METAVENUES

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN PERFORMING ARTS

ECHO — EUROPEAN CONCERT HALL ORGANISATION · komodal · SPOT GRONINGEN · Funded by the European Union

Programming for test phase (D3.1)

By SPOT Groningen

December 2024

Preface

Below you will find the report 3.1. belonging to WP3 of the Project METAVENUES. To keep it clear and logically readable, the report is structured by analogy with the project description and the interim report questions posed by the committee.

Process flow from WP2 to WP3

Research and problem definition (Phase 1, WP2)

Think tanks, conduct brainstorming session with all peer groups. In which the central question is, what would be the impact from your professional perspective of digital developments?

Results:

Two research questions:

1: Would it make sense to create a 3rd party entity allowing the venues to navigate the said technologies?

2: Should the value proposition of immersive technologies and metaverse lie in proposing virtual shows or in other services that the audience would be ready to pay for?

Idea generation and prototyping (Phase 2, WP3)

The outcomes of the research questions were used to:

- Develop prototypes to test through a living lab
- Identify the required materials, programming and marketing methods, presentation formats and new (digital) strategies for a (new) audience need. (D3.1 and D3.2)

This report describes the steps of organizing the living lab, the outcomes and preparing and programming the testing phases

WP3: Ideate and Prototype (M9-M14)

This work package corresponds to the second project specific objective: "identify the required material supplies, programming and marketing methods and new (digital) audience outreach and engagement strategies and develop prototypes to meet those needs". The goal is to generate ideas and select the best ones and produce these.

Programming for test phase (D3.1)

Work Package 3

Work Package 3: Ideate & Prototype							
Duration:		M9 – M14	**Lead Beneficiary:**		SPOT Groningen		
Objectives							
▪ Identify the required material supplies, programming and marketing methods, performance formats and new (digital) audience outreach and engagement strategies and develop prototypes to meet those needs.							

Task No (continuous numbering linked to WP)	Task Name		Description		Participants		In-kind Contributions and Subcontracting (Yes/No and which)
					Name	Role (COO, BEN, AE, AP, OTHER)	
T3.1	Living Lab		This includes the three steps at described in 2.4: 1. Physical meeting to discuss outcomes T1.3 2. Concept development phase (3 months) 3. Prototype development (3 months) – this might include one physical meeting for registration / production		SPOT (NL) ECHO (BE) Komodal (FR)	COO BEN BEN	

Milestones and deliverables (outputs/outcomes)

Milestone No	Milestone Name	Work Package No	Lead Beneficiary	Description	Due Date	Means of Verification

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Call: [CREA-CULT-2023-COOP-1] — [European Cooperation projects Small Scale]

Associated with document Ref. Ares(2023)6533191 - 27/09/20:
EU Grants: Application form (CREA CULT and CROSS): V2.0 – 01.06.2022

(continuous numbering not linked to WP)					(month number)	
MS1		3				
MS2		3				

Deliverable No (continuous numbering linked to WP)	Deliverable Name	Work Package No	Lead Beneficiary	Type	Dissemination Level	Due Date (month number)	Description (including format and language)
D3.1	Programming for test phase	3	SPOT	R – Document Report	PU: Public	14	PDF 1-2 pages in English

Details on programming in the test phase. |
| D3.2 | Report on development of prototypes and corresponding audience engagement formats. | 3 | SPOT | R – Document Report | PU: Public | 14 | PDF 3-4 pages in English

Factsheet with information on details of development prototypes and explanation of audience reach methods. |

Programming for test phase (D3.1)

Execution WP3

Partner meetings	Present	Date	Purpose and agenda
Online	ECHO, Komodal, SPOT	23-4-2024	Develop content concept of the living lab. We have the outcomes of the think tanks, in WP3 we want to arrive at several concrete scenarios through ideating and prototyping in order to test them in practice. What is needed for that and how are we going to organize that.
Online	same	30-05-2024	Reduce all outcomes of the think tanks to 2, max 3, follow-up research questions
Online	same	24-06-2024	Fine-tuning and establishing at a detailed level of the research questions
Online	same	03-09-2024	Agree on follow-up research questions, choose target groups for participants and set up the organization of the two-day event
Online	same	17-09-2024	Preparing the two-day event for content and organisation. In summary, what substantive issues will we work on, which keynote speakers will we invite to get the discussion off to a good start, how will we organise, guide and report on the brainstorming sessions? Which participants from the think tank sessions will we invite so that all target groups are represented? What role do we give the students who will organise a parallel project after the two-day event from the educational side?
Online	same	26-09-2024	As above
SPOT Groningen, NL	45 participants: 25 peer group participants and 20 students from the app university's	2/3rd -10 2024	Living Lab. We worked on the research questions that emerged Komodal from the think tank sessions. We collected as many creative ideas and solutions as possible to develop various scenarios/prototypes.

	music business and future of technology		
Komodal, France	Consortium day.	2-12-24	Evaluation of the living lab and made choices for prototyping / testing

Living lab

- Physical meeting at 2 and 3 October 2024 at SPOT Groningen

Approach described in project plan:
The participants include a select group of participants, composed of tech experts, artists and professionals working in the venues. This group is quite small on purpose, as
this phase relies on the technical expertise of those involved. It is still important to mix different competencies to stimulate knowledge sharing and gain understanding of the involved stakeholders' visions.

