step 5: Promotion, Marketing & Advertising).





Fig. 17: Creative Edge project partners launch MyCreativeEdge, Maskinhuset, Skelleftehamn, Sweden, 15 June 2013

2.9 Conclusion

The design and development step concluded with the launch of a website which met the majority of the requirements established during the research and consultation phase. Various refinements and adjustments were made to the original plans during the process of developing the site for technical, financial, administrative and ease of use reasons.

This step resulted in **MyCreativeEdge: The Creative Showcase for Europe's Northern Edge** becoming available as a free platform for creative enterprises, freelancers and new talent based in the Northern Periphery of Europe to showcase their work to potential international clients and customers.

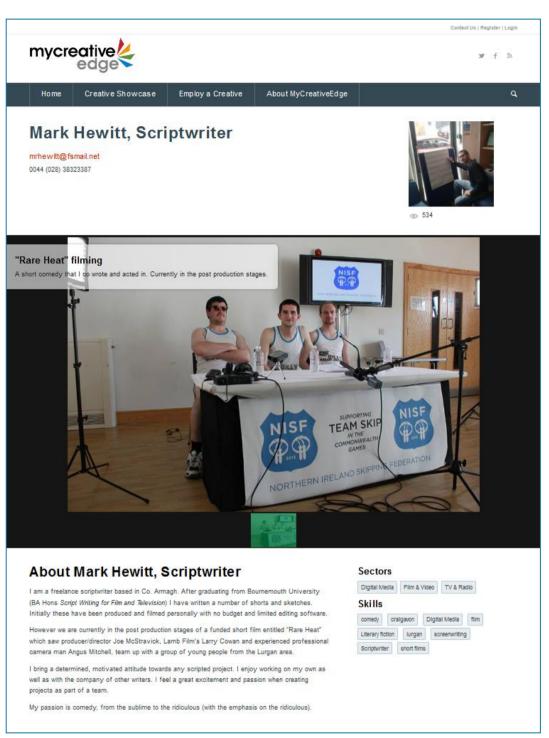


Fig. 18: Example of a MyCreativeEdge profile page – Mark Hewitt, Northern Ireland





Step 3: Recruiting Members

The heart of MyCreativeEdge is the profile pages of the members. Their thumbnail images dominate the Home page, Creative Showcase and Employ a Creative (Fig. 19) and viewing profile pages is the central purpose of visiting MyCreativeEdge.

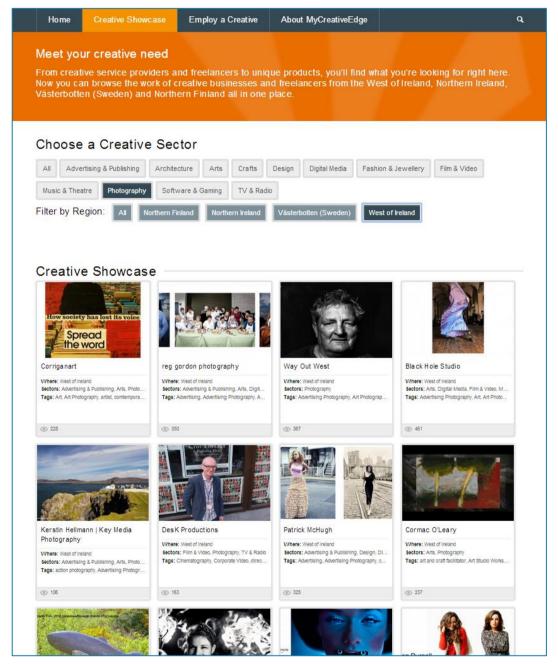


Fig. 19: A section of the Creative Showcase page filtered by sector (Photography) and region (West of Ireland)

Encouraging creatives to join the site and create their profile was therefore the most important activity in the development of MyCreativeEdge. The site was promoted to creative businesses in

advance of its launch and some were provided with pre-launch access to create their profile. Recruiting members has been a central and constant activity for all partners since the site's launch.

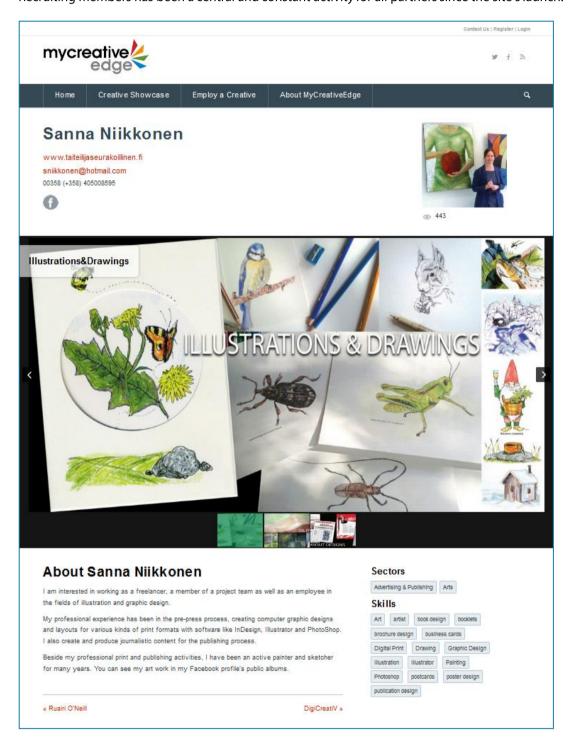


Fig. 20: Example of a MyCreativeEdge profile page – Sanna Niikkonen, Northern Finland

That the *Creative Edge* project would develop an online export platform for creative businesses was promoted in various ways during the year prior to its launch. The aim was to raise awareness of the



project and recruit members. As the exact format and details of the platform were not clear in the early stages, the promotion was of the general concept. As the design and development of the site progressed, it became easier to promote as it was clearer what was on offer to businesses and what input would be required from them. Once the site went live promotion became more direct and focused.

Some of the actions taken to recruit members before the site's launch included:

- o In July 2012 the WDC made seven presentations on the plan to establish a platform, one in each county of the Western Region of Ireland, during briefing sessions on the WDC's Micro-Loan Fund: Creative Industries. These sessions were attended by 50 creative enterprises and support agencies.
- Members of the IAG were requested to promote and raise awareness of the planned export platform within their own networks.
- In December 2012 the WDC attended the Irish National Craft & Design Fair and spoke with 37 craft workers from the Western Region to recruit them for the online export platform. A FAQ leaflet was left with each and contact details collected.
- o In April and May 2013, Craigavon Borough Council held three seminars for creatives on export advice. These were used to promote the platform to potential members.
- An expression of interest form was created on <u>www.mycreativeedge.eu</u> to allow interested creative businesses to register their interest in joining the platform.
- In May 2013 e-mails were sent to creative industry trade associations, enterprise support
 agencies and other relevant organisations requesting them to circulate details of
 MyCreativeEdge to their members and clients.
- Direct e-mails were sent to existing databases of creative enterprises notifying them about the upcoming MyCreativeEdge website.
- *Creative Edge* social media was used to promote the launch of the platform and encourage creative enterprises to express their interest.

On 11 June an e-mail was sent to the 156 people who had expressed their interest on the registration page (Fig. 21). This e-mail provided them with a pre-launch link so they could register and create their profile before the website went live.



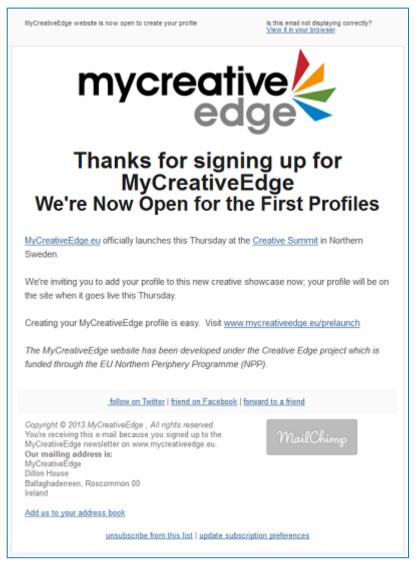


Fig. 21: The pre-launch access email sent on 11 June 2013 to those who had registered on the expression of interest'site

This phase of recruiting members resulted in **100 profiles published on the site within one month of its going live**. Many specific activities to recruit members have been taken since the site went live and these are set out in detail in Step 5: Promotion, Marketing & Advertising.



Fig. 22: An icon designed for members of MyCreativeEdge to use on their own website, social media and other promotional material

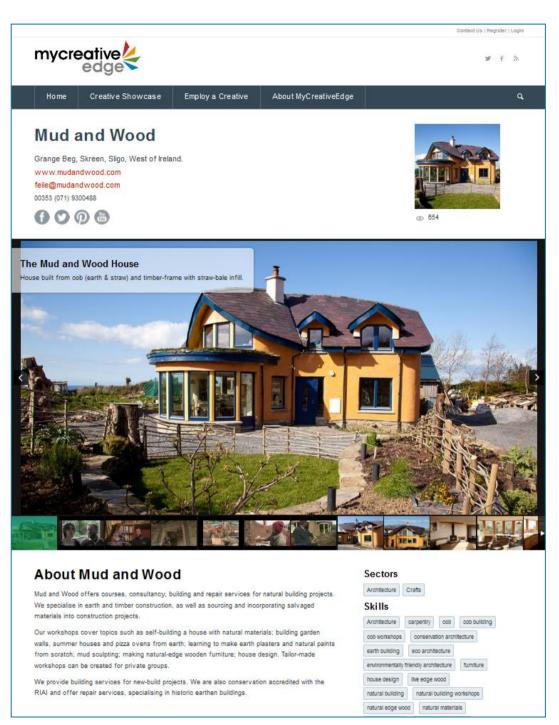


Fig. 23: Example of a MyCreativeEdge profile page – Mud and Wood, Ireland





Step 4: Creating Profiles

The central function of MyCreativeEdge is to allow creative businesses, freelancers and new talent to create their own profile page to showcase their creative work. Ensuring that this process is as simple and user friendly as possible was critical to the platform's success. Creating a profile involves following the steps set out in Fig. 24 which are described in the rest of this section.



Fig. 24: Steps to create a MyCreativeEdge profile

4.1 Registration

The first step in creating a profile on MyCreativeEdge is registration. This is done through the registration form on the site (Fig. 25) which asks for contact details, location and creative sector. When a person submits a registration they receive a 'double opt-in' e-mail which asks them to click a link to confirm their registration. This is to prevent spam and ensure that the e-mail address is valid and correct.

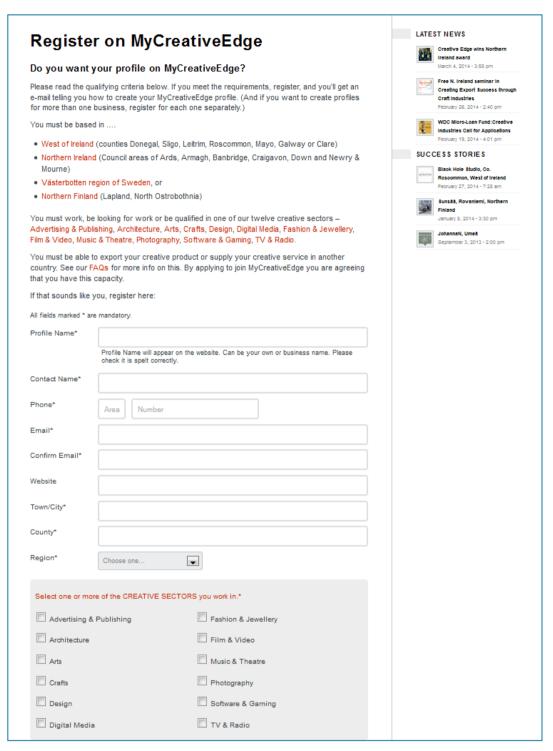


Fig. 25: Registration page on MyCreativeEdge

4.2 Moderation

When a new registration has been submitted and confirmed, the relevant regional administrator receives a notification e-mail to that region's dedicated e-mail account e.g. northernireland@mycreativeedge.eu. They then login to the site to moderate the registration by checking if it meets the following criteria:



- Location is it located in an eligible area?
 - West of Ireland (counties Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway or Clare)
 - Northern Ireland (Council areas of Ards, Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon, Down and Newry & Mourne)
 - Västerbotten region of Sweden, or
 - Northern Finland (Lapland, North Ostrobothnia)
- Sector is it operating in at least one of the 12 eligible sectors?
 - Advertising & Publishing, Architecture, Arts, Crafts, Design, Digital Media, Fashion & Jewellery, Film & Video, Music & Theatre, Photography, Software & Gaming, TV & Radio.
- Export capacity does it appear to have some export capacity?

If this information cannot be confirmed by checking the applicant's registration form, website or social media or by an internet search, then the administrator may phone the applicant. After reviewing the application the regional administrator can:

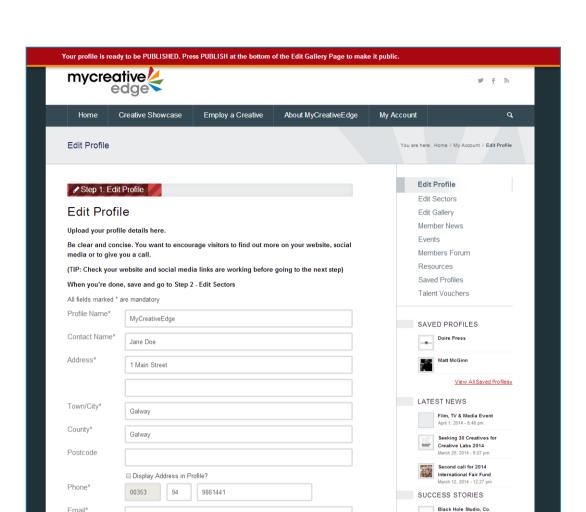
- **Approve** if they meet the criteria. An e-mail is automatically sent to the person with their automatically generated username and password and instructions on how to create their profile.
- **Reject** if they do not meet the criteria. A standard rejection e-mail is automatically sent, to which additional text can be added to explain the decision.

When an approved member receives their username and password they can login to create their profile.

4.3 Edit Profile

When a new member logs in, the first step is to complete the Edit Profile page (Fig. 26, Fig. 27 and Fig. 28). This provides the basic information about their business/themselves that will appear on their profile page. The information includes:

- Profile name
- Contact details (a member can choose if their address details appear on the site or not)
- Website
- Profile image (200px X 200px)
- Description (to appear in the About section of their profile page)
- Meta description (160 chars) (for search engines)
- Clients (list of past clients)
- Social Media links (can include details of up to 11 different social media channels)
- Demographics (age group and gender, for statistical purposes only see Step 6: Evaluation)



Sunsää, Rovaniemi, North

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Fig. 26: Top of Edit Profile page where name and contact details are provided

support@mycreativeedge.eu

www.mycreativeedge.eu

Website

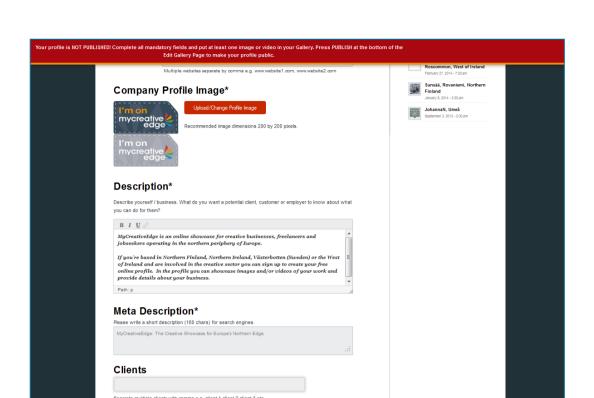


Fig. 27: Middle section of Edit Profile page where the profile image and information about the business is provided

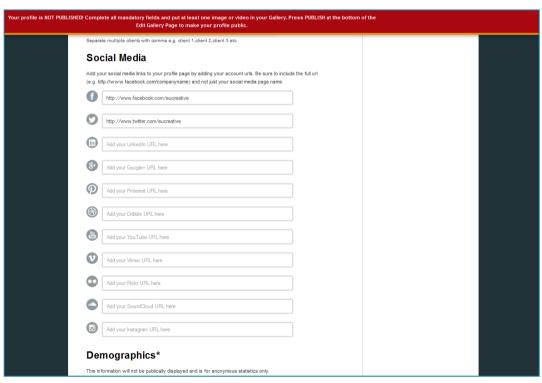


Fig. 28: Bottom of Edit Profile page where social media links are given



4.4 Edit Sectors

The second step is to complete the Edit Sectors page (Fig. 29) which gives details of the member's services and activities.

