

The emergence of new digital technologies is rapidly changing the nature of film production and distribution. A significant technological shift is occurring as the industry moves away from traditional analogue tools towards digital systems and begins to explore new avenues for product promotion and release. As a result, long established business models are now being re-examined and modified to benefit from the commercial opportunities these new technologies present.

The Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) between Green Screen Productions (GSP) – an independent feature film production company – and the University of York Department of Theatre, Film and Television involves a detailed exploration of cutting edge production methods, distribution methodologies and enhanced digital marketing practices. By having this fundamental understanding and core knowledge in house, Green Screen Productions can maximise its ability to be competitive and enhance profitability.

The objective of this project is to facilitate the development of resources for GSP that enable the company to choose and apply different types of digital technologies in support of production, distribution and marketing of its film projects. Reviews of different aspects of GSP's existing methodologies are being undertaken, including formal needs analyses to specify the company's requirements. A survey of the appropriate technologies and best practices will be compiled before a series of formal 'toolkits' is articulated to the company. The toolkits will then be trialled on live projects and refined in light of feedback from those trials before being formally integrated into business methods.

For Green Screen Productions, the ability to apply the newest digital tools and techniques to their existing business practices will allow them to become a more competitive and sustainable feature film business. In this way the company can become a horizontally integrated business across the value chain. Traditionally this would only be possible for larger companies with substantial resources, but such is the impact from technological advances, the expertise is available for smaller independents such as GSP to achieve this level of business efficiency.

The University of York benefits by gaining unique insight into different aspects of commercial feature film production and exploitation in the context of the new digital economy. This includes information that can be directly applied to the department's teaching, particularly to keep students up-to-date with current practice, but more specifically to enhance research efforts in this domain. Work placement and internship opportunities have also been made available to students as part of the collaboration. The Associate is gaining an in-depth understanding of all aspects of independent feature film operations as well as a rich understanding and appreciation of new technologies available to film practitioners. This experience will enhance his ability to fulfil his career objectives.

This unique project – funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and Technology Strategy Board (TSB) – started in January 2013 and will be completed in January 2015.