- Working group composition:
  A representative group was assembled from the three target groups that participated in the think tank sessions in WP2. That is, participants from artists (6), professionals (marketeers, production leaders, stage technology, programmers, hospitality, facility management (7)). It was difficult to involve the audience side. Causes were no interest, no time, still insufficient imagination of digitization and performing arts. In their place, we invited a group of 20 students (Applied University). This group consisted of young people following courses such as the future of new technology (gaming) and Music management.
  The working group was guided by a process supervisor and of course all consortium members were represented.

- Content
  The outcomes of the previous think tanks were summarized and shared with the group.
  Two red threads were then analyzed and presented to the group in two research brainstorming questions:

  1. Is it possible/necessary to create a platform or learning hub where professionals from venues, artists and audiences can discover, experiment, share knowledge and learn from each other around the application of new technologies in the performing arts?

  2. Should the value proposition of immersive technologies and the metaverse lie in providing virtual performances or other services that audiences would be willing to pay for? For example: experience before and after the performance, access to an exclusive preview, master class with the artist, etc.

To energize the group and reflect on research question 1. Jos Feijen was invited from the Effenaar in Eindhoven, The Netherlands. He gave a presentation about his experience as director of a venue with inventing/developing/trying concepts based on use of new technology for both artists and his venue. To get the group thinking about research question 2, Maud Clavier, former CEO of VROOM, attended the second day online. She gave a presentation on her experiences as director of a large French organization like VROOM, on hybrid and fully digital performances in the metaverse.

- Outcomes:
  Five groups of 4 to 5 people worked on the first day after Jos Feijen's keynote on the first research question. Where they were also asked to name the differences in terms of advantages or disadvantages of a physical and a virtual entity/platform.
  On the second day, after Maud Clavier's inspiring keynote, four groups of 4 to 5 people worked on the second research question.
  For more detailed information on the outcomes see the attached report at the end of this document.

Concepting and prototyping phase

After analyzing the results of the brainstorming phase, we developed two concepts in a meeting of the project team in early December that we plan to prototype in the coming months.

1. Blended performance

An online-live-online theater performance with one of our artists who is also involved in the Metavenues project. That's Danny van Zuijlen.
Together with the consortium he can do an experiment with a program he is developing called Sleepy Hollow . This an immersive theater production that combines classic storytelling with modern technologies such as virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR).

- Concept:
  We want with this experiment to test what is the impact immersive storytelling with which we take the actual audience and the next generation' into innovative, hybrid experiences.

- Schedule:
  The experiment will take place at SPOT in Groningen on February 11 and 12, 2025.

- Production and planning:
  - The theater group will bring its own technical equipment.
  - Komodal, comes up with questions/content before and after the show
  - Komodal, suggests possible platforms for the online meeting

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- SPOT/ECHO, what marketing actions can be deployed to gain a wider audience?
- SPOT/ECHO, s there an incentive to trigger participation? What about a prize?
- We have an online production meeting every two/three days. First upcoming online meeting is December 15, 2024

Audience Outreach
Echo will work with SPOT to create a marketing plan for this event.

2. **Metaverse Event**
The project group will organise a multi-day event aiming at sharing knowledge C inspiration about immersive tech with artists and venue professionals (conference of hardware manufacturers, of artists who have already implemented these techs in their show, feedback from professionals of other industries who also have implemented these techs, etc...).

- Concept:
The metaverse event should be a test to test the operation of a digital development platform. The event has the following pillars:
- Facilitate meetings of artists and professionals.
- Facilitate information access for professionals.
- Showcase possible activities.
- Research on possibilities for educational content (modules for cultural management classes, info for networks etc.).

- Schedule
The test (WP 4) is scheduled for late May-early June in 2025.

- Production and planning
- All partners will give input on the content (specific themes) of the event at the next production meeting.
- With the delegations of venue professionals, artists the themes will be developed and filled in.
- Komodal will develop the technical platform.
- We will have an online production meeting every two/three days. First upcoming online meeting is December 15, 2024 and this prototype phase must be finished the end of March.

Audience Outreach
Echo, possibly with the help of marketers from SPOT and Komodal, will develop a marketing and dissemination plan to meet as many participants as possible on this digital platform.

Annex

Report on outcomes from Metavenues Living labs Day 1 & 2

Day 1 Morning: Presentation and Discussion

Session: Presentation of the Smart Venue Project by JOS (Effnaar)
Topics discussed during this presentation:

- Challenges of VR in Venues:
    - Complexity and the steep learning curve for venue staff (e.g., sound and light engineers).
    - Lack of time and expertise to adopt new technologies.
    - Financial concerns, as venues aren't yet monetizing smart venue programs effectively.
- Fear and Resistance:
    - Both artists and venues are hesitant to adopt new technologies due to fear of failure, lack of experience, and insufficient support.
    - Major industry players and older staff often resist changing established business models.
- Impact of COVID-19:
    - Shifted focus to virtual and hybrid live events.
    - Small scale virtual concerts with tickets priced at 100€ each, combining video and chat, and many were only targeted at gamers
- Hybrid Live Music Models:
    - Live performances are evolving to include both in-person and virtual components, increasing accessibility and audience reach.
- Reimagining Staff and Structure:
    - During Covid, JOS had to lay off 2/3rds of this staff. Now post Covid, this restructuring led to hiring new staff with innovative mindsets ready to embrace technology.
    - Some venues now operate as two separate entities - traditional and smart venues - to maximize resources and subsidies.
- Artist Empowerment:
    - Artists can now have greater control over their careers through tech-driven solutions.
    - Venues and programs must focus on educating and supporting artists to explore tools that align with their vision and audience.
- Collaboration with Technology Partners:
    - Technology partners play a crucial role in turning artists' ideas into reality.
    - Building a network of shared knowledge and experiences across venues can facilitate innovation.

Day 1 Afternoon: Brainstorming Sessions

Groups of 3 people were asked to choose at least 2 ideas to develop, one physical/one virtual. The goal was to come up with a complete scenario (explanation and guidelines).

Group 1

- Physical Spaces:
    - Create labs for artists, teachers, and students to experiment with tech away from daily distractions.
    - Set up innovation spaces outside concert venues, which could also be a networking space for tech professionals etc.
- Virtual Spaces:
    - Build customizable platforms where people can meet, share knowledge and experiment together.
    - Use membership fees to support shared ownership models (between venues).

Group 2

- Physical Spaces:
    - Help artists and tech partners work together to create innovative ideas.
    - Support artists as risk-takers to inspire others and drive innovation.
- Virtual Spaces:
    - Provide safe virtual environments for artists to test and interact with fans.

Group 3

- Physical Spaces:
    - Improve already existing spaces
    - Capitalise and make use of attendees have a mobile phones, adding to the experience.
- Virtual Spaces:
    - A virtual space for each artist to promote their work to venues
    - 3D rendering of the venues to give artists a better idea of the space. This could be useful for stage production as well as overall experience of the performance.

Group 4

- Physical Spaces:
    - Use mobile containers to train people on different technologies.
    - Encourage co-creation between artists and audiences.
- Virtual Spaces:
    - Build virtual platforms for on-demand (not real time), from home participation in the performance. E.g. Use 360 video to film choreographies, sharing with fans so they can learn it, perhaps even before the show.

Group 5

- Physical Spaces:
    - Create a 'Smart Metavenues' label/standards to ensure quality and consistency in tech adoption.
- Virtual Spaces:
    - Build unified platforms for consistent and high-quality virtual experiences.

Day 2: Before and after the show

Morning: Ideation Session with Maud Clavier
Fablabs and Hybrid Experiences:

- Physical Spaces:
    - Fablabs inside venues to let artists create avatars and train in virtual worlds with professionals.
    - Hybrid setups that connect live and virtual audiences (e.g., VR buttons launching real-life fireworks).
    - Venues acting as production hubs for virtual content, including virtual merchandise and interactive Q&A sessions.
- Virtual Spaces:
    - Virtual venues for curated shows, like the example of Blankaly's theatre using Vroom.
    - Devices evolving, with AR glasses becoming common in the next year or two for both home and venue use, and in 2-3 years we will see more VR headsets at home.

Artists' Opinions and Challenges:

- Artists' Perspectives:
    - Some artists, prefer avatars due to shyness, while others find virtual interaction less engaging than live performances.
    - Virtual shows need to match or exceed live quality to gain acceptance.
- Tech Implementation:
    - Venues should experiment with mixed-reality devices for innovative experiences.
    - VR and AR shouldn't replicate reality but offer unique, enhanced visuals and freedom for audiences.

Public-Oriented Services:

- Inclusivity:
    - Expand access to music for people in hospitals, with anxiety, disabilities, or limited financial means.

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- o Use VR to create expressive, movement-focused experiences, particularly for dance and other visual art forms.
- Collaboration:
  - o Students and tech designers can partner with artists to explore new ways of engaging audiences.

Afternoon: Brainstorming session

3-4 x groups of 4-5 people, where each group chooses at least 2 ideas to develop. The questions asked were:

- What additional services around a traditional show based on immersive technologies might interest the audience?
- How can we add value to these services so that they represent a true value proposition?
- What types of exclusive or bonus content could attract an audience willing to pay for complementary services?

Group 1

- Use AR glasses to help staff provide personalized services, like recognizing drink or seating preferences.
- Replace brochures with immersive 3D experiences to connect audiences with artists before and after the show.

Group 2

- Make use of new spatial audio - Train venues in advanced sound systems like Dolby Atmos to create new sound experiences.
- Adapt spatial audio techniques for both live and electronic music.
- Use audio systems that recreate real-world acoustics in VR environments.

Group 3

- Use AR glasses to create pre-show atmospheres and engage audiences.
- Introduce AR features to attract younger audiences and enhance their concert experience.

Group 4

- Let audiences contribute art, poetry, or feedback during shows to foster creativity.
- Provide tools for audiences to collaborate with artists in real time.