
MEDIA & ICT CONSUMPTION TRENDS

“WANTED: MORE AUDIO-VISUAL CONTENT FOR LIBRARIES”

In today's digital world, libraries are no longer the most important sources for information. They lost their former monopoly to search engines and other online platforms that can offer users fast and often free access to almost all the knowledge in the world. If libraries want to become better again at meeting the needs of their (future) users, they will have to reinvent themselves. Our research shows that audio-visual content can play an essential role in achieving this. By order of VIAA, the Flemish Institute for Archiving, iMinds Living Labs settled into eight large public libraries throughout Flanders. Following the principles and methods of living lab research, they asked 440 visitors about their vision for the library of the future.

Hunger for audio-visual information

The survey outcomes show a big appetite for audio-visual content. The vast majority of the respondents also believe in the added value of providing context for audio-visual fragments in, for example, interactive exhibitions. Visitors want their library to make collections of its audio-visual material and use those to enrich exhibitions. The research shows that over half of the visitors are willing to come to the library to watch this kind of audio-visual material. It could be a big opportunity for libraries to use these materials to draw people in. To preserve the relaxing tranquility, respondents prefer using headphones or subtitled clips.

Audio-visual content appeals to youngsters

DigiMeter 2014, iMinds' yearly survey into the possession and use of media in Flanders, already showed that young people are living in an audio-visual world. Especially these youngsters share this vision for the library of the future. They unconditionally link the audio-visual offer to schoolwork, since they prefer getting their information from a short video over a book with the same subject matter. Older visitors on the other hand have some anxiety or lack the digital skills to handle tablets or touchscreens.

Increasing library visitor engagement

The research results shed some light on how libraries can use audio-visual material to serve existing visitors even better while at the same time attracting new target audiences. The role of the library can consist of responding to the visitor's need for audio-visual content by providing thematic content across different media. So let us consider how we can maximise the impact of our audio-visual memory by setting up sector-reinforcing collaborations on specific themes. And then realise these plans, of course...

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Audio-visual content is key for libraries to re-invent themselves

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Audio-visual content can serve existing visitors as well as attract new audiences

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Media & ICT Consumption Trends is a partnership between iMinds Research Center Media & ICT (iMinds-MICT) and digital research institute iMinds. The project seeks to provide an overview of academic research in Flemish media and internet consumption, and links insights into transforming audiences to the current challenges for the Flemish media industries. It therefore combines results from original user-driven innovation research with conclusions from international studies and technology trends reports.

Series Editors: Tom Evens, Bart Vanhaelewyn and Lieven De Marez

Hungry for more insights? Check out the other issues in this series at <http://www.mict.be>

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 - (2015-3) **Facebook: Why we ignore the privacy alarm**
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Research Center **Media & ICT (iMinds-MICT)** is affiliated to Ghent University, part of the Flemish digital research center and business incubator iMinds, and forms, together with SMIT and CUO, the research department iMinds-Digital Society. The context and focus of MICT's research is today's digital society and innovation economy, and more specifically the changes and challenges that are imposed by that environment for each of its stakeholders: industry, policy makers and, not the least, end-users.

iMinds is Flanders' digital research center and business incubator, established by the Flemish government in 2004. Building on the expertise of our 850+ top researchers located at 5 Flemish universities, it introduces digital innovation in 6 key markets including Media, ICT and Smart Cities. iMinds collaborates with research partners to convert digital knowhow into real-life products and services that change people's lives for the better. Key asset is an agile, open research mind set and proven methodology.