- creative Sectors (which of the 12 sectors the business operates in, can select more than one)
- Location (which section to appear in Creative Showcase, Employ a Creative or Both)
- Talent Voucher participation (for those who select Employ a Creative or Both and are in one
 of the three eligible regions an option appears to be considered for the Talent Voucher
 Scheme)
- Add Tags (select or create tags for skills, products and services)

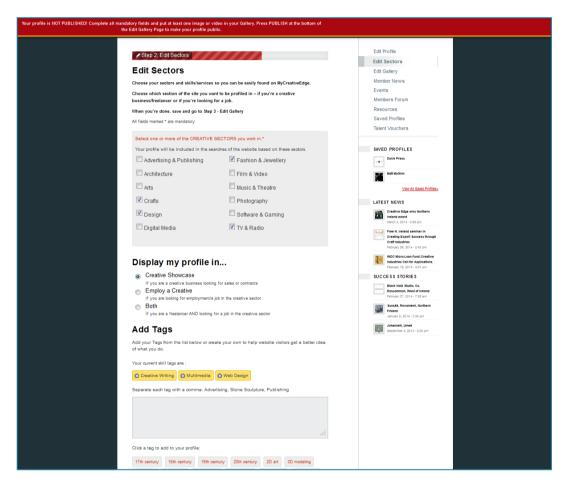


Fig. 29: Edit Sectors page where creative sectors and tags are added

4.5 Edit Gallery

The third step is to complete the Edit Gallery page (Fig. 30). This is where the images and video links that appear in the profile page slideshow are uploaded. As the slideshow is the central focus of each profile, this is the most important step.

Up to 20 images and/or links to videos (on YouTube or Vimeo) can be uploaded to the slideshow. Captions can be added to each image with more information.

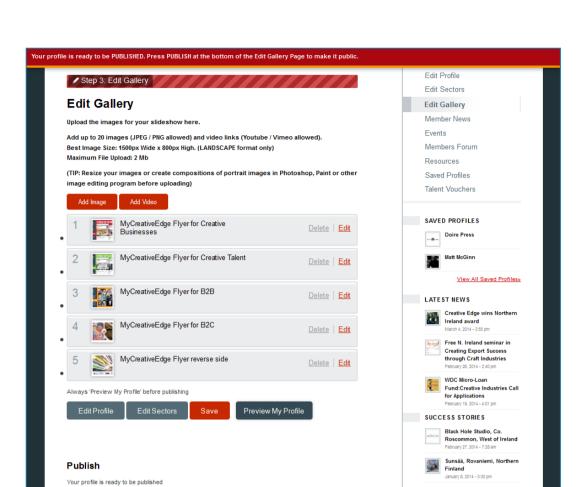


Fig. 30: Edit Gallery page where images and video links are uploaded

4.6 Preview & Publish

When each of the three steps has been completed, the member can preview their profile page (Fig. 31). They can then return to any step to revise text or images until satisfied. When completed the member clicks Publish and the profile is live on the site.

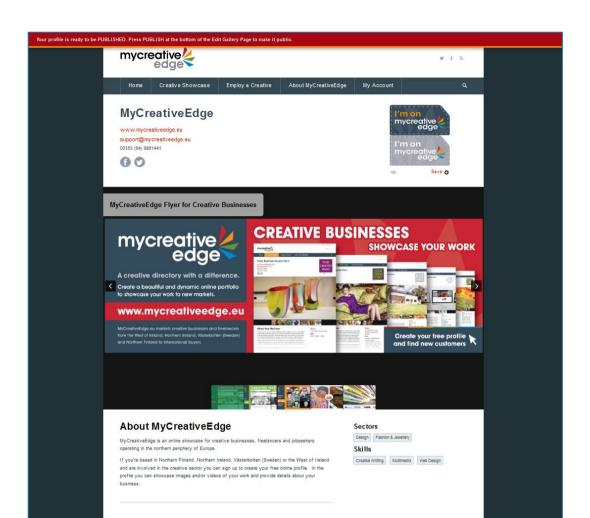


Fig. 31: Preview of a profile page before it is published

4.7 Problems and solutions

Once the website went live and members began creating profiles, a number of issues arose which led to changes in the process.

Not published: A problem arose with some members missing the step of clicking Publish after previewing their profile. They believed their profile was published but it was still only a draft. Therefore an addition was made and until a profile is published a red banner now appears at the top of each page in the process. This notifies the member that their profile is not published yet. This can be seen in all the previous images of the profile creation process.

Location not saved: An issue arose with some profiles' location on the site not being saved. Therefore, while their profile was published, it did not appear in the Creative Showcase or Employ a Creative sections of the site and was not included in thumbnail images on the Home page. This was due to the member not clicking Save on the Edit Sectors page where the location for the profile is selected.



This was resolved by automatically allocating every new registration to the Creative Showcase unless the member alters it.

Image size: Initially, to fit the letterbox style of the slideshow, images had to be 1500px wide by 800px high to show properly. However it was found that a considerable number of initial members uploaded images of different sizes, including portrait size images, which were cropped and did not show well in the slideshow.

Therefore the slideshow image format was changed to allow any image size to be uploaded. While 1500px X 800px are still the recommended dimensions, for different image sizes, black space is inserted around the image to prevent cropping in the slideshow (Fig. 32).

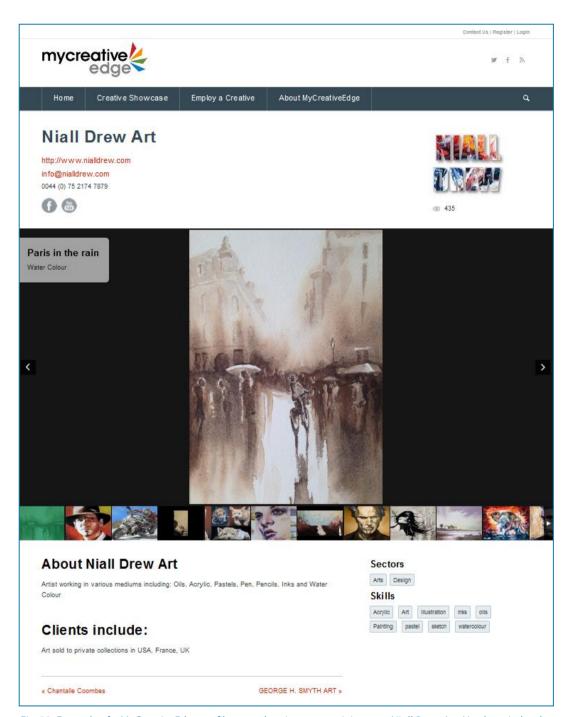


Fig. 32: Example of a MyCreativeEdge profile page showing a portrait image – Niall Drew Art, Northern Ireland

Registered but not published: As the number of approved registrations increased it became noticeable that a significant number (close to a third) of those approved had not created and published their profile. Initially the regional administrators e-mailed them directly to remind them. However this was not a long term solution as the number of registrations rose.

An automatic system was therefore put in place whereby all approved members who have not published their profile receive an e-mail on the first day of each month to remind them to publish



their profile. Any member will only receive three such e-mails and will then be removed from the automatic reminder system. They will however remain part of the MyCreativeEdge members list and so will still receive other update e-mails.

In addition to these specific issues, a number of technical bugs arose for members. Most were quite minor and were responded to as quickly as possible. However some did create more serious problems and there were particular issues for members using the Internet Explorer browser. There was also a problem with tags appearing incorrectly which was resolved. The number of technical problems has declined as these initial bugs have been resolved. A problem also arose with the site going down a number of times and in October 2013 it was transferred to a different server.

4.8 Survey says!

A survey of MyCreativeEdge members was taken in November-December 2013. In total 103 members completed the survey – 84 had published their profile at the time, 19 had yet to do so. The results of the survey are examined in detail in Step 6: Evaluation, however among the questions were two which are very relevant here. When asked about their experience in creating a profile:

- 84.5% said creating their profile was Easy or Quite Easy (Fig. 33)
- 84.5% said the explanations and directions for creating their profile were Clear or Quite Clear (Fig. 34)

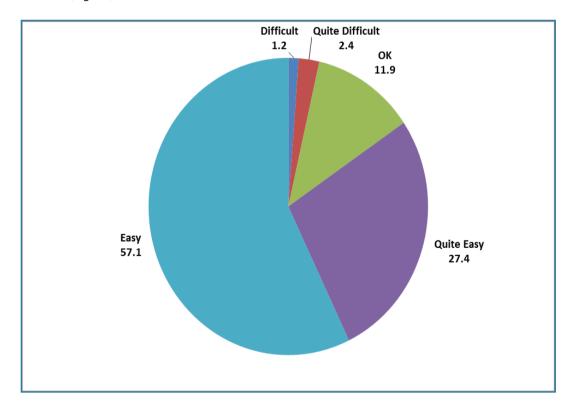


Fig. 33: Was the process to create your profile ... (84 respondents) (% of responses)



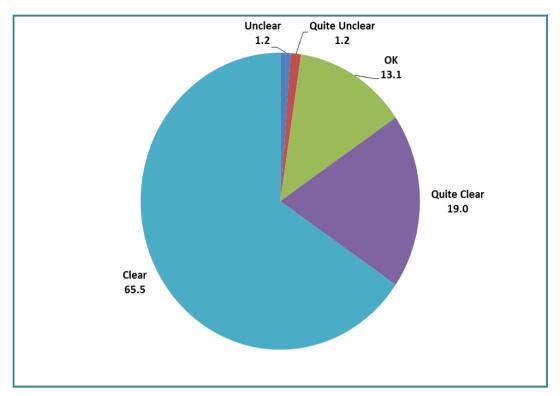


Fig. 34: Were the explanations and directions for creating your profile ... (84 respondents) (% of responses)

4.9 Conclusion

During the planning of MyCreativeEdge it was agreed that a critical priority for the platform was that the process for creating profiles be as user friendly as possible, particularly for those with limited technical skills. The step-by-step process to create a profile was developed with this in mind. The survey results confirm that this was largely achieved with 84.5% considering the process easy or quite easy. Adaptation of the process in response to problems which arose was also important to ensure satisfaction among members.

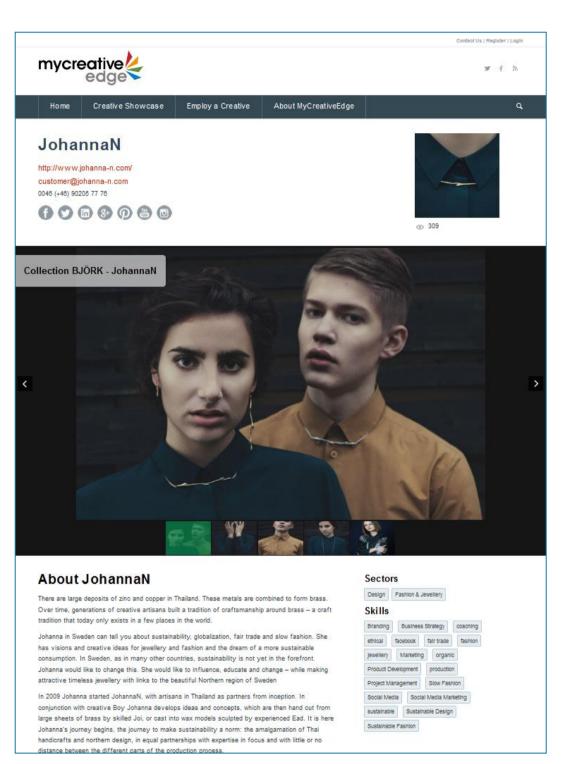


Fig. 35: Example of a MyCreativeEdge profile page – JohannaN, Sweden





Step 5: Promotion, Marketing & Advertising

During the consultation and design process it became increasingly clear that the promotion, marketing and advertising of MyCreativeEdge would be critical to its success and effectiveness. This would include recruiting members to join the site and advertising to attract website visitors, which would in turn increase the incentive for creatives to join.

During the consultation phase it was agreed that MyCreativeEdge had four distinct target audiences and that different marketing approaches were needed for each. The four audiences are:

- **Creative Businesses** established freelancers, micro-enterprises and SMEs from the 12 eligible sectors who would also be potential employers of emerging creative talent.
- Creative Talent new graduates from creative disciplines as well as other emerging creative talent.
- **B2C** Business to Consumer clients for the products and services of the profiled businesses.
- **B2B** Business to Business clients for the services and products of the profiled businesses. Also potential employers of emerging creative talent.

The main activities in the promotion, marketing and advertising of MyCreativeEdge were:

5.1 Strategic marketing plan

In April 2013 a strategic marketing plan was developed by Newmarket Consulting in consultation with the WDC. This set out marketing messages, communication channels and measurements for each of the four target audiences. It also identified geographic areas to target for B2B and B2C clients. The marketing messages for each of the four target audiences were:

Creative Businesses – Join MyCreativeEdge to:

- Reach new international markets through MyCreativeEdge's international advertising, including access to each region's diaspora.
- Showcase your creative products and services through a high quality visual medium.
- o Identify export opportunities.
- Build connections with like-minded international creative and other businesses.
- Share knowledge and learn from other creative businesses around Europe.
- Access information and tips on how to export your creative product or service.
- Find the most talented creative staff and freelancers from across Europe.

Creative Talent – Join MyCreativeEdge to:

- Get a job, or freelance work on a project, in the creative sector.
- Showcase your portfolio to international creative sector businesses and other website visitors
- Get supported work through the Creative Edge's pilot Talent Voucher Scheme.
- Network with creative businesses and other creative talents.
- Learn about selling your skills and portfolio.
- Get references and testimonials from clients and employers.





Fig. 36: A MyCreativeEdge pull-up banner designed to recruit creative businesses and

B2C – Visit MyCreativeEdge to:

- Browse our Creative Showcase / See our Creative Portfolios.
- Find that unique gift.
- MyCreativeEdge provides a unique marketplace, with centralised access to creative products and services that have been inspired by life in the Northern Periphery of Europe.
- MyCreativeEdge opens up a world of creative choice, allowing you to discover creative home, gift, fashion, entertainment and arts ideas and to experience something truly original.



- MyCreativeEdge showcases the work of creative professionals who can tailor their service to your needs from architects to photographers, interior designers to musicians.
- For diaspora: MyCreativeEdge gives you a unique opportunity to discover creative home, gift, fashion, entertainment and arts ideas that allow you to re-connect with home and support Irish/Northern Irish/Finnish/Swedish creatives.

B2B – Visit MyCreativeEdge to:

- Browse our Creative Showcase / See our Creative Portfolios.
- Get the "Creative Edge" in business.
- Employ a creative person.
- Connect with a creative partner.
- Looking for a Creative Product or Service: MyCreativeEdge lets you browse the creative work and portfolios of businesses and creative freelancers in once central location. Not only does that make it easy to engage with the right creative supplier for you, it also allows you immediate access to a wide mix of creatives from across the Northern Periphery of Europe.
- Looking to Collaborate: MyCreativeEdge will assist you in building creative connections, enabling you to collaborate on new projects with creative partners.
- Looking to Employ a Creative: No matter what industry you are in, bringing a creative edge
 to your business can bring huge benefits. MyCreativeEdge brings together the portfolios of
 some of Europe's freshest creative talent, allowing you to find the right person for a creative
 job quickly and hassle-free.





Fig. 37: A MyCreativeEdge pull-up banner designed to attract B2B and B2C buyers

The primary communication channels identified in the strategic marketing plan were:

- Digital advertising
- Showcasing at events
- Distributing flyers
- Direct contact with creatives and associations
- Press releases



Social media

5.2 Tactical marketing plan and media buying

Based on the strategic marketing plan a Request for Quote was issued in May 2013 for a service provider to develop a tactical marketing plan and undertake media buying for MyCreativeEdge for the period July-September 2013.¹⁴ Following evaluation, Bua Marketing was selected to provide this service.

A tactical marketing plan and media buying schedule was devised identifying the best advertising channels to reach the four target audiences. It was agreed that during July and August marketing and advertising should focus on recruiting creative businesses to join the site to create their profile. It was felt that until a reasonable number of profiles were published on the site it would not be wise to market it widely to potential clients and customers. Also it was recognised that the summer months were not the best time to begin advertising the site to consumers and businesses. It was agreed to begin advertising to website visitors from early September 2013.

Given budget constraints and the online nature of MyCreativeEdge, advertising focussed on digital advertising. It was agreed that Facebook ads and Google AdWords would be the most cost effective means of advertising the website. Facebook ads would be used to target B2C visitors and to recruit creatives while Google AdWords would mainly be used to target B2B visitors. In addition a small number of online banner ads would be used to target creative businesses to join the site. Details of the digital advertising campaign are given in section 5.4.

Following approval of an extension to the *Creative Edge* project, a new Request for Quote was issued in August for media buying services for the period October-December 2013.¹⁵ Bua Marketing was selected and a marketing plan for the October-December period was agreed based on the experience of the July-September campaign.

5.3 Design of marketing material

Implementing a marketing and advertising campaign requires the design of visual material, both digital and physical. JDK Design, under the contract for the design and development of MyCreativeEdge, designed a suite of visual marketing material. Some additional material was prepared by individual project partners. A list of what was designed is set out in Table 4 and images are distributed throughout this report.

Table 4: List of marketing material designed to promote MyCreativeEdge

Marketing Material	Target Audience
Digital marketing material	
Online advertising banners (various dimensions)	Creatives
Facebook ads (various options)	Creatives;
	B2C clients
E-mail signature banner for <i>Creative Edge</i> project staff	Stakeholders

¹⁴ The Request for Quote for 'Media Planning and Buying Services for new MyCreativeEdge.eu Website' was circulated to seven service providers on 27 May 2013.

¹⁵ The Request for Quote for 'Media Planning and Buying Services for new MyCreativeEdge.eu Website' was circulated to four service providers on 28 August 2013.

Marketing Material	Target Audience
2 x eZine templates for Mailchimp	All
Postcard size	
Newsletter size	
2 x Facebook Cover image	All
1 x Twitter Cover image	All
2 x badges for members of MyCreativeEdge to put on their websites/social media	Members
PowerPoint template	Stakeholders
Physical marketing material	
Printed flyer / PDF for creative businesses	Creative businesses
Printed flyer / PDF for creative talent	Graduates / Freelancers looking for a job
Printed flyer / PDF for B2B	Business audience
Printed flyer / PDF for B2C	Consumer audience
Flyer in Swedish for creative business and talent	Creatives
Flyer with Northern Ireland contact details	Creatives
2 x pull-up banners for events	Creatives;
Creative businesses/talent	B2B and B2C clients
B2B/B2C customers	
Poster of pull-up banner design	Creatives
Pens with MyCreativeEdge logo (NPP + EU)	All



Business cards with MyCreativeEdge logo (NPP + EU)

Fig. 38: MyCreativeEdge branded pens and business cards

Αll

5.4 Digital advertising

Direct advertising of MyCreativeEdge was digital. There were two elements to this – recruiting creatives and attracting website visitors.



5.4.1 Recruiting creatives

A Facebook ad campaign to recruit creatives to join the site was created using regular and promoted post ads targeting the specific demographic in the partner regions. Ad click-throughs delivered traffic to the MyCreativeEdge registration page.

This campaign ran during July and August 2013 and again during October and November 2013. Some examples of the ads used:



Fig. 39: Examples of Facebook ads used to recruit creatives to join MyCreativeEdge



Google AdWords were also used during July 2013 to attract creatives. These work by purchasing particular keywords in specific target markets and when these words are searched in that area a paid AdWord appears on the Google search results page. You pay per click of the ad. Google AdWords did not prove particularly successful in terms of clicks by potential members and it was decided not to use them for the October-November recruitment campaign.

The total number of clicks on ads aimed at recruiting members to join the website, and the advertising expenditure, is given in Table 5.

Table 5: Total number of clicks on Facebook ads and Google AdWords aimed at recruiting members to join MyCreativeEdge, July-August and October-November 2013

	Facebook ads July-Aug	Google AdWords July	Facebook ads Oct-Nov	Total
Clicks	4,470	430	5,927	10,827
Cost (inc. VAT)	€1,741.65	€782.96	€2,996.06	€5,520.67

In addition to Facebook and Google, online banner advertisements (Fig. 40) were bought on three trade-specific creative websites in Ireland during July and August. These were:

Galway Arts Festival

- Journal of Music
- FilmIreland



Fig. 40: Example of the online banner advertisements used to recruit members

Fig. 41shows the number of pageviews of the registration page of MyCreativeEdge during the period July-November 2013. The significant impact that the ads had on driving traffic to this page during the campaigns in July-early August and October-early November is very evident.

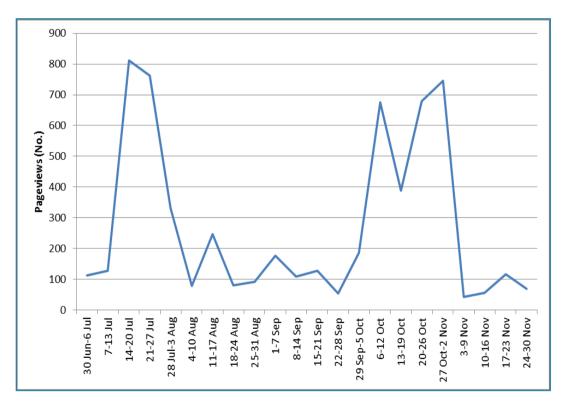


Fig. 41: Number of pageviews of registration page of MyCreativeEdge



Fig. 42: MyCreativeEdge flyer designed to recruit Creative Talent

5.4.2 Business to Consumer (B2C) buyers

To attract B2C visitors to MyCreativeEdge, Facebook ads were used. This campaign ran from September to early December. A specific Christmas campaign ran during the first two weeks of December (see section 5.4.3).

When planning the campaign it was agreed that only certain creative sectors would be suitable to be advertised to consumers, specifically Architecture, Arts, Crafts, Fashion & Jewellery and Photography. It was also agreed that not all sectors could be advertised in all markets. Budget constraints when considering multiple sectors in multiple markets was the main factor in this.

B2C Facebook ads targeted 22-65 year olds in the specified markets. Click-throughs on the ads directed the visitor to the Creative Showcase page filtered for profiles of a particular sector e.g. an ad about crafts would direct to http://www.mycreativeedge.eu/creative-showcase/crafts/



Fig. 43: Example of a Facebook ad for the Fashion & Jewellery sector in the West of Ireland

Table 6 shows the results of the September campaign with the number of clicks and click-through rates (% of the people who saw the ad who clicked it) for each sector/location. In total the September Facebook ad campaign generated 4,426 clicks. The highest clicks were generated by:

- Architecture ads in the West of Ireland
- Architecture ads in Dublin
- Visual Arts ads in Dublin
- Crafts ads in Manchester



Fashion & Jewellery ads in London

The total advertising cost for the September Facebook ad campaign was €1,766.93 (inc. VAT).

Table 6: Number of clicks and click-through rates for MyCreativeEdge Facebook ads, September 2013

	West of Ireland	Dublin	Philadelphia	London	Boston	Manchester	Total Clicks
Architecture	1,298	626	34				1,958
	6%	5%	4%				
Visual Arts	0	597	28		3	0	628
		4%	5%		6%		
Crafts	122	41	87	186	4	519	959
	4%		5%	3%	4%	4%	
Fashion &	15	14	5	451	38	0	523
Jewellery	3%	3%	3%	4%	5%		
Photography	57	0	1	144	3	153	358
	4%		3%	4%	4%	3%	
Total	1,492	1,278	155	781	48	672	4,426

Following evaluation of the results of the September campaign, a number of revisions and additions were made for the October-early December campaign.

Table 7 shows the number of clicks and click-through rates for each sector/location during Octoberearly December. In total there were 12,481 clicks on MyCreativeEdge ads. The highest clicks were generated by:

- Architecture ads in the West of Ireland
- Crafts ads in the West of Ireland
- Crafts ads in Dublin
- o Architecture ads in Dublin
- Fashion & Jewellery ads in London

The total advertising cost of the October to early December Facebook ad campaign was €4,503.65 (inc. VAT).

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l able /: Number of	t clicks and click-throual	n rates for MvCreativeEdae	Facebook ads. October–ea:	riv December 2013

	West of Ireland	Dublin	Philadelphia	London	Chicago	Total Clicks
Architecture	3,011 <i>4%</i>	1,372*				4,383
Visual Arts	173 <i>3</i> %	216*	262 <i>4</i> %	347*	159 <i>4</i> %	1,157
Crafts	1,685*	1,632*	151 <i>4%</i>	108 3%	162 <i>4</i> %	3,738
Fashion & Jewellery	212 3%	850*	59 4%	1,109*	65 4%	2,295
Photography	479*	99 3%	4 2%	239 3%	87 3%	908
Total	5,560	4,169	476	1,803	473	12,481

^{*}A number of different ads for this sector in this market were used. It is not possible to provide an average click-through rate.

5.4.3 Christmas consumer campaign

A specific campaign to target the Christmas gift buying market ran during the first two weeks of December. This used a combination of regular Facebook ads and Newsfeed ads (which go directly into a person's Facebook Newsfeed) for the gift sectors of Arts, Crafts, Fashion & Jewellery and Photography.



Fig.44: Example of a Facebook Newsfeed ad used in the Christmas campaign

The Christmas campaign ran in each of the four partner regions, as well as their capital cities, London and a number of US cities. Table 8 gives the results of the Christmas campaign which generated 6,283 clicks. The highest clicks were generated by:

- Fashion & Jewellery ads in Dublin
- Fashion & Jewellery ads in London
- Visual Arts ads in the West of Ireland
- Fashion & Jewellery ads in the US
- Photography ads in London

The total advertising cost of the Christmas Facebook ad campaign was €1,935.93 (inc. VAT).

Table 8: Number of clicks* for MyCreativeEdge Facebook Christmas campaign 2013

Campaign	Visual Arts	Crafts	Fashion & Jewellery	Photography	Total Clicks
Christmas	17	0	13	2	32
Sweden					
Christmas	7	0	46	20	73
Finland					
Christmas Dublin	234	56	1,181	107	1,578
Christmas London	118	34	922	742	1,816
Christmas US	27	11	813	11	862
Christmas Northern Ireland	12	185	31	57	285
Christmas West of Ireland	815	32	472	318	1,637
Total	1,230	318	3,478	1,257	6,283

^{*}As multiple ads for each sector were used in most of the locations, click-through rates are not available.



Fig. 45: MyCreativeEdge flyer designed to attract consumer buyers

5.4.3 Business to Business (B2B) buyers

Google AdWords were used to target potential business customers for MyCreativeEdge. Different sectors were considered relevant to the B2B market than the B2C market. It was agreed to advertise the Advertising & Publishing, Architecture, Design, Digital Media, Film & Video, Software & Gaming and Photography sectors. Also not all sectors could be advertised in all markets given the available budget. The cost of buying particular keywords varies hugely depending on their popularity in searching and the location e.g. a keyword such as design in the Boston market is very expensive. This campaign ran from September to early December, with revisions and additions made following the end of September.

New & Original Artworks
Find up and coming artists.
Northern Ireland's new talent.
MyCreativeEdge.eu/CreativeShowcase

Fig. 46: Example of Google AdWords used for MyCreativeEdge B2B advertising



Table 9 shows the performance of the Google AdWords campaign during September 2013 showing the number of clicks and click-through rates. In total the AdWords campaign led to 1,553 clicks with the highest clicks achieved by:

- Photography in West of Ireland
- Design in London
- Film & Video in West of Ireland

Total expenditure on Google AdWords advertising during September was €1,878.36 (inc. VAT).

Table 9: Number of clicks and click-through rates for MyCreativeEdge Google AdWords campaign, September 2013

	West of Ireland	Dublin	Phila- delphia	London	Boston	Manch- ester	Total Clicks
Advertising &	18	5					23
Publishing	0.28%	0.23%					
Architecture	26	1	180	64	0	10	281
	0.68%	0.63%	0.69%	0.27%		0.34%	
Design	16	0	0	135	0	11	162
	0.25%			0.44%		0.47%	
Digital Media	0	0					0
Film & Video	114	2					116
	0.30%	0.20%					
Software &	0	0					0
Gaming							
Photography	871	100					971
	0.65%	0.37%					
Total	1,045	108	180	199	0	21	1,553

Given some poor performances in the September campaign, a number of revisions were made for October-early December. Table 10 shows the performance of Google AdWords during this period when a total of 3,209 clicks were generated. The highest clicks were from:

- Photography in West of Ireland (these ads were stopped in mid-November)
- Visual Arts in New York
- Film & Video in West of Ireland
- Design in London
- Architecture in London

Some of the individual keywords and markets in this campaign were quite expensive. The average cost per click for Arts and Design in New York, Advertising & Publishing in Helsinki and Architecture and Design in Philadelphia were the highest of any ads used in the MyCreativeEdge campaign. In total, advertising expenditure on Google AdWords during October to early December was €5,159.76 (inc. VAT).

...........

Table 10: Number of clicks and click-through rates for MyCreativeEdge Google AdWords campaign, October-early December 2013

	West of Ireland	Dublin	Phila- delphia	London	Helsinki	New York	Total Clicks
Advertising & Publishing	66 <i>0.26%</i>	34 <i>0.67%</i>			39 <i>0.28%</i>		139
Visual Arts	0.20,7				107 <i>0.35%</i>	521*	628
Architecture	65 <i>0.50%</i>	13 <i>0.44%</i>	162*	219 <i>0.46%</i>			459
Design	55*	7 0.34%	161 <i>0.69%</i>	259 <i>0.49%</i>		33 <i>0.40%</i>	515
Film & Video	408 <i>0.30%</i>	21 <i>0.30%</i>					429
Software & Gaming	0	4 0.30%					4
Photography	910 <i>0.66%</i>	125*					1,035
Total	1,504	204	323	478	146	554	3,209

^{*}A number of different ads for this sector in this market were used, it is not possible to provide an average click-through rate.



Fig. 47: MyCreativeEdge flyer designed to attract business buyers

The effectiveness of the digital advertising campaign is examined in sections 6.2.4 and 6.2.5 where the channels of visits to the site and pageviews on the site are evaluated.

5.5 Showcasing at events

Participating in events was another key tool in promoting and marketing MyCreativeEdge both to potential members and clients. A number of these events were organised directly as activities of the *Creative Edge* project e.g. the seminar series organised in Northern Ireland, but the majority involved MyCreativeEdge partners participating in existing events.





Fig. 48: MyCreativeEdge being promoted at the Creative Summit conference, Skellefteå, Sweden, 13 June 2013

Participation in events took several forms including: a MyCreativeEdge exhibition stand with pull-up banner, flyers and promotional material; making a presentation about MyCreativeEdge to attendees; inclusion of MyCreativeEdge flyers in welcome packs; inclusion of the MyCreativeEdge logo on the event programme; and networking with attendees.



Fig. 49: Niall Drew, Craigavon Borough Council and Cllr Carla Lockheart at 'Creating Export Success in Crafts, Natural Organics, Jewellery and Related Designs', Brownlow House, Lurgan, Northern Ireland, 12 March 2014

In total across the four regions, MyCreativeEdge project partners promoted the site at 54 events during 2012-2013. A full list and how MyCreativeEdge was promoted at each event is provided in Annex 3. A few examples include:

- FilmArc Masterclass III, Skellefteå, Sweden
- Creative Summit, Skellefteå, Sweden
- MOVE Film Festival Industry Day, Sweden

- Career Fairs at five third level colleges, West of Ireland
- Rough Draft Design and New Media conference, Sligo, West of Ireland
- MeetWest business networking event, Mayo, West of Ireland
- Meet the Experts, Craigavon, Northern Ireland
- Creativity and the Economy, Belfast, Northern Ireland
- o Portadown Careers, Portadown, Northern Ireland
- o Creative Hub (Work Package 5) launches, Northern Ireland
- Barents Reunion Convention, Haparanda/Tornio, Northern Finland/Sweden
- Cultural Marathon, Kemi-Tornio, Finland



Fig. 50: MyCreativeEdge flyers in welcome packs at the Rough Draft Design and New Media conference, Sligo, Ireland, 7 November 2013

5.6 Distributing flyers

Four flyers for MyCreativeEdge, one targeted at each of the site's four target audiences, were designed and printed (see Fig. 42, Fig. 45, Fig. 47 and Fig. 51). A flyer in Swedish was also produced to recruit creatives and a flyer with Northern Ireland contact details (Fig. 52). The aim of the flyers is to encourage creative businesses and creative talent to sign up to the site and to attract consumer and business buyers to visit the site to discover creative products and services.



Fig. 51: MyCreativeEdge flyer designed to recruit creative businesses



In addition to distributing these flyers at events, bundles were also put on display at various locations in the partner regions. These included locations frequented by the public and by creative businesses and talent such as:

- Local authority/municipality/council offices
- Enterprise support agency offices
- Third level colleges/ universities including career offices
- Arts, culture and recreation venues
- Libraries
- Shops and cafés
- Career services and jobs offices

Flyers were also posted to:

- Creative enterprises
- Creative talents
- Creative trade and industry organisations
- Members of the site



Fig. 52: MyCreativeEdge flyer designed by Craigavon Borough Council with Northern Ireland contact details



5.7 Direct promotion to creatives and associations

Engagement with creative sector trade and industry associations, as well as statutory agencies with responsibility for the sector, was used to promote MyCreativeEdge to the creative community. All project partners contacted a large number of relevant associations and organisations in their regions and countries to inform them of the new opportunity for their members/clients. This involved meetings, phone calls and e-mails.

These organisations were informed about MyCreativeEdge and requested to circulate details and flyers to their members, to promote through their social media and/or include details and a link on their own website. This was an ongoing activity starting before the site was launched. Some examples of those engaged with include The Lodge creative association in Västerbotten, Craft NI in Northern Ireland, Visual Artists Ireland and the Culture Power Plant in Finland.

Presentations were also made to creative enterprises and talents about MyCreativeEdge. Some of these included:

- Presentations to staff and students at the Southern Regional College and the South Eastern Regional College in Northern Ireland
- Presentation to students of KTUAS
- Briefing sessions for creatives in Galway, Ennis and Roscommon in the West of Ireland
- Film i Västerbotten Meet & Greet event for new students

Each of the partners also undertook direct e-mailing to creative enterprises and talents in their region, drawing on various databases, to inform them of the website.



Fig. 53: Meeting with creatives at the Meet the Experts event, CIDO Enterprise Agency, Craigavon, Northern Ireland, 17 September 2013

5.8 Traditional media

Releases to traditional media – newspapers and radio – were also used to promote the site.



The WDC published two media releases for national and local media in Ireland. A general release was issued to national media with a specific release then tailored for each county with details of MyCreativeEdge members based in that county. Localisation of a release increases the likelihood of it being covered by local media. The two releases were:

- 'MyCreativeEdge: The Creative Showcase for Europe's Northern Edge WDC launches new website to promote the West of Ireland's creative sector', issued on 8 July to announce launch of website.
- 'MyCreativeEdge.eu: 300 creative profiles and 30,000 visits Showcasing the West of Ireland's creative businesses internationally', issued on 9 December to mark the milestone of 300 published profiles and to connect with the Christmas campaign.

Both of these releases led to radio interviews on regional, local and community radio stations across the region. They also received coverage in a number of local newspapers.



Fig. 54: Coverage of press release in Roscommon Herald newspaper, Ireland, 17 December 2013



NUI Galway issued a press release about the *Creative Edge* conference held on 2 December 2013. Within this press release, MyCreativeEdge was promoted to site visitors and members. This release received radio and newspaper coverage.

In Northern Finland, KTUAS provided an article about MyCreativeEdge to the newspaper "Lounais Lappi" which appeared on 1 August 2013.



Fig. 55: Article about MyCreativeEdge in Lounais Lappi newspaper, Finland, 1 August 2013

5.9 Social media

Social media was another key communications tool for marketing MyCreativeEdge. From the survey of members it was the second most common way in which members discovered the website (see section 5.11).

In October 2012 the WDC had issued an Invitation to Tender for a service provider to design and implement a social media campaign for the *Creative Edge* project.¹⁶ Following evaluation, Bua Marketing was selected to provide this service.¹⁷ The primary purpose of the campaign was to generate interest in the creative sector and the *Creative Edge* project in the partner regions and to raise awareness of the online export platform as it was being developed. This was seen as critical for recruiting members.

At the project partner meeting held in November 2012, the social media campaign was outlined and each partner undertook to provide relevant creative sector links and stories to be promoted through social media from their region on an ongoing basis. Each partner also provided a list of key creative influencers in their region who should be connected with on social media.

The *Creative Edge* social media campaign began in November 2012 with the establishment of a Facebook page (eucreative) and a Twitter account (@eucreative). There were regular Facebook posts and Tweets of creative news and events each week.

¹⁶ An Invitation to Tender for 'Design and Implementation of a 'Creative Edge' Social Media Campaign' was published by the WDC on the Irish government's online tendering service on 18 October 2012. Five proposals were received.

¹⁷The initial contract covered the period November 2012 until the end of September 2013, the original end date of the project. When the three month extension was granted, the contract was extended for this period.





Fig. 56: The Creative Edge Facebook page

As MyCreativeEdge was being designed, social media was increasingly used to raise awareness of the site and encourage creatives to express their interest on the pre-registration page. Following the site's launch in June, social media was used to drive traffic to news articles and case studies on MyCreativeEdge. The Facebook and Twitter cover images were also changed to reflect MyCreativeEdge branding. The Facebook page was also used to mark milestones e.g. 100 published profiles.

By the end of December 2013 the Creative Edge social media channels had:

- 1,552 Facebook Likes
- 433 Twitter Followers

The *Creative Edge* project partners also used their own social media presence to promote the site through Facebook and LinkedIn groups in their own regions.



Fig. 57: The Creative Edge Twitter page

5.10 E-mail mailings

During the design and development of MyCreativeEdge four automated e-mail lists were set up using the Mailchimp service (www.mailchimp.com). These were:

- Pre-launch expression of interest list
- Approved members of MyCreativeEdge
- Newsletter sign-up a sign-up field for a MyCreativeEdge e-mail newsletter was created on the site
- Approved but unpublished members (which is a segment of the approved members list)

Two branded e-mail templates were also designed, one as a newsletter style template that allows a number of news items to be included (Fig. 58) and the second as a postcard template for e-mails with only one news item (Fig. 59).





Fig. 58: Example of the MyCreativeEdge newsletter e-mail template



The Mailchimp service was used to send 19 e-mail mailings during June-December 2013 (Table 11).

Table 11: All mailings to MyCreativeEdge mailing lists, June-December 2013

Subject	Date	List
MyCreativeEdge Now Open for Profiles	11 June	Pre-launch list
100 MyCreativeEdge Profiles and Counting	29 July	Members
Join MyCreativeEdge and Showcase your Creative Business	30 July	Pre-launch list
Creative Edge Talent Voucher Scheme	1 August	Members in West of Ireland, Northern Finland and Västerbotten
Talent Voucher Deadline Extension	2 September	Members in West of Ireland, Northern Finland and Västerbotten
Talent Voucher Deadline Extended	2 September	Newsletter list
Harnessing Creativity events	23 September	Members in West of Ireland
15,000 Visits to MyCreativeEdge	9 October	Members
MyCreativeEdge receives 15,000 Visits	9 October	Newsletter list
MyCreativeEdge October Update	23 October	Members
MyCreativeEdge Member Survey	21 November	Members
MyCreativeEdge Member Survey Reminder	29 November	Members
Creative Edge Conference, 2 December Galway	27 November	Newsletter list
Creative Edge Conference, 2 December Galway	27 November	Members from West of Ireland and Northern Ireland
Reminder to Unpublished Profiles	1 December	Approved but unpublished members
MyCreativeEdge Member Survey Reminder	5 December	Members
Creative Policy Toolkit Questionnaire	5 December	Newsletter list
Christmas Greetings	19 December	Newsletter list
Christmas Greetings	19 December	Members





Fig. 59: Example of the MyCreativeEdge postcard e-mail template



5.11 Survey says!

The survey of MyCreativeEdge members taken in November-December 2013 asked two questions directly relevant to the marketing and promotion of MyCreativeEdge.

Members were asked how they had heard about the website. The most frequent response was directly from a project partner organisation (32%) (Fig. 60). This may have involved an e-mail, phone call or meeting with one of the project partners.

Social media was the next most common answer with nearly a quarter of responses. Within social media, Facebook was most important with 18% hearing from a Facebook post or ad. LinkedIn and Twitter were the other channels.

Word of mouth accounted for 17.5% of responses which indicates support and growing recognition for MyCreativeEdge within the sector. The Other category was next highest which included learning from creative trade and industry associations and third level institutions showing the importance of other stakeholders informing their networks.

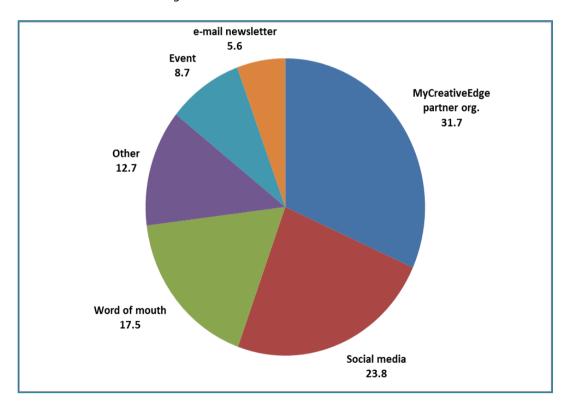


Fig. 60: How did you hear about the MyCreativeEdge website? (126 responses from 103 respondents) (% of responses)

When asked if they had taken any steps to promote their own profile, half of respondents said they had not (Fig. 61). Of those who had, social media was by far the most common method. The importance of social media in raising awareness of the site and its role in promoting profiles is



significant in terms of future promotion of the site. Promoting to the respondents' contacts was next highest, followed by promotion on their own website.

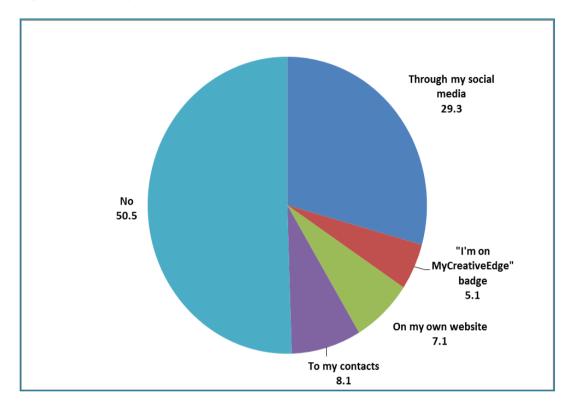


Fig. 61: Have you promoted your MyCreativeEdge profile page? (99 responses from 84 respondents) (% of responses)

5.12 Conclusion

The critical role of promotion, marketing and advertising for the successful implementation of MyCreativeEdge became increasingly obvious during the planning stages. After all, attracting members and visitors to the site is its essential purpose. A comprehensive plan using multiple channels and promotional materials to target creatives and buyers was implemented by all partners. This ranged from digital advertising to site visitors, to partners attending events, distributing flyers and making direct contact with creative enterprises and talents to encourage them to take advantage of this new opportunity to showcase their work. The role of social media in raising awareness among creatives and as an advertising tool was particularly important.

The next section evaluates the effectiveness of the promotion, marketing and advertising campaign in recruiting members to join the site and in attracting website visitors.

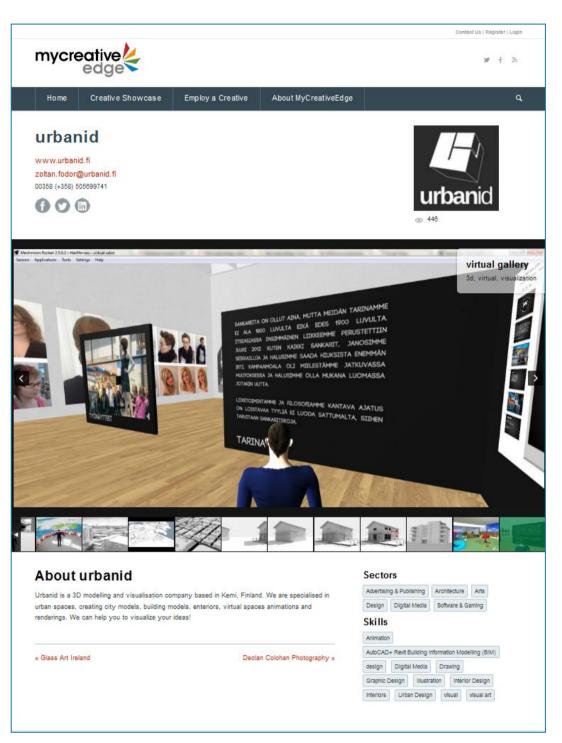


Fig. 62: Example of a MyCreativeEdge profile page – urbanid, Finland



Step 6: Evaluation

How effective has MyCreativeEdge been since its launch? There are a number of ways to measure and evaluate its performance. Firstly its uptake by end users – creative enterprises and talent in the partner regions; secondly the level of activity on the site by site visitors; and thirdly any impact it has had on members' businesses.

6.1 MyCreativeEdge members

By the end of 2013 there were 500 registered members of MyCreativeEdge.

6.1.1 Location

Fig. 63 shows the distribution of registered members by region. Just over half are from the West of Ireland with Northern Ireland having the next highest number.

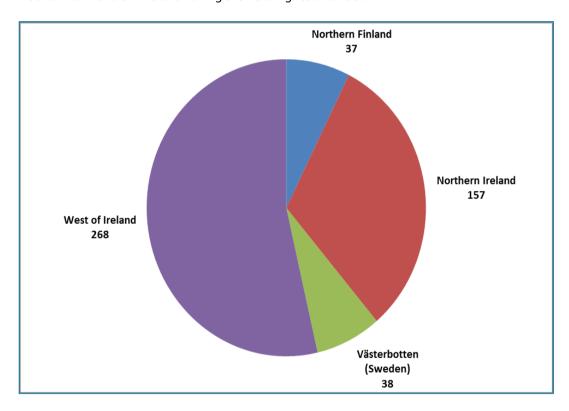


Fig. 63: Members of MyCreativeEdge by region

The regional distribution of members must be considered in light of the relative size of the partner regions. Fig. 64 compares the distribution of site membership across the partner regions with the distribution of population. It can be seen that the West of Ireland and Northern Ireland have only slightly higher shares of membership than their share of population would predict. Northern Finland also has a higher share than its population would suggest, while Västerbotten has a lower share of membership than would be expected. This is not too surprising given the sectoral focus on the audiovisual sector in Västerbotten compared with the broader sectoral focus in the other regions.



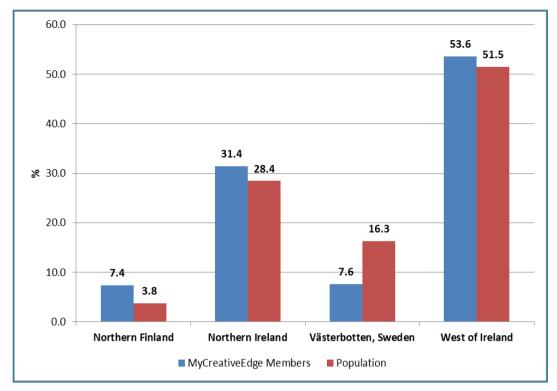


Fig. 64: Distribution of members of MyCreativeEdge and distribution of population across the four Creative Edge partner regions (%)

6.1.2 Sector

The sectoral distribution of registered members is given in Fig. 65. It should be noted that almost all members have selected two or more creative sectors, so the total figure here is considerably higher than the actual number of members.

Design and Arts are the two largest sectors, partly due to their broad nature e.g. fashion, craft, graphic design could all be included, as well as them being quite large sectors. The broadness of these sectors, and difficulties for visitors trying to find relevant providers on the website, has been raised as a concern in the survey of members (see Step 7: Further Development). The next largest sectors, Crafts and Digital Media, are also quite broad and could encompass a wide range of activities. The large number in these sectors also reflects engagement with some of the organisations and agencies working in these areas e.g. Craft NI, Crafts Council of Ireland. Software and Gaming, Architecture and TV & Radio had the smallest number of members.



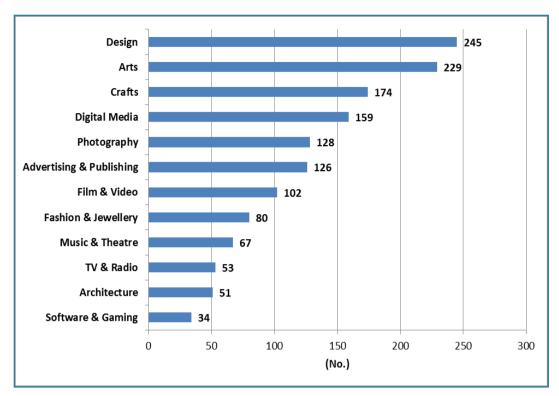
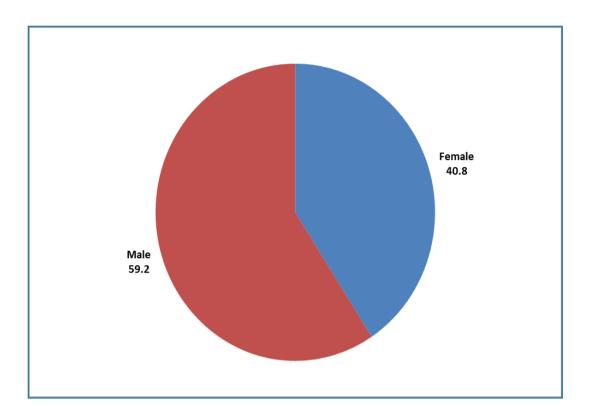


Fig. 65: Members of MyCreativeEdge by sector

6.1.3 Age and gender

Of the total membership of 500, 326 had published their profiles by the end of 2013. Additional information is available on the characteristics of this group as they have given more details when completing their profile. The gender and age breakdown of published profiles is shown in Fig. 66. In total 41% of published members are female. Less than 5% of published members are aged under 25 years meaning it would be important to target younger creatives to join the site in future.



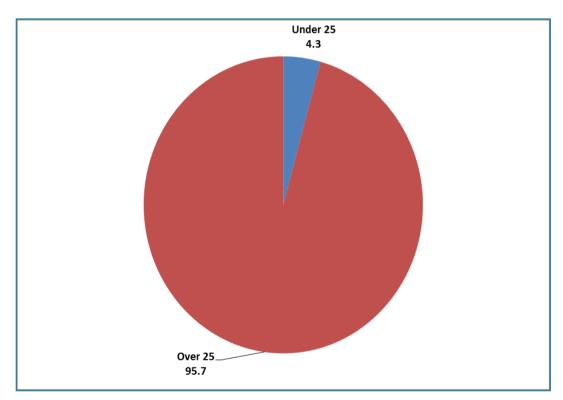


Fig. 66: Published profiles on MyCreativeEdge by gender and age



6.1.4 Enterprise size

The survey of members conducted in November-December 2013 gives us some useful additional insights on the profile of members. In total 103 responded to the survey, about a fifth of all members.

Considering enterprise size, almost 60% of survey respondents were working alone (Fig. 67). This is a common feature of the creative sector and has important implications for the design of support programmes. The capacity and resources available to single person businesses to begin or expand export activities can be quite limited. Indeed 99% of respondents would be categorised as microenterprises with fewer than 10 employees.

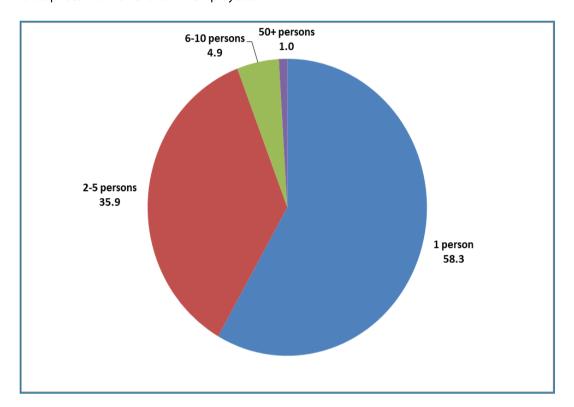


Fig. 67: How many people work in your business (including yourself)? (103 responses) (% of responses)

6.1.5 Clients

The survey also asked about the main markets served by the respondents. Most respondents rely on national markets for their products and services (Fig. 68). The respondents' own country (beyond their local/regional area) was the most common location for their clients. This is likely influenced by a lot of business being focused in their capital cities. The respondents' own regional area was the next most common. Of all responses, 22% indicated international clients.



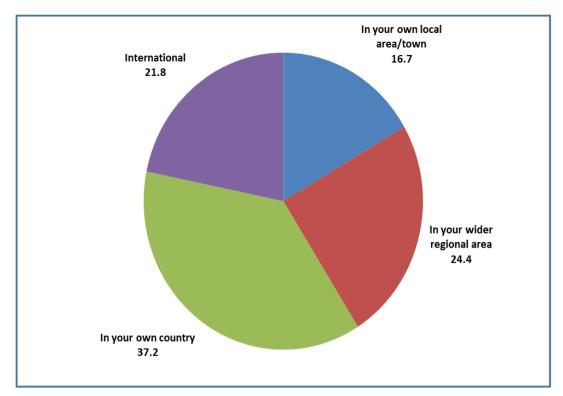


Fig. 68: Where are most of your customers or clients based? (156 responses from 103 respondents) (% of responses)

6.2 Visits to MyCreativeEdge

There are two sources of information on activity by visitors to MyCreativeEdge. The site has internal statistics on the number of views of each profile page as well as the number of clicks on the various links (website, Facebook etc) on each profile page. Detailed website visitor statistics are also available from Google Analytics. Both of these sources are examined here.

6.2.1 Profile page activity

There were a total of 61,707 profile views on the site between June and December 2013. This is the total number of times that any profile on the site was viewed; if a visitor viewed a number of profiles each one is counted.

The number of views that each profile received varied considerably. Table 12 shows the top three most viewed profiles from each region. Images of these 12 profiles are distributed throughout this report. Differences in the number of views are due to the length of time a profile has been featured on the site, any promotion they may have done of their own profile and the attractiveness of their imagery to draw visitors to their profile page from their thumbnail image on the main website pages. As the order of appearance of profiles on the Home and Creative Showcase pages is randomly generated, all profiles have an equal chance of appearing in the top images on these pages and in any search by region or sector. Though in searches by sector or region those in the larger categories face greater competition.



Table 12: The top three most viewed profiles from each of the four regions, June-December 2013

Region/Profile Name	Profile Views	Sector
Northern Finland		
Sanna Niikkonen	383	Illustrator
urbanid	360	3D modelling
Valtteri Niskavaara	307	Film-maker
Northern Ireland		
The Armagh Rhymers	1,689	Theatre group
Mark Hewitt	489	Scriptwriter
Niall Drew Art	374	Visual artist
Västerbotten, Sweden		
David Sandberg	824	Film director
JohannaN	266	Jeweller
Trickfabriken AB	255	Post-production services
West of Ireland		
Edel MacBride Knitwear Designer	764	Knitwear designer
Outrider Artists	672	Artists' collective
Mud and Wood	552	Architecture



Fig. 69: Example of a MyCreativeEdge profile – The Armagh Rhymers, Northern Ireland

While views of profiles is a good indicator of activity by visitors on the site, those visitors taking action by clicking a link on a profile page to visit that enterprise's own website or social media page, is very important in terms of converting website visits into real impacts. While the site collects data on the number of clicks on website and social media links, it does not collect data on those who click e-mail addresses to e-mail the business directly.



Fig. 70 shows the total number of clicks on each type of link for all profile pages. In total there were 2,292 clicks of website and social media links on profile pages. Clicking through to the profile owner's website was by far the most common action accounting for 73% of all activity. This was followed by Facebook links and Twitter. It should be noted that some members do not have a website link on their profile page, with some using their Facebook page as their main online presence.

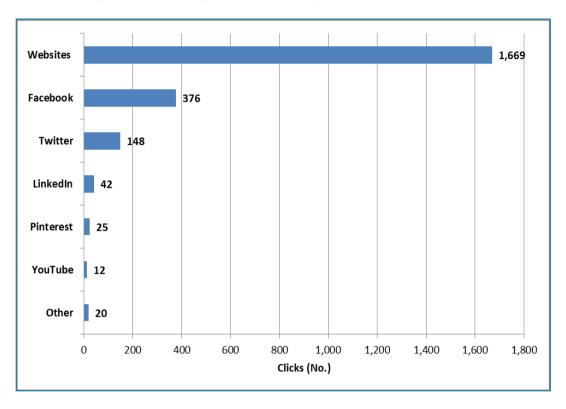


Fig. 70: Number of clicks on website and social media links on MyCreativeEdge profile pages, June-December 2013

The profile pages which received a total of 30 or more clicks were:

- 1. David Sandberg, film director
- 2. Edel MacBride, knitwear designer
- 3. Mark Stephens Architects, architects
- 4. Martina Hamilton, jeweller
- 5. Western Designs & Co., 3D designer
- 6. Jackie Askew, visual artist
- 7. Caroline Rock Art, visual artist

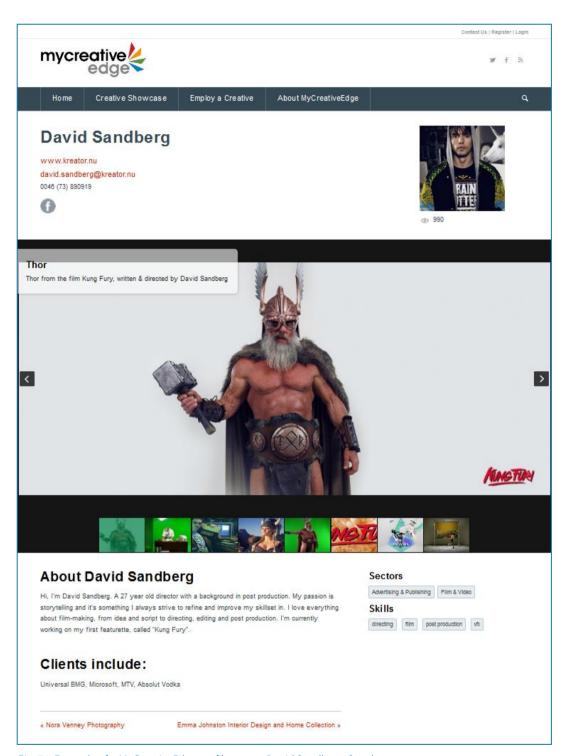


Fig. 71: Example of a MyCreativeEdge profile page – David Sandberg, Sweden

6.2.2 Website visits

More detailed statistics on website visits are available from Google Analytics. **In total from launch until end December 2013 there were 36,857 visits to MyCreativeEdge with 27,878 unique visits.** Fig. 72 shows weekly visits over the six month period.



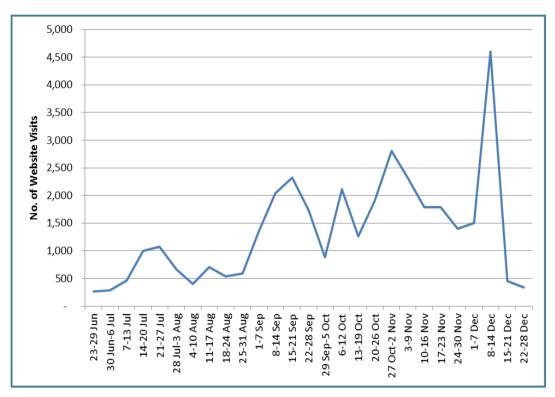


Fig. 72: Number of website visits per week to MyCreativeEdge, June-December 2013

Of the total visits to the website over the period, just under a quarter were from returning visitors who visited the website more than once (Fig. 73). Three-quarters of visitors were new visitors.



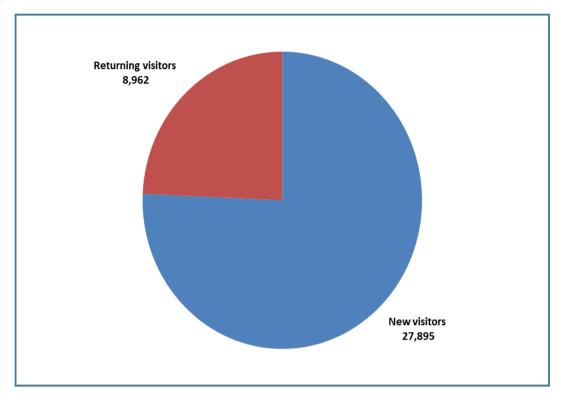


Fig. 73: Number of new and returning visitors to MyCreativeEdge, June-December 2013

6.2.3 Location of visits

The location of visits to the site is set out in Fig. 74. Ireland was the source of just over half of all visits. This reflects both the profile of the site's membership and strong advertising in the West of Ireland as well as in Dublin.

In line with the international targeting of digital advertising as outlined in section 5.4, the United States (16%) and England (9%) were the next largest sources of visits followed by the partner regions.

As one of the primary objectives of the site is to showcase the partner regions' and the Northern Periphery area's creativity to international markets, the fact that a third of all visits were from outside the four partner countries is very encouraging.



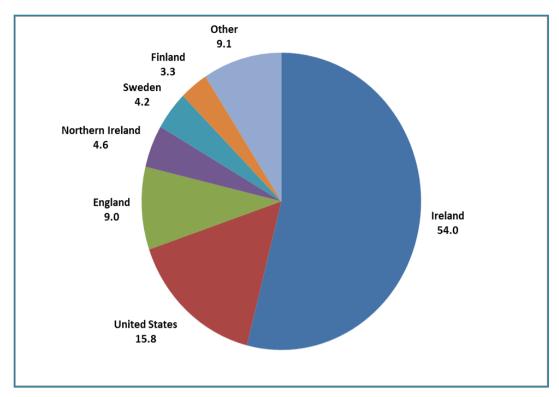


Fig.74: Location of website visits to MyCreativeEdge, June-December 2013

For the partner regions, visits from other areas of their own country, particularly their capital cities, also represent a form of export showcasing. In-country exports from more peripheral regions to core areas can often be the most important and cost effective market for many creatives. So it is interesting to consider the pattern of site visits within each of the partner countries. For Northern Ireland a breakdown by area is not available, however the information for Ireland, Sweden and Finland is presented (Fig. 75). In the case of Ireland and Finland, their capital city was the largest source of visits and for Sweden it was second largest.



Website visits from Ireland: Dublin 57% Galway 15% Sligo 8% Website visits from Sweden: Västerbotten county 55% Stockholm county 42%



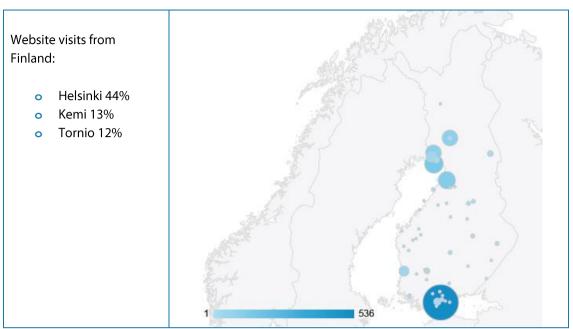


Fig. 75: Maps showing the source of visits to MyCreativeEdge from Ireland, Sweden and Finland, June-December 2013

6.2.4 Channel of visits

Each visit to the website comes through a particular channel. A visitor may find it by doing an internet search, clicking a Facebook ad, following a link from another website, etc. Fig. 76 shows the percentage of visits that came through each of the main channels.

Direct visits accounted for 45% of the total. This included people typing in the web address and also those who clicked on a Facebook ad. Social was the next largest source of visits, this is primarily people following a link to the site from a Facebook post. Organic searching i.e. someone using a relevant keyword in a search engine and then selecting the site from the results, was next highest. This was followed by paid search which is someone clicking a Google AdWord when they have searched a relevant keyword. Referral means visits which come from a link on another website.



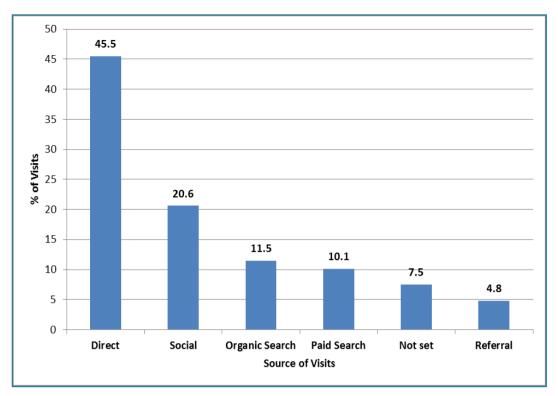


Fig. 76: Channel of visits to MyCreativeEdge, June-December 2013

The top ten routes to visiting the website are given in Table 13. A link from a Facebook post (not including ads) was the largest single source of traffic. This may have been links from the *Creative Edge* Facebook page or links to the site from posts on other Facebook pages.

Five of the main routes were directly to the Creative Showcase section filtered for a particular sector. These were links placed behind the Facebook ads for those sectors. The ads for the Fashion & Jewellery sector resulted in the second largest number of visits with ads for Crafts, Arts, Architecture and Photography all bringing over 1,200 visits to the site.

Direct visits to the Home page were the third largest, while the registration page was fifth. This would include those clicking Facebook ads aimed at recruiting members and also following direct links to the registration page circulated by the project partners by e-mail. Paid searches (Google AdWords) were the ninth and tenth largest sources of traffic with photos the most popular keyword.



Table 13: The top ten channels for visits to MyCreativeEdge, June-December 2013

Main Channels to site	No. of Visits	Type of Channel
Facebook post	7,325	Social
/creative-showcase/fashion-jewellery/	4,196	Direct / Facebook Ad
www.creativeedge.eu	2,337	Direct
/creative-showcase/crafts/	2,173	Direct / Facebook Ad
/register/	2,087	Direct / Facebook Ad
/creative-showcase/arts/	1,520	Direct / Facebook Ad
/creative-showcase/architecture/	1,304	Direct / Facebook Ad
/creative-showcase/photography/	1,278	Direct / Facebook Ad
photos	839	Paid Search / Google AdWord
logo	346	Paid Search / Google AdWord

6.2.5 Website pageviews

As well as considering how visitors got to the site, it is useful to examine what they viewed. The website pages with the most pageviews are shown in Fig. 77. The site's Home page received the most views at just over 12,000. This was followed by the Creative Showcase page filtered for the Fashion & Jewellery sector. This was strongly influenced by the Facebook ad campaign, with Fashion & Jewellery ads performing well in all periods but particularly strongly during the Christmas campaign (see section 5.4).

The registration page had the next highest number of views, again this would be influenced by the digital advertising campaigns to recruit members as well as direct promotion of the site to creatives by the partners, as described in Step 5: Promotion, Marketing & Advertising. The next highest were also the Creative Showcase page filtered by sector – Photography and Crafts. Again ads for these sectors performed quite strongly with Photography performing particularly well in the Google AdWords and Crafts doing well during the October-December Facebook ad campaign.

Pageviews by site members of their Edit Profile page, which is the first step in creating a profile, was next highest with the Edit Gallery page the ninth most viewed.



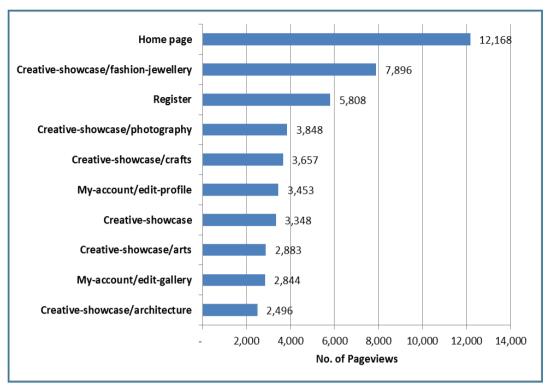


Fig. 77: Top 10 pages of MyCreativeEdge by pageviews, June–December 2013

6.2.6 Devices

Given changes in technology and the increasing use of mobile phones and tablets, it is interesting to consider the technology used by visitors to the website (Fig. 78). Three-quarters of all visits came from someone using a desktop computer (this would include laptops). The next largest, with 13% of visits, was by people using mobile phones followed by 11% using tablets. The website was designed to be responsive i.e. to adapt to the device being used to view it, and as one in four of all visits came from a mobile or tablet the importance of responsiveness is clear. Changes in technology and how the internet is used will need to be central to the site's future development.



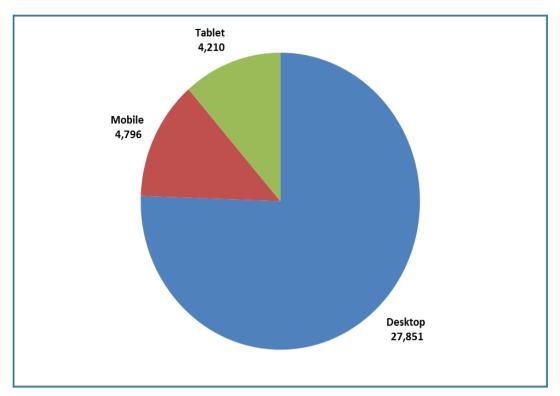


Fig. 78: Devices used to visit MyCreativeEdge, June-December 2013

6.3 Members' Experience

It was decided to do a short online survey of members of MyCreativeEdge during November-December 2013 in order to:

- Determine members' experience in the practical process of creating their profile on the site and any changes that may be required.
- Determine any impact that being on the site may have had on their business (though it was recognised it was quite early to judge this).
- Gather suggestions for how MyCreativeEdge could be developed and promoted in future.
- Feed into the reporting and evaluation of the MyCreativeEdge platform and the *Creative Edge* project by the NPP.

As the *Creative Edge* project partner with main responsibility for developing MyCreativeEdge, the WDC created an online survey using Polldaddy (www.polldaddy.com). The questions are listed in Annex 4. An e-mail was sent to all approved MyCreativeEdge members (444 at the time) on 21 November 2013 asking them to complete the survey. Two reminder e-mails were sent on 29 November and 5 December and the survey closed on 8 December. In total there were 103 respondents (23% response rate), 84 of whom had published and 19 who had not published as yet on the website.

Several of the survey results have already been reported such as the ease of creating a profile (section 4.8), how respondent's heard about the website (section 5.11) and their enterprise size (section 6.1). Here, the results of other questions on why they joined MyCreativeEdge and any impact their presence on the site has had, are set out.



6.3.1 Reasons for joining MyCreativeEdge

Most respondents gave multiple reasons for joining MyCreativeEdge. Access to international markets, the fact it was a free resource and networking with other creatives were the most frequent reasons, accounting for nearly half of responses (Fig. 79).

An opportunity to complement their already existing web presence, to connect with potential employers and the joint marketing provided by MyCreativeEdge were also important factors. These six reasons were by far the most common.

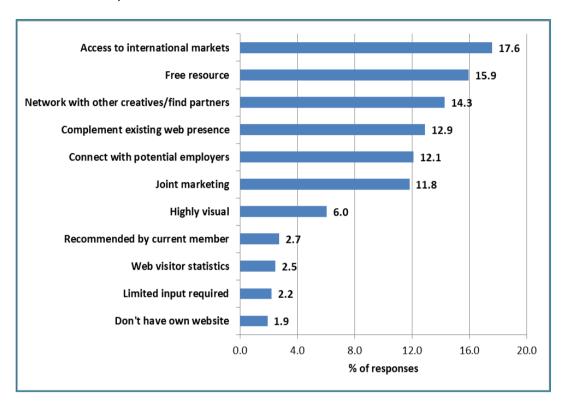


Fig. 79: Why did you register on MyCreativeEdge? (364 responses from 103 respondents) (% of responses)

6.3.2 Response to MyCreativeEdge profile

The largest share of answers, close to 60%, reported no response to their profile page (Fig. 80). While this is likely true in most cases, it is also possible there was some response in terms of MyCreativeEdge visitors clicking through to their own website or Facebook page but they may not be aware of this.

In total 28 respondents reported being aware of some reaction to their profile, 16% referred to receiving e-mails with 14% reporting visits to their own website.



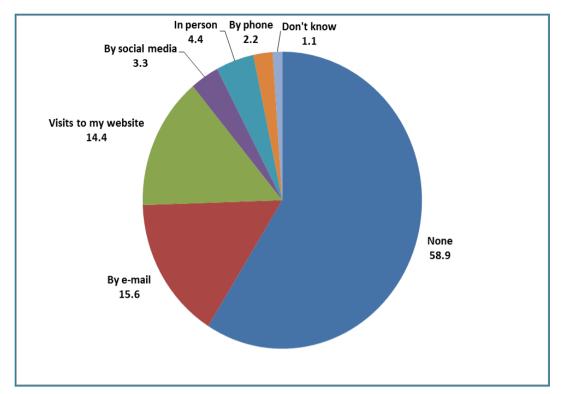


Fig. 80: Have you received any response to your MyCreativeEdge profile page? (90 responses from 84 respondents) (% of responses)

The two most common outcomes of these responses were general queries and no further action, with potential leads next highest (Fig. 81). This partly reflects the short time period that the site and the respondents' profiles would have been live at the time. The next highest was partnership with another creative (3 respondents) which is important in the context of networking through the site.



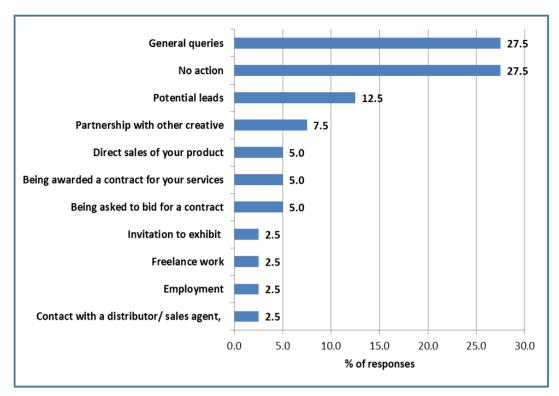


Fig. 81: Has this led to ... (40 responses from 31 respondents) (% of responses)

There were 17 examples provided of responses that members had received including:

- Receiving e-mails regarding their work from other members of MyCreativeEdge.
- Working directly with another member under the Creative Edge Talent Voucher Scheme.
- Being contacted by another member of MyCreativeEdge in relation to the Talent Voucher Scheme, and though they did not work together under the scheme, were going to work together in future.
- Contacting several artists from the site with a view to working together to publish their work.
- One noted that an image of her work had been used in some promotional material for the website and this raised her profile among potential clients.
- o Connecting with another creative business at a networking event and working together.
- Several artists on the site had been contacted by the director of an art fair in London enquiring if they were interested in exhibiting.
- Being asked to quote for work.

6.3.3 Networking through MyCreativeEdge

91 respondents indicated they had used MyCreativeEdge to look at other creative profiles (Fig. 82). This is an indication of the importance of the site as a tool for networking within the sector.

The two most common actions were that they had looked at profiles from their own and other regions or had looked at profiles from their own region. That they had looked at profiles just from their own local area or just from their own sector were next highest.



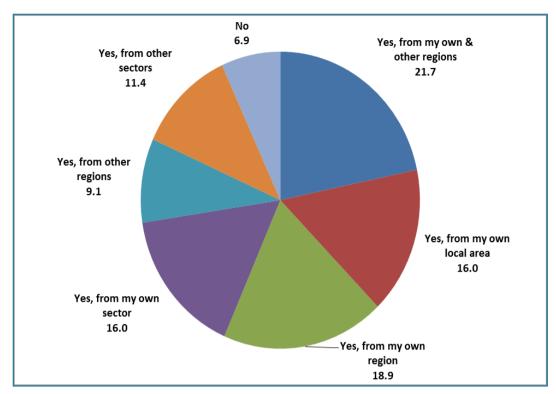


Fig. 82: Have you used MyCreativeEdge to look at other creative profiles? (175 responses from 103 respondents) (% of responses)

Three-quarters of responses indicated they had not made direct contact with anyone they found on the site (Fig. 83).

There were 25 responses indicating they had made contact, with some respondents indicated they had contacted multiple people. The most common was making contact with someone from their own region, followed by making contact with someone from their own local area.

The limited number of responses indicating they had made contact with creatives from other regions indicates that international networking may be an area in need of further support.



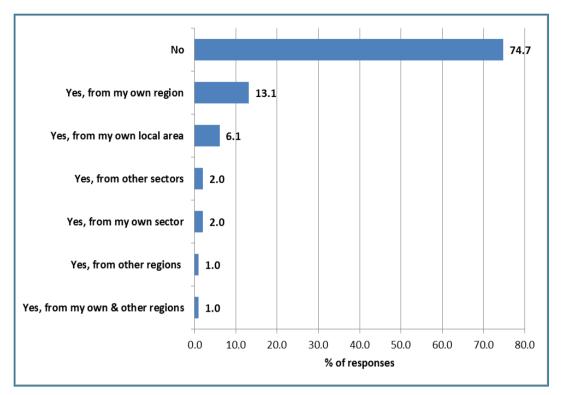


Fig. 83: Have you made direct contact with anyone you discovered on MyCreativeEdge? (99 responses from 91 respondents) (% of responses)

6.4 Conclusion

The evaluation shows that 500 creatives from across the four regions joined MyCreativeEdge in its first six months of operation. They are relatively well balanced in terms of gender but more effort is required to attract young creative talent. The majority are single person businesses which is a critical characteristic in terms of their capacity to increase or commence exporting.

The site received 37,000 visits during its first six months, with Ireland, the US, England, Northern Ireland, Sweden and Finland the main sources of visits. The capital cities of the partner countries were particularly important sources of visits to the site. Most visitors discovered the site by clicking on a digital ad or through a Faceboook post.

For the members of the site, accessing international markets and networking with other creatives were the main reasons they joined. While direct impacts have been limited to date, some responses have been reported with potential leads emerging.

This evaluation of the site's membership and visitor response will inform the site's further development.

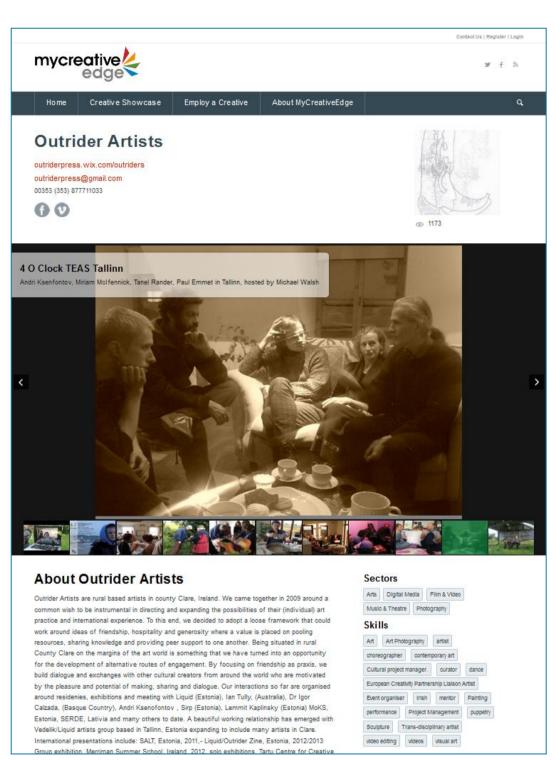


Fig. 84: Example of a MyCreativeEdge profile page – Outrider Artists, Ireland





Step 7: Further Development

This report has outlined the process of designing, developing and implementing MyCreativeEdge over the period to the end of 2013. The question now arises as to its future and how it can and will be maintained and developed.

All *Creative Edge* project partners are committed to continuing the operation of MyCreativeEdge for the benefit of creative businesses and talents in the partner regions. The website's hosting, maintenance, security and CMS upgrades are fully funded for the next five years.

The marketing and promotion of the website will continue through 2014. Staffing resources for the administration and updating of the website and social media are also available. This period will be used to examine the options for the longer term sustainability of MyCreativeEdge.

The project partners involved in *Creative Edge* have secured funding from the NPP to undertake a preparatory project called *Creative Momentum*. This is with a view to applying for a new project to support the creative industries sector in the Northern Periphery area under the new Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme 2014-2020. While this will be a new and distinct project application, the intention is that if the project is approved the functions of MyCreativeEdge would be expanded and developed as part of the new project.

The evaluation of MyCreativeEdge in the previous section, and the experience of its operation, has also raised a number of issues which are important for the further development of the site. Some are technical issues while others are broader concerns about how the site can become a more useful resource for members and more user friendly for visitors.

In the member survey a number of questions asked for suggestions for how the site could be further developed and promoted. These suggestions will inform plans for the site's development.

