
# DIGITAL SISTER CITIES INITIATIVE NEWS
## 2005-2007

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# Digital Sister Cities : lancement du jumelage numérique entre Paris et San Francisco

C'est au pôle Cap Digital que le Digital sister cities act doit sa première grande réalisation commune, le « Digital Pathway Program » (DPP). Ce programme, expérimenté avec succès à San Francisco, vise la réinsertion durable des jeunes de quartiers défavorisés par l'apprentissage des technologies du numérique.

## Un partenariat sans precedent

Grâce à la mobilisation de nombreux partenaires, c'est la première étape dans la construction d'un partenariat sans précédent entre Paris et San Francisco.
Côté américain, la San Francisco State University (Joaquin Alvarado) ainsi que le groupement d'entreprises du multimédia (Bay Area Video Corporation, BAVC) vont apporter leur expérience.
Côté français, la Ville de Paris a chargé le pôle de compétitivité numérique « Cap Digital » qui rassemble 300 entreprises franciliennes du secteur, ainsi que l'association Réseau 2000 qui accueille chaque année plusieurs milliers de parisiens pour les initier aux nouvelles technologies de l'information et de la communication, de réaliser le programme.

## Se former aux techniques numériques

Grâce aux soutiens rassemblés en un temps record auprès des partenaires, le DPP va permettre à 15 parisiens des quartiers défavorisés de Paris de se former aux techniques de la production vidéo, de l'animation, du multimédia, de l'internet et de la musique numérique. Ces jeunes vont pouvoir montrer dès le 5 mai prochain au 50ème Festival international du film de San Francisco une réalisation collective, un clip vidéo du chanteur Sinclair.
Ils réaliseront également des productions numériques (texte, audio, photos, vidéo, animation) autour de Paris et plus particulièrement du XIXème arrondissement. Le même programme sera lancé en parallèle à San Francisco. Les participants parisiens à ce programme pourront ainsi échanger leurs créations numériques avec leurs homologues américains et pourront dialoguer chaque semaine à l'aide d'outils conçus par les entreprises du Pôle Cap Digital, partenaires du DPP (ShalSoft et la Cartoonerie).

## Un programme pérennisé en cas de succès

A terme ce sont 30 jeunes qui seraient accueillis chaque année au titre de ce programme qui a vocation à être pérennisé. Son intérêt est triple :
- L'économie numérique offre des perspectives d'avenir pour les populations jugées « exclues » de ce secteur, comme le prouve la réussite du programme américain. -

Les jeunes recrutés constituent pour les entreprises partenaires un vivier exceptionnel d'observation d'usages innovants.

- Des dispositifs de formation innovants seront mis en place dans le domaine de la création de contenus numériques en s'appuyant sur des accords de coopération internationaux. Ceci correspond à la vocation du pôle « Cap Digital » qui vise à devenir un des leaders mondiaux de la création de contenus.

# San Francisco International Film Festival 2007

## EVENTS/SFIFF/ONLINE

The International continues its ongoing exploration of new digital tools and forms with four SFIFF50 online projects that showcase digital exhibition, production, networking and community building

**INTERNATIONAL ONLINE** April 26–May 10 Presented by San Francisco Film Society and Jaman

Designed by SFFS and Jaman, International Online is a new concept in the online presentation of Festival films. International Online will offer online screenings of a selection of five to eight SFIFF50 films at better-than-DVD quality. The films selected will be available worldwide for download to a limited number of viewers during an exclusive window of time following their SFIFF theatrical screenings.

SFIFF will use International Online to share films from the vibrant San Francisco Bay Area film and media scene with Festival fans across the country and around the world. The full list of titles and download dates will be published April 3.

**SFIFF50 GLOBAL REACH** Friday, May 4 (two events listed below) Presented by San Francisco Film Society and the SFSU Institute for Next Generation Internet Sponsored by Mobinema

SFSU Westfield Campus, 835 Market Street, Sixth Floor San Francisco

**Digital Pathway Global Studio Project** 10:00 am–12:00 noon, San Francisco 7:00–9:00 pm, Paris

A collaboration of the Digital Sister Cities initiative, the trailblazing Global Studios Project brings the local Bay Area Video Coalition and the Paris-based Reseau together with five new media centers in New York for real-time production via emerging wireless environments and next-gen Internet connectivity.

**The SFIFF/Online Directors Forum** 2:00–3:30 pm, San Francisco 5:00–6:30 pm, Toronto 10:00–11:30 pm, Dublin 11:00 pm–12:30 am, Paris

SFIFF50 directors will take part in a live international hi-def multicast across the next-gen Internet. Audiences in Tokyo, Toronto, Paris and Dublin will interact with San Francisco audiences and guests to discuss filmmaking in the age of universal communications.

Archived and streamed with the support of CineGrid, Yahoo!, the Digital Media Council and BAVC. Visit www.sffs.org or www.ingi.org for complete information.

# San Francisco Film Society

# Press Releases

## 50Th San Francisco International Film Festival Presents Sfiff/Online

### Innovative Four-Program Initiative To Showcase Digital Broadband Exhibition, Production, Networking, Community Building And Explore Vast New Frontiers

**San Francisco, CA –** The **50th San Francisco International Film Festival (April 26–May 10)** continues its ongoing exploration of new digital tools and audience formations with a suite of four SFIFF50/Online projects that showcase digital exhibition, production, networking and community building.

**International Online** Designed by San Francisco Film Society and Jaman (www.jaman.com), International Online is a new concept in the online presentation of Festival films. International Online will offer online screenings of a selection of five to eight SFIFF50 films at better-than-DVD quality. The films selected will be available worldwide for download to a limited number of viewers during an exclusive window of time following their SFIFF theatrical screenings. SFIFF will use International Online to share films from the vibrant San Francisco Bay Area film and media scene with Festival fans around the world. The full list of titles and download dates are available at http://fest07.sffs.org/online.

**SFIFF50 GreenWorld Contest and Yahoo! Video Partnership** SFIFF50 has teamed up with Jumpcut and Yahoo! Video to present an online competition of short films focused on the conversations, changes, leadership, vision and imagination necessary to create a world that is truly sustainable. Visit www.jumpcut.com/groups/greenworld to view digital works in various forms and genres, from fictional suspense drama and romantic comedy to investigative reportage and personal essays to animated and experimental work. The contest began on March 15, and the winner will be announced May 9 at the SFIFF50 Golden Gate Awards Ceremony and will receive a $1,000 cash award. The winning and runner-up entries will also be featured onscreen at the May 9 SFIFF50 celebration and performance, Halou, Tarentel and the GreenWorld, at Mighty.

Additionally, SFIFF50 has partnered with Jumpcut and Yahoo! Video to launch a branded video channel featuring content from the San Francisco Film Society. The SFFS Channel on Yahoo! Video is available at http://video.yahoo.com. The channel will feature content and creative programming from the 50th San Francisco International Film Festival. In addition, the channel will continue throughout the year with programming drawn from the Film Society's full slate of events content including interviews with directors of the SFIFF films, clips from the television show SF360 Movie Scene and the second San Francisco International Animation Festival in

October 2007.

**SFIFF50 Global Reach** The San Francisco Film Society and the Institute for Next Generation Internet present SFIFF50 Global Reach, which consists of two programs, Digital Pathway Global Studio Project and the SFIFF/Online Directors Forum, taking place on Friday, May 4 at the SFSU Westfield Campus, located at 835 Market Street.

The Digital Pathway Global Studio Project is a collaboration of the Digital Sister Cities initiative, bringing the local Bay Area Video Coalition and the Paris-based Reseau together with five new media centers in New York for real-time production via emerging wireless environments and next-generation Internet connectivity. The event will take place at 10:00 am–12:00 noon, San Francisco and 7:00–9:00 pm, Paris time.

SFIFF50/Online Directors forum will invite SFIFF50 directors to take part in a live international high-definition multicast across the next-generation Internet. Audiences in Tokyo, Toronto, Paris and Dublin will interact with San Francisco audiences and guests to discuss filmmaking in the age of universal communications. The multicast will take place 2:00–3:30 pm, San Francisco; 5:00–8:30 pm, Toronto; 10:00–11:30 pm, Dublin; and 11:00 pm–12: 30 am, Paris.

SFIFF50 is archived and streamed with the support of CineGrid, Yahoo! and the Digital Media Council. Additional information is available at www.sffs.org or www.ingi.org.

**Festival History Site** To commemorate 50 years of Festival history, the San Francisco Film Society has launched a Web site chronicling the event's evolution from its inception in 1957 to this year's golden anniversary. Showcasing a trove of priceless archival materials, the History site features audio and video podcasts of film luminaries including Jacques Tati, Shelley Winters, Clint Eastwood and Dolores del Rio; interviews with former Festival staff and affiliates; a photo gallery of rarely seen images from Festivals past and a gallery of exceptional photographs by Pamela Gentile and other sharp-eyed SFIFF shooters; and incisive articles on great Festival moments ranging from Truman Capote's appearance in 1974 to a press conference with Liv Ullman. In addition, the site functions as an encyclopedia of information on nearly 6,000 films screened over the years, most accompanied by program notes, film stills and credits. The History site (http://history.sffs.org/) is an excellent resource for historians and film buffs alike.

