from: iip/create – ict innovation platform – creative industry

We have chosen to represent the main tenets of this excellent, and extremely timely report, not because we could not think of the wording ourselves, but because we feel that a verbatim paraphrase allows us to find support in an authorative voice, expressing opinions that have far wider resonance than the working group for the *creative technology* bachelor would ever be able to obtain. Nevertheless, we have included our opinions so as to emphasize our point of view and indicate our particular strengths, where we aim to create a, as it is called in the report, **local eco-system** for **creative technology**, at a university that carries both **convergence of technologies** with societal impact and **creative entrepeneurship** as their mission towards the dutch and local society.

From the **managements summary** we may read as a characterization of the **creative sector**:

> *The creative sector*: Economic growth relies on **ideas**, **skills**, and **quality to excell**, on the **work force** to make it happen, and ultimately on **society** where all these aspects are rooted. (p. 6)

With respect to the **economic potential** the report is careful:

> The potential: Estimation of the **economic perspective** in standard ways is hard as data about this new sector lag behind. Nevertheless, there is ample evidence of a considerable impact in times where technology becomes invisible, hardware is cheap and **content** becomes invaluable.

Nevertheless, it leaves no doubt about the impact of these developments, especially in a **social context**:

> Socially, the rise of the *creating* **class** has an enormous impact on the participation in (virtual) communities, to restore coherence, narrowing the digital divide, and introducing new ways of living in the city.

And to emphasize, as later also more explicitly indicated in the report, the **creative industry** is regarded a necessary factor to remedy the potential dangers of the rapid technical developments to our society:

> The impact of the *creating* **industry** is inevitable, desperately needed to balance the excitement of internet and games at home.

And this holds, not surprisingly also for the Dutch situation:

> In the Netherlands: The life style of consumers will be creative and personalized, supplied with mass produced individual expression.

In particular, as observed in the report, broadband is widely available, nevertheless there is a tendency for the creaitive industry to gather in particular centers of our country, since:

> Where broadband introduces the whole world in the living room, **proximity** will paradoxically gain in importance.

The committee writing the report has set itself as a goal:

> In science and technology there is an apparent lack of a coherent agenda, as opposed to foreign countries which invest heavily in this field.

> It is our vision to create world-class **eco-systems** of the **creative sector**, by creating coherence between knowledge centers, industry and non-profit leaders in regional contexts.

It is instructive, from our point of view to read what the report mentions as examples of areas which acts as **centers of creative industry**:

> Examples: Amsterdam, Utrecht, Eindhoven and Rotterdam. (p. 7)

And indeed, why not Twente, you may ask. Here we may state, not needing any further argumentation, that Twente should make effort to be also in the list, since it satisfies many of the necessary conditions, that is the occurrence of (education in) science, arts and a lively entrepeneurial climate. Our proposal for a bachelor **creative technolgy** as explained fully in the main body of our accreditation eport, fits seamlessly here, and may acts as a necessary impetus to put Twente on the **creative map** of the Netherlands.

The **strategic agenda** of the report mentions five themes:

> The five themes are: **search & find**, **contextivity** about the context of context exploration, **virtual and real worlds**, **collaboration** as a way of life, and **interactive** and tangible **environments**. (p. 7)

In each of these themes our curriculum has to a greater or lesser extent an offer. And here we emphasize that, as much as possible, we would like to approach these themes from a unified vision, that is find suitable interactions between these themes, whenever possible.

The report spends ample deliberation on what it considers conditions for **creating a winning eco-system**:

> This agenda proposes a mix of long-term research with short-term demonstrators and high-profile applications, consequently to form new **chains of knowledge** for an enduring advantage.

> We focus on the hottest spots, supporting local iniatives, whereever they originate.

In other words, local context and iniative are determining success factors, and as such it from our point of view more a matter of whether the UTwente has the courage to take this initiative, than whether the necessay conditions are satisfied, which to our mind leaves no room for doubt.

Despite the **visionary rethorics** used in the report, as some may regard it, the report gives in our opinion a very accurate description of the current cultural and academic landscape, as it concerns the **creative industry**. It is worth emphasizing that a large, representative group of people have been involved in the writing of it:

> IIP/CREATE: The **Strategic Agenda** was produced by the program board of IIP/Create and created in discussion with industry, non-profit institutions, SMEs, universities, HBOs and academies, platforms and intermediaries, and supported by ICTRegie.

Apart from the grand overview given in the *managements summary*, it is worthwhile to look in some more detail at the observations made in the report, in particular as they pertain to education and our target audience, that is essentially members of what the report calls the **creative class**:

> Living the creative way: Millions of people are beginning to work and live **the creative way**, as artists, consultants and scientists always have done. (p. 10)

> The creating class: Our definition of the ***creating*** class covers the creation and recreation of products, it contains **experience** and **information**, it contains **media** and their **impact**. In short, it contains all who are creating in **relative autonomy**, operate in a **social network**, live in a **local eco-system** and deliver their goods wherever they are in the world.

It is interesting to note that the report has a wider definition of the creative class, which includes for example also scientists (!), than the CPB, which puts stronger emphasis on the relation with the **arts** and **human experience**:

> Cf. definition of CPB, which is more narrow: The creative industry is a specific form of industry, which produces **products** and **services** which are the result of individual or collaborative behavior and entrepreneurship. **Content** and **symbolism** are the most important elements of these products and services. They are purchased by consumers because they evoke **meaning**. On this basis **experience** is created.

Irrespective of what definition is adhered to, both research and education for the **creative industry** is inherently **multi-disciplinary**:

> Essential parties: Our target lies at the crossroads of three parties. We need **inspiration** and **content** from the **arts**, from **cultural heritage**, from **design**. And we need **industry** to **make** and **sell** it. And we need **science** and **innovative ways** of thinking to make the product or service ... (p. 11)

In other words,

> we need **content** designed with a touch of **excellence** and empowered by **science**.

As **critical success factors**, the report mentions:

> *Technology, talent and tolerance*: Extensive research shows that **successful eco-systems**, with respect to **innovation** and growth, have three factord in common: **technology**, **talent** and **tolerance**.

Especially, while positioning our curriculum **creative technology** in an academic/engineering environment it is worthwhile to keep in mind, as the report phrases it:

> A tolerant environment attracts top creative and top creating talents. (p. 11)

There should be no need to divulge into the **potential** of investing in (education for) the **creative industry**:

> The potential: Dutch creativity is world famous, but does not (sufficiently) payoff economically. (p. 18)

> Cultural potential: New technology is first applied in the old idions, later it is employed in line with its own capabilities. As a consequence, the many ways in which ICT technology will innovate the arts are still to be discovered.

And let's be clear, there is not only cultural potential, but **economic potential** as well, simple because **learning** becomes essential for our total workforce:

> Potential in learning: **learning at school** and **life long learning**. (p. 31)

The report, moreover, clearly states what **education for the creative industry** entails:

> Education for the creative industry: It is **essential** that education at schools, **universities**, and in programs aimed at people in the **creative industry** adjust to the developments we have sketched ...

And, again no need to emphasize, our curriculum **creative technology** must be seen as instrumental in conveying both **skills** and **competences** in an appropriate way:

> The new possiblities, technologies and applications must find their way to the **(future) creative work force**.

> Current arts programs at academies should include more **training of technical skills** and technical schools should give more attention to the development of people with **creative skills**.

The report makes some interesting observations about **creative entrepreneurship**, and how **media artists** might be looked at as **role models**:

> The role of the media artist: The rise of the media has only just begun. Today's and tomorrow's **interactive media applications** represent a significant part if the creative industry, where **co-creation** and **meaning** become crucial. Interactive art and design have created a valuable **expertise** and a rich **practice** in relevant fields of **human** or **user-centered** and **participatory** design. (p. 44)

Equally interesting is the importance the report attaches to **regionality** or **regional eco-systems**:

> Open or collaborative accross-discipline innovation in a **local eco-system** is a **winner**. (p. 44)

> The vision: We need the **creatives** for their contributions to realize the necessary **transitions** in **society** and **education**. (p. 46)

> It is our vision to create a world-class eco-system of the **creative sector**, by creating **coherence** between **knowledge centers** and the non-profit leaders in **regional contexts**.

And, again creating education for the creative industry is not something that should be done in isolation. Also for our curriculum **creative technology** in addition to the great variety of expertise in-house, we essentially need to cooperate with the partners in the local context, including saxion, syntens, and *de creatieve fabriek*:

> Collaboration is a way of life: **Cooperation** improves **creativity**, breeds industrial and cultural **innovation** and trancends fixed **patterns and structures**. (p. 47)

Evidently, from an educational perspective, we need the courage to look beyond the traditional boundaries of engineering and computer science.

The report makes also in very clear wording explicit how **creative research** differs from traditional academic research:

> Research of the creatives: Creative research is totally different from academic research, the techniques, the process, the results and the way these are appreciated. (p. 61)

And, again, the reports refers to the **media artist** as a **role model**:

> The contemporary **media artist** is a **researcher**, **designer** and **mediator** who is positioned in the **center of disciplines** and patches together knowledge fields and methods.

The **message** is simple and clear:

> Academic and creative research is destined to go hand-in-hand to **learn** and **benefit**.

In the local situation, that is the Netherlands, the report observes:

> In the Netherlands,..., we have many yet isolated **examples** of successful cooperation between **creative** and **scientific** research ...

We should keep in mind, according to the report:

> Creating **coherence** is key. (p. 63)

This directly points to the **relevance of (proper) education**:

> Cornerstones: education for a world-class knowledge and creativity to feed into the eco-systems. (p. 67)

The timeliness of the report, as well we hasten to add, the proposal for our bachelor **creative technology** is testified by the (in itself incidental) occurrence of the fact that the UE has announced:

> EU 2009: The year of Creativity and Innovation

The report concludes on that basis that:

> We are to develop outstanding **education programs**, combining **technolgy**, **research**, **business** and **design & art**. (p. 69)

Since, as the report states:

> Only if **young people** see career opportunities the **knowledge chain** can be closed again.

More in detail, the report proposes:

> Education and permanent learning (p. 71):
>
> - Master programs will be developed allowing students to enhance their knowledge and experience in other directions, like a master for creative service design.
> - In addition, we endorse collaboration between ICT and art colleges in the form of exchange of staff and students.

We wish to go a step further and start with a **bachelor**, to prime young people, with **fresh minds**. If not integrated from the start, the Dutch bureaucratic university and school systems might prevent such exchange to happen, even if only due to the perception of students that just come from high school, and still need to find orientation in their lives.

In conclusion, in the **iip/create** report, we find, so to speak, the **evidence** that our initiative to create a bachelor **creative technology** is not only timely, but also well-focussed, both in terms of **content**, as it deals with many of the issues relevant for the future owrkforce off the **creative industry**, and in **regional approach** where it is meant to strengthen the creative industry in the eastern part of the country, in close cooperation with a wide range of potential partners, supported, where needed, with what in Dutch may be called some *grootstedelijk elan*.