- Promotion of the site:
 - Increased promotion to non-creative businesses as a directory of creative providers.
 Attend business networking/conference events where businesses would be looking for creative providers. More promotion among commissioners of work.
 - Targeting online advertising to the location of the majority of clients, often the capital city of the partner region.
 - Advertising in trade-specific magazines/newsletters and at trade-specific events.
 - Using the local media (newspapers, radio) to promote the website, not focusing solely on digital advertising and promotion.
 - Recruiting 'reps' from the sector to promote the site in their own communities of interest and encourage others to join up. Promoting to community groups, Facebook groups, arts organisations and others with an interest in the sector.
 - Creating a LinkedIn group.
 - Linking with / sponsoring major tourism initiatives.
 - Building links and co-operation with international art fairs and galleries.
- Technical/website development:



- The creative sector categories could be more specific to make searching easier e.g. for a web designer. Particularly a concern for the broad Design category.
- Restrict the number of creative categories a member can select to one or two.
 Members selecting too many sectors, some of which are not core to their services, means website visitors may get many irrelevant search results discouraging them from visiting the site again.
- o A blog featuring creative businesses from the site e.g. 60 second interviews.
- Create an international projects section with details of projects that members could bid for. This could incorporate a facility to allow members to collaborate to pool resources to bid for larger projects.
- A dedicated section on the site for each of the partner regions.
- o Adding an eCommerce element to allow direct sales through the website.
- o Increasing the gallery size to allow more images.
- Making Creative Showcase the Home page.
- Allowing a comments section on each profile page with any comments left on the site also posted to the members' Facebook page.
- Hosting a crowdfunding platform exclusively for members of MyCreativeEdge.
- Some form of quality control for contacts made through the site.
- MyCreativeEdge as a repository for CVs for jobseekers looking for work in the sector.

More interaction with members:

- More active posting on the site including notifications to members of upcoming offers.
- Feedback to members on any projects that have resulted from the site.
- The members' Forum needs to be moderated and more active.
- Provide more information and advice to members on how to promote their own profile page and get the most out of it.
- Hold online Q&A sessions. This could include regular online mentoring clinics via Skype/Google Hangouts.
- Expand the resources section with more varied sources.
- Provide a mentoring programme.
- Advice and information for members on how to exploit social media and present their work online.

Organising events:

- Organising events such as a creative fair day or creative festival to showcase creative talent.
- Organising trade shows and inviting retail trade buyers.
- o Organise more meetings and seminars so members can network in person.
- Hold specific seminars for different sectors / professionals.
- Organise international trade fairs.

Incentives:

- Having some form of voucher system to allow purchases from any of the members of the site.
- Running the *Creative Edge* Talent Voucher scheme again but opening it to allow enterprises from outside of the creative industries to apply.
- Provision of some form of incentive for collaboration among members.



MyCreativeEdge will continue to be developed as the Creative Showcase for Europe's Northern Edge, providing a platform for creatives from across the Northern Periphery to access international markets, network with others in the sector and expand employment opportunities for emerging creative talent.





Key Lessons

Based on our experience of creating an online export platform for the creative sector, the key lessons the *Creative Edge* partners would like to share with others considering a similar project would be:

- 1. **Consult with creatives**: Undertaking widespread consultation with the sector in the early stages of the planning process is critical. It is especially important to consult with the ultimate end users creative enterprises and talent to learn exactly what they need and want from such a platform. If creatives are not consulted in the early stages, it is more difficult to get buy-in later in the process and it will be less likely that the platform will meet the real needs of end users.
- 2. **Clarify objectives**: Be clear and realistic about your objectives. Be realistic in the early stages about what it is possible for such a platform to achieve. Clarity is needed on what the ultimate objectives of the platform are and how these are prioritised. These need to be agreed by all partners involved and clearly explained to all stakeholders. A lack of clarity in the early stages will follow through the entire process and create difficulties later on. Having clear and realistic objectives will also help to manage expectations among end users, as long as these objectives are communicated simply and clearly.
- 3. **Build consensus**: Building consensus among all parties before beginning the design process is essential. When a range of partners and interests are involved it is vital to build consensus about the platform's essential elements before beginning the actual design and development process. It is necessary to gain agreement that not all interests can be fully met by the platform and that compromises need to be made by all concerned. Once consensus is reached on the fundamental aspects of the platform this should ease the development process.
- 4. **Be flexible**: Though building consensus in the planning stages is critical, this must not result in being too rigid during the development process. There is a need for flexibility as many issues will arise during the development process that were not considered in the planning stages and which need to be responded to. Often ideas and concepts which make sense when discussed in a meeting, do not work effectively when implemented in reality. An unwillingness to adapt, respond and change during the design and development process would mean a less effective platform. In particular it is critical to respond to the actual experiences of end users when using the service.
- 5. **Clear decision-making**: As with any transnational or multi-partner project, it is important to balance consensus and partner engagement with clear final decision-making. It is often difficult to balance the need for support among all partners with a clear method of decision-making in a case of disagreement. There also needs to be one organisation with responsibility for day-to-day decision-making for issues that do not require partner input or when time pressure does not allow for consultation. In a project such as this the lead organisation for the Work Package, in this case the WDC, takes on this responsibility.
- 6. **Recruit champions**: Having champions, ambassadors or 'alpha' companies within the creative sector, to champion and support the platform, is vital. Recruiting creatives to join the site can be done using many methods, as described in Step 5 of this report, but word of mouth from other creatives and the demonstration effect of seeing other creatives on the site are likely to be among the most effective. Gaining the support of leaders and



- influencers within the sector, who will go on to spread the word to their networks and contacts, is particularly important for the longer term sustainability of the site and building a sense of ownership within the sector.
- 7. Adequate resources: It would be very easy to underestimate the resources, in terms of staffing, time and finance, required to effectively design, develop, implement and promote such a platform. It is a very labour and time intensive process involving a wide range of activities such as organising events, meetings and presentations, recruiting and managing external contractors, writing site content, liaising with and getting agreement from all partners throughout the process, planning and implementing a broad marketing campaign, moderating applications and providing technical support to members, as well as regular updating of the website, social media and e-mails. Sufficient and realistic resources need to be made available from the start and throughout the process.
- 8. **User friendly process for members**: As this platform was designed to be used by members with a wide range of technical capabilities, it needed to be as user friendly as possible. The input (time and resources) required from members must be kept to a minimum, while at the same time be able to achieve the objectives of the platform. This consideration must be central to the entire design process and the needs of users must be paramount in the platform's development. If it is not user friendly for members to create their profile when they first login, they are less likely to complete it, undermining the site.
- 9. **Reasons to return**: There is a need to create reasons for members to return to the site and continue to engage after they have published their profile. This is an aspect where more work is required by MyCreativeEdge. Some of the methods can include regular e-mails with links to articles on the site and a stronger resources section with more tailored information. But the most effective means would be to make the site more social with live interactive events such as webinars hosted on the site and a more active Forum connected to social media. Use of the site to manage other support programmes, as was done with online applications for the Talent Voucher Scheme, is another method. This could include using it for booking events, applying for other supports etc.
- 10. **Role of social media**: For an online service such as MyCreativeEdge the role of social media is very important. Its importance in raising awareness of the site among creatives was clear from the survey results as was its role in driving visitor traffic to the site through ads as well as links from posts. But social media does need to be managed and adequately resourced if it is to be effective.
- 11. **Sustainability**: The longer term sustainability of such a website needs to be built into the planning from the very start. Any initiative funded by a time limited project has the inbuilt challenge of how to make it sustainable beyond the lifetime of the project funding. Sustainability was considered during the early stages of planning MyCreativeEdge but the short time period that it was live (six months) before the end of *Creative Edge* funding has meant that more work needs to be done on this throughout 2014.

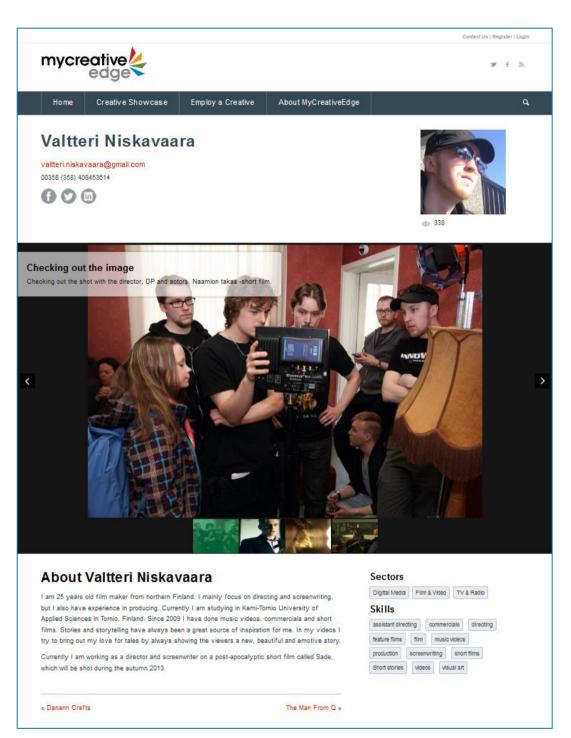


Fig. 85: Example of a MyCreativeEdge profile page – Valtteri Niskavaara, Finland





Annex 1: Questions in online survey, September 2012

Q1: Business Name

Q2: How many people work in your business?

- o 1
- o 2-5
- o 6-10
- 11-50
- o 51+

Q3: Business Location

- Donegal
- Sligo
- Leitrim
- Mayo
- Roscommon
- Galway City
- Galway County
- Clare

Q4: What sector(s) do you primarily operate in?

- Advertising
- Architecture
- Art or Antiques trade
- Crafts
- Design
- Fashion
- Digital Media
- Internet and Software
- Music, visual or performing arts
- Publishing
- Radio and TV broadcasting
- Video, film and photography

Q5: In terms of exporting (including selling to overseas visitors), what is your current status?

- I currently export
- I have never exported
- I have exported previously, but no longer export

Q6: On a scale of 1-5 (where 1 is not important and 5 is very important), how important are the following export channels to your business?



- Through people you know/personal networks and their experience operating in external markets
- Website/Online Export Platform
- Financial and other support from state bodies
- Hire Industry experts/consultants to explore and identify new market opportunities
- Trade Shows

Q7: On a scale of 1 – 5 (where 1 is not a problem and 5 is a major problem), how big a problem are the following barriers to exporting for your business?

- Limited information or research on overseas markets
- Lack of time to dedicate to exporting activities
- Shortage of working capital to finance export activities
- Marketing problems (including adapting and selling your product/service in different markets)
- Complexity of overseas distribution channels (including lack of reliable foreign representation) or distribution/shipping costs
- Unfamiliarity with procedures/paperwork
- Insufficient State assistance
- Lack of sufficient infrastructure e.g. broadband

Q8: On a scale of 1-5 (where 1 is least likely and 5 is most likely), how likely would you be to use the following tools to export in future?

- Online Platform/ Website
- Trade Shows
- International Sales Agent
- State Support Agency

Q9: On a scale of 1 – 5 (where 1 is not important and 5 is very important), how important would the following supports be in assisting you to export?

- Marketing Skills
- Access to information about export markets
- Increased financial resources
- Increased human resources
- Knowledge about procedures and paperwork
- Inclusion on a direct sales website
- Government assistance

Q10: On a scale of 1-5 (where 1 is not important and 5 is very important), how likely would you be to use the following networking channels in future?

- Social media
- Creation of formal networks
- International visit to witness best practice and make contacts
- Public showcase event
- Workshops on particular topics
- Design challenge event



Q11: On a scale of 1-5 (where 1 is not important and 5 is very important), please rank the following in terms of their contribution to the 'attractiveness' of a place to live

- Safe place (low crime rate)
- Weather
- Proximity to the countryside
- Educational Institutions
- Healthcare providers
- Cultural infrastructures (Theatres, Music Venues etc.)
- Cultural Producers (Artists, Musicians, Theatres practitioners etc.)
- New industries (IT businesses, new media operations etc.)
- A cultural Heritage
- Road, rail and air infrastructure
- Telecoms Infrastructure (broadband speeds/ bandwidth)
- Community Spirit
- Wealth

Q12: On a scale of 1-5 (where 1 is not important and 5 is very important), please rank the following in terms of their contribution to the 'attractiveness' of a place to do business

- Local Market
- Business Support mechanisms (enterprise boards, chamber of commerce, other agencies)
- Tax relief
- Proximity to large market
- Educational institutes
- Healthcare providers
- Cultural infrastructures (Theatres, Music Venues, etc.)
- Cultural producers (Artists, Musicians, Theatre practitioners etc.)
- New industries (IT businesses, new media operation etc.)
- A Cultural Heritage
- Road, rail, air infrastructure
- Telecomms infrastructure (broadband speeds/bandwidth)
- Community Spirit
- Wealth



Annex 2: Briefing Note for IAG

Briefing Note for Creative Industry Advisory Group for *Creative Edge* project (Work Package 3) Western Development Commission

Background

The Western Development Commission (WDC) is a statutory agency promoting economic and social development in the Western Region (counties Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Mayo, Roscommon, Galway and Clare).¹⁸ One of its key areas of work is the development of the creative industries sector in the Western Region.

The WDC defines the creative industries as

Occupations and industries centred on creativity, for the production and distribution of original goods and services.

Specifically this refers to 12 creative sub-sectors in three broad categories:

- 1. **Creative Application**: Art/Antiques trade (private art galleries, antique shops); Architecture; Fashion; Publishing; Advertising; Crafts
- 2. **Creative Expression**: Music, visual and performing arts (musicians, artists, theatre groups); Video, film and photography; Radio and TV broadcasting
- 3. **Creative Technology**: Internet and software; Digital media (gaming, animation); Design (graphic design, web design)

The WDC has commissioned research and analysis on the creative sector in the Western Region. The aim was to determine the size of the sector, the key barriers to its growth, what actions could be taken to grow the sector and what impact these actions were likely to have. This research and analysis has been published in three reports:¹⁹

- Baseline Research on the Creative Industries Sector in the Western Region of Ireland (2008)
- Creative West: The Creative Sector in the Western Region (2009)
- Economic Impact Assessment: The Creative Sector in the Western Region (2011)

This research has informed the WDC's role in the *Creative Edge* project (see below).

In addition to *Creative Edge* the WDC is also involved in a number of other activities aimed at developing the creative sector in the region:

WDC Micro-Loan Fund: Creative Industries is a €1m micro-loan fund which will provide micro-loans of up to €25,000 to creative enterprises in the Western Region. The first call is currently being evaluated. A second call will be announced in late 2012, closing on 31 March 2013. Calls will be issued on a quarterly basis thereafter (www.wdc.ie/microfundci)

¹⁸ www.wdc.ie

¹⁹ These reports can be downloaded from <u>www.wdc.ie/publications</u>



- The WDC has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Crafts Council of Ireland to develop the craft and creative sector in the region
- The WDC is represented on the Steering Committee of the 4CNW talent vouchers project http://creativestatenorthwest.com

Creative Edge project

Creative Edge is a pan-regional initiative for sustainable growth of creative businesses through increasing their access to international markets and developing their emerging creative talent. It is funded under the EU INTERREG IVB Northern Periphery Programme (NPP).²⁰ The total project budget is \in 1.2m and NUI Galway is the lead partner. The partners in the Creative Edge project are:

- o National University of Ireland, Galway (Lead Partner) http://www.nuigalway.ie/cisc/
- o Region Vasterbotten / Film i Västerbotten, Sweden http://filmivasterbotten.com/english/
- o SEED, Craigavon Borough Council, Northern Ireland http://www.seedpse.com/
- Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences (KTUAS), Finland http://www.tokem.fi/ln_English/Home.iw3
- Western Development Commission, Ireland http://www.wdc.ie/

The project is composed of five Work Packages:

- Work Package 1: Management, Co-ordination and Communications (Led by NUI Galway)
- Work Package 2: Policy Review, Analysis and Development Framework (Led by NUI Galway)
- Work Package 3: Access to Export Model (Led by WDC, Ireland)
- Work Package 4: Emerging Talent Development Programme (Led by Film i Västerbotten and KTUAS)
- Work Package 5: Creative Place Development (Led by SEED, Northern Ireland)

More information is available at www.creative-edge.eu

Creative Edge: Work Package 3

The WDC is lead partner for Work Package 3: Access to Export Model. It will design, develop and pilot a sustainable model to facilitate creative enterprises (sole traders, micro-enterprises and SMEs) in the partner regions to access global markets to sell their goods and services. The manner in which different creative sub-sectors 'export' varies and this will have to be incorporated within the model. It will be closely linked with Work Package 4 which aims to assist emerging creative talent to access employment opportunities.

There are two main activities within Work Package 3:

1. **Export Access Model**: The design, development and delivery of an open access 'export platform' to facilitate creative sector micro-enterprises and SMEs operating in the NPP partner regions to access international markets. The exact format which the 'export platform' will take is to be finalised during the early stages of the project. It may involve a website, mobile app, attendance at trade fairs and/or other channels to market. It will link closely with the attendant regions' diaspora as an initial customer base. Sustainability of

www.northernperiphery.eu



- the model will be a key consideration in its initial development. This export model will be combined with the access to employment model (Work Package 4) to create an overall Creative Access Model (CAM) for the partner regions to allow creatives to access both export and employment opportunities.
- 2. **Talent Vouchers**: A pilot scheme of talent vouchers to co-fund businesses to contract young creative talent in order to provide young talent with experience and portfolio development, as well as to address innovation needs of businesses in the wider economy.

Expected Outputs of Work Package 3

- A sustainable, pan-regional creative Export Access Model to support export growth of creative goods and services.
- Within this, the establishment of networks of like-minded creatives who share the ambition to develop their business and to break into export markets – The "1,000 club".
- Increased employment opportunities within regional creative businesses and reduced displacement of creative talent from peripheral areas to larger urban centres.
- Access to expertise and knowledge sharing / mentoring through the Talent Voucher Scheme.
- Increased competitiveness and sustainability of existing and emerging creative businesses.
- Transnational exchange of knowledge, expertise, technology and methodologies.
- Extensive information, awareness and promotional campaign in the NPP region and beyond.

Role of the Creative Industry Advisory Group

The WDC wishes to establish a Creative Industry Advisory Group to provide advice on the implementation of Work Package 3, in particular the export access model. The intention is for the Group to meet three times at the design, development and implementation stages of the export access model.

Meeting 1 – Design (10.30-13.00, Thursday, 8th November, Ard Rí House Hotel, Tuam, Co Galway) The meeting will provide a brief overview of the *Creative Edge* project. The main topic will be the design of the export access model. This will be informed by the results of a survey of creative enterprises in the region on their export experience and needs. These results, combined with those of other consultations, will be presented. The IAG will be asked to provide their insights and experience to inform the design of an effective export platform.

Meeting 2 – Development (March 2013)

Following agreement on the design of the export access model a developer/designer will be contracted by the WDC (in Feb/March 2013) to create the platform. The second meeting of the IAG will include the contracted developer/designer and will very much focus on the practical issues of developing an effective and user friendly export access model. The previous experience of IAG members with similar initiatives will be vital to the development stage.

Meeting 3 – Implementation (June/July 2013)

The third meeting will coincide with the launch of the export access model. It is hoped that this will also provide an opportunity to meet with the partners from the other regions. The focus of this meeting will be on implementation of the export platform and the generation of interest among



creatives in the partner regions and also potential customers. Issues of how to make the export platform a success and sustainable will also be discussed.

In between the three meetings members of the IAG may be contacted by e-mail and asked to comment on a number of draft documents, in particular the 'design spec' for the export access model before it is issued.



Annex 3: Events where MyCreativeEdge was promoted

Event	Organised by	Location	Date	MyCreativeEdge Target Group	Nature of Participation
WDC Micro-Loan Fund: Creative Industries and MyCreativeEdge Briefing Session	WDC / Creative Edge	Carrick-on- Shannon, West of Ireland	09/07/2012	Creative Businesses	Presentation
WDC Micro-Loan Fund: Creative Industries and MyCreativeEdge Briefing Session	WDC / Creative Edge	Roscommon, West of Ireland	09/07/2012	Creative Businesses	Presentation
WDC Micro-Loan Fund: Creative Industries and MyCreativeEdge Briefing Session	WDC / Creative Edge	Galway, West of Ireland	10/07/2012	Creative Businesses	Presentation
WDC Micro-Loan Fund: Creative Industries and MyCreativeEdge Briefing Session	WDC / Creative Edge	Ennis, West of Ireland	10/07/2012	Creative Businesses	Presentation
WDC Micro-Loan Fund: Creative Industries and MyCreativeEdge Briefing Session	WDC / Creative Edge	Sligo, West of Ireland	11/07/2012	Creative Businesses	Presentation
WDC Micro-Loan Fund: Creative Industries and MyCreativeEdge Briefing Session	WDC / Creative Edge	Castlebar, West of Ireland	12/07/2012	Creative Businesses	Presentation
WDC Micro-Loan Fund: Creative Industries and MyCreativeEdge Briefing Session	WDC / Creative Edge	Letterkenny, West of Ireland	16/07/2012	Creative Businesses	Presentation
National Crafts & Design Fair		Dublin, Ireland	5/12/2013	Creative Businesses	Networking and FAQ flyer
Video & Film Imaging seminar	Craigavon Borough Council	Portadown, Northern Ireland	27/04/2013	Creative Businesses and press	Organiser / facilitator
The Art of Presenting Craft seminar	Craigavon Borough Council	Armagh, Northern Ireland	09/05/2013	Creative Businesses and press	Organiser / facilitator
Revisiting Modern Architecture seminar	Craigavon Borough Council	Banbridge, Northern Ireland	23/05/2013	Creative Businesses, press and policy makers	Organiser



Event	Organised by	Location	Date	MyCreativeEdge Target Group	Nature of Participation
WDC Micro-Loan Fund: Creative Industries and MyCreativeEdge Briefing Session	WDC / Creative Edge	Galway, West of Ireland	23/05/2013	Creative Businesses	Presentation and pre-launch flyers
FilmArc Masterclass III: Entertainment	FilmArc project / Film i Västerbotten	Skellefteå, Sweden	10-11/06/2013	Creative Businesses and Creative Talent	Presentation and cards
Creative Summit	The Lodge/ Creative Edge / Film i Västerbotten	Skellefteå, Sweden	12-13/06/2013	Creative Businesses	Sponsorship and Swedish flyers
Barents Convention Reunion	Barents Reunion	Haparanda/ Tornio, Sweden/Finland	12-13/06/2013	Creative Businesses, Talent, and Business Buyers	Networking
Euracademy Summer Academy	Euracademy	Slovenia	14/07/2013	Rural policy makers	Presentation and cards
Down Business Information Event	Down District Council	Down Bus Centre, Northern Ireland	29/08/2013	Creative Businesses	Presentation and pop up stand
Empowering Change	Craigavon Borough Council	Newry, Northern Ireland	06/09/2013	Creative Businesses	Information
Down Business Collaborative Network	Down Business Collaborative Network	Holywood, Northern Ireland	12/09/2013	Creative Businesses	Presentation and pop up stand
Spirit of Entrepreneurship	Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology	Castlebar, West of Ireland	16/09/2013	Business Buyers and Creative Businesses	Exhibition Stand, roll up banner, promotional material
Meet The Experts	CIDO	Craigavon, Northern Ireland	17/09/2013	Creative Businesses	Presentation, pop up stand and information
Cultural Marathon	Kemi-Tornio University of Applied Sciences	Kemi-Tornio, Finland	17-18/09/2013	Creative Talent	Presentation, promotional material
NPP Annual Conference	NPP Secretariat	Skellefteå, Sweden	19/09/2013	NPP regional policy makers	Flyers
Creativity & the Economy	Culture Week	Belfast, Northern Ireland	20/09/2013	Creatives Businesses and policy makers	Networking
Banbridge JABO	Craigavon Borough Council	Banbridge, Northern Ireland	23/09/2013	Personal Advisors to unemployed/ben efit claimants	Presentation, pop up stand, information
Linkubator	Craigavon Borough Council	Belfast, Northern Ireland	25/09/2013	Creative Businesses	Information
US-Ireland Law & Business Symposium	Brehon Law Society / Mayo Co Co / WDC etc.	Westport, West of Ireland	25-27/09/2013	US and Irish Business Buyers	Exhibition Stand, roll up banner, promotional material, flyer in welcome packs



Event	Organised by	Location	Date	MyCreativeEdge Target Group	Nature of Participation
Banbridge Business Network	Banbridge Business Network	Banbridge, Northern Ireland	26/09/2013	Creative Businesses	Information
Beyond Territories Seminar	Harnessing Creativity project	Carrick-on- Shannon, West of Ireland	27/09/2013	Creative Businesses	Flyers
Galway Oyster Festival		Galway	27-30/09/2013	Consumer Buyers and Creative Businesses	Exhibition Stand, roll up banner, promotional material
Cuyahoga Trade Visit	Mayo Co Co	Various areas of Co Mayo, West of Ireland	2-5/10/2013	US Business Buyers	Flyer in welcome bag for US business delegates
Portadown Careers	Craigavon Borough Council	Portadown, Northern Ireland	03/10/2013	Careers advisors	Presentation, pop up stand and information
GMIT Galway Careers Fair	Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology	Galway, West of Ireland	07/10/2013	Creative Talent	Exhibition Stand, roll up banner, promotional material
NUIG Graduate Jobs Fair 2013	NUI Galway	Galway, West of Ireland	08/10/2013	Creative Talent	Flyers
Newry & Mourne Business Networking Group	Newry & Mourne Business Networking Group	Newry, Northern Ireland	08/10/2013	Creative Businesses	Presentation, pop up stand, information, leaflets
MOVE Film Festival	Film i Västerbotten and others	Umeå, Sweden	08-13/10/2013	Creative Businesses	Promotional material, networking
WDC Micro-Loan Fund: Creative Industries and MyCreativeEdge Briefing Session	WDC / Creative Edge	Ennis, West of Ireland	09/10/2013	Creative Businesses	Presentation and flyers
MOVE Film Festival Industry Day	Film i Västerbotten and others	Umeå, Sweden	10/10/2013	Creative Businesses (AV sector)	Presentation, promotional material, networking
WDC Micro-Loan Fund: Creative Industries and MyCreativeEdge Briefing Session	WDC / Creative Edge	Roscommon, West of Ireland	16/10/2013	Creative Businesses	Presentation and flyers
Letterkenny IT Careers Fair	Letterkenny Institute of Technology	Letterkenny, West of Ireland	21/10/2013	Creative Talent	Exhibition Stand, roll up banner, promotional material
Douglas Hyde Conference	Roscommon County Council / WDC	Ballaghaderreen, West of Ireland	25/10/2013	Policy makers and Creative Businesses	Exhibition Stand, roll up banner, promotional material
Downpatrick, Kilkeel, Newcastle, Newry	Careers Office	Downpatrick, Northern Ireland	25/10/2013	Careers advisors	Presentation, pop up stand and leaflets



Event	Organised by	Location	Date	MyCreativeEdge Target Group	Nature of Participation
Careers					
Newry Hub Launch	Craigavon Borough Council	Newry, Northern Ireland	02/11/2013	Creative Businesses and press	Presentation and information
Rough Draft Design and New Media Conference	Private sector design community Sligo	Sligo, West of Ireland	07/11/2013	Creative Businesses and Creative Talent	Opening address, flyers in bag for delegates and logo on programme
North Armagh Artists Collective	Craigavon Borough Council	Lough Neagh, Northern Ireland	13/11/2013	Creative Businesses	Presentation and leaflets
Armagh Hub Launch	Craigavon Borough Council	Armagh, Northern Ireland	21/11/2013	Creative Businesses and Press	Presentation and information
Enterprise Week	Bank of Ireland	Portadown, Northern Ireland	22/11/2013	Creative Businesses	Presentation, pop up stand, information and leaflets
MeetWest business networking	Mayo Co Co / WDC etc	Westport, West of Ireland	21-22/11/2013	Business Buyers and Creative Businesses	Exhibition Stand and flyers in bags for delegates
A Guide to Starting Your Own Business launch	Craigavon Borough Council	Craigavon, Northern Ireland	25/11/2013	Creative Businesses	Information
Banbridge Hub Launch	Craigavon Borough Council	Banbridge, Northern Ireland	26/11/2013	Creative Businesses and press	Presentation and information
The Creative Europe Programme	Sonic Arts Centre	Belfast, Northern Ireland	27/11/2013	Creative Businesses and policy makers	Networking
Creative Edge Conference	NUI Galway / Creative Edge	Galway, West of Ireland	02/12/2013	Policy makers and Creative Businesses	Presentation and exhibition stand with material
Lurgan Southern Regional College	Craigavon Borough Council	Lurgan, Northern Ireland	05/12/2013	Creative Talent	Presentation, powerpoint, pop up stand, leaflets
Film i Västerbotten Meet & Greet (new students)	Film i Västerbotten	Umeå, Sweden		Creative Talent	Presentation, promotional material

Annex 4: Questions in Member Survey, November-December 2013

Q1: What region are you based in

- Northern Finland
- Northern Ireland
- Västerbotten, Sweden
- West of Ireland

Q2: What is your main activity?

- Advertising & Publishing
- Architecture
- Arts
- Crafts
- Design
- Digital Media
- Fashion & Jewellery
- o Film & Video
- Music & Theatre
- Photography
- Software & Gaming
- TV & Radio

Q3: How many people work in your business (inc. yourself)?

- o 1
- o 2-5
- o 6-10
- 11-50
- o 51+

Q4: Where are most of your customers or clients based?

- o In your own local area/town
- o In your wider regional area
- In your own country
- International

Q5: How did you hear about the MyCreativeEdge website?

- At an event (conference, workshop, fair)
- e-mail from MyCreativeEdge organisation
- o e-mail newsletter
- Facebook ad
- Facebook post
- LinkedIn

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- Online banner advertisement
- Third level college/university
- Trade or industry association
- Twitter
- Word of mouth
- Other

Q6: Have you published your profile yet?

- Yes
- No

Q6a: If No, why not?

- Haven't had time
- Forgot
- Experienced technical problems
- Changed my mind
- Other, please specify

Q6b: If Yes, was the process

- Easy
- Quite Easy
- OK
- Ouite Difficult
- Difficult

If you had any problems publishing your profile, what were they?_____

Q6c: What did you think about the explanations and directions for creating your profile?

- Clear
- Quite Clear
- OK
- Quite unclear
- Unclear

Q7: Have you received any response to your MyCreativeEdge profile page?

- o By e-mail
- By phone
- Visits to your website
- By social media
- In person
- None

Q7a: If Yes, has this led to

- Being asked to bid for a contract
- Being awarded a contract for your services



- Contact with a distributor/ sales agent,
- Direct sales of your product
- Employment
- Freelance work
- General queries
- No action
- Partnership with other creative
- Potential leads

Q7b: Please give an example (If you have achieved direct sales through MyCreativeEdge, ple	ase
try to quantify their value)	

Q8: Have you used MyCreativeEdge to look at other profiles?

- Yes from my own local area
- Yes from my own region
- Yes from other regions
- Yes from my own and other regions
- Yes from my own sector
- Yes from other sectors
- No

Q8a: If Yes, have you made direct contact with anyone you discovered on the site?

- Yes from my own local area
- Yes from my own region
- Yes from other regions
- Yes from my own and other regions
- Yes from my own sector
- Yes from other sectors
- No

Q9: Have you promoted your MyCreativeEdge profile page?

- Yes, on my own website
- Yes, through my social media
- Yes, to my contacts
- Yes, I've added the 'I'm on MyCreativeEdge' badge
- Yes, other
- No

Q10: Do you have any ideas for how potential consumers and clients for your products services could be attracted to the site in the future?			
Q11: Do you have any ideas for how MyCreativeEdge can be improved?			
212: On a scale of 1-5 (where 1 is not important and 5 is very important), how important wou he following supports be in assisting you to grow your creative business?	ld		



- Support to attend Trade Fairs outside my region
- Support to attend established trade conferences / meetings in my region
- o Organisation of networking events in my area
- Voucher for initial design of a new product/service
- Micro-finance loan
- Access to creative space
- Support to develop new creative talent
- Training in marketing skills
- Training in business, financial and management skills
- Training in technical skills for online sales
- Mentoring support from successful creative business
- Access to information on export markets
- Other

Q13: Do you have any other suggestions for how your business can be supported?_____





Project website: www.creative-edge.eu

Export platform: www.mycreativeedge.eu

The creative showcase for Europe's Northern Edge