# Profectio

**Bringing together Canada's connected community.**

## Toronto Gets Digital

by **Scott Mac Donald** @ 10:59 am on March 30, 2007.
Search This Site by:torontotechweek

The City of Toronto demonstrated its commitment to the ICT sector last week by signing onto an international digital cities network. The network connects Toronto to other Digital City members who span the globe from San Francisco to Singapore.

Objectives for the agreement included:

• Fostering international relationships between digital media organizations. • Creating new business ventures. • Supporting growth and innovations with existing digital media businesses. • Encouraging private and public investment in advanced digital technologies. Toronto's membership initiative was lead by Joaquin Alvarado, Director of the Institute of Next Generation Internet at San Francisco State University.

"The Digital City Network involves cities and regions that we believe are forward-looking," said Alvarado. "Toronto was chosen to be part of the Network because of its New Media and IT industry. We were looking to partner with cities and regions that we believe are creative and technological hubs. Toronto was a perfect choice to join the Network. "

Toronto Mayor David Miller signed the agreement with San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom. San Francisco is spearheading the initiative that already lists Paris, Prague, and Dublin as members.

Potential projects the Digital City Network may work on include cultural exchanges, joint research initiatives and developing business to business relationships and investment opportunities.

For more information on the Digital City Network and its objectives, check out the news release at CNW.

**California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology**
March 23, 2006

# San Francisco Mayor Receives Broadband Honor at Calit2

*San Diego, CA, March 23, 2006* -- San Francisco mayor Gavin Newsom took a tour of Calit2 at UC San Diego today and received an award from FirstMile.US, a non-profit group that honored "his Big Broadband vision for the City and County of San Francisco." The tribute took place in front of a packed audience in the Calit2 auditorium, where the broadband organization held its spring conference.

After accepting his award from Calit2 director Larry Smarr and FirstMile.US president Susan Estrada, Mayor Newsom promised to continue pushing for broadband access -- notably, through his campaign to offer *free* Wi-Fi connectivity throughout the city of San Francisco.

That move has been countered by some private telecommunications companies, which have sued the city to block the plan, charging that it hurts private enterprise. But in his remarks, Newsom noted that many companies have come around and even bid on a major contract to build the San Francisco Wi-Fi network. "We expect to announce the winner of the competition next week," said the mayor. Newsom equated the role of government in providing free connectivity to all citizens, to its role in providing other types of jointly shared infrastructure such as roads and bridges: "These are public services and if the private sector has been unable or unwilling to roll out broadband throughout the city, then it's time for local government to make it happen."

The award to Newsom came at the conclusion of the FirstMile.US conference, which provided a glimpse of living in a Big Broadband-enabled world and focused discussion on jump-starting strategies to build demand to get "Big Broadband Everywhere" in the United States.

The FirstMile.US Big Broadband Honors recognize significant achievements in helping to make Big Broadband Everywhere a reality. The Honors showcase the pioneering ideas of today's visionaries who best exemplify the creative spirit needed to craft the right environment that ensures that every member of the American public has access to big broadband, the 21st century pathway to a better overall quality of life.

"Mayor Newsom has taken an active role in ensuring that his community is well served by current and future broadband solutions. His vision and leadership is laudable and what we'd like to see in every community in the U.S.," said Susan Estrada, President of FirstMile.US. "From the Digital Sister Cities to the Digital Media Initiatives, Mayor Newsom makes his San Francisco TechConnect

strategy authentic, practical and inclusive for every resident."

"For San Francisco, which knows the highs and lows of the first Internet boom better than any other city in the world, this award is testament to our commitment to look forward and not back," stated Mayor Newsom. "San Francisco not only believes in the new economy, we believe all of our citizens should have a place in it."

The two-day event included demonstrations of 'killer' applications in entertainment, education and healthcare utilizing Calit2's first-of-a-kind collaborative environment, including 10 gigabits of connectivity to the venue, and a rare 4K projection system that offers four times the resolution of high-definition TV.
Prior to accepting his award, Newsom and attendees got an advance look at CineGrid, a Calit2-led project that aims to provide global research, education, science and art communities who work with ultra-high-performance digital media with networked testbeds to enable new kinds distributed media production, remote mentoring, remote-controlled scientific research, networked collaboration and international cultural exchange. Another important Big Broadband application featured was in E-medicine, which is fueling a fundamental change from today's disease treatments to tomorrow's predictive, preventive, personalized and participatory medicine.
"Big Broadband supporters in the U.S. are disturbed that the nation is still employing twenty-year old technologies," said FirstMile.US president Estrada. In a global ranking, the United States now places 16th against nations around the world aggressively deploying contemporary broadband technologies. Many nations are also deploying "first mile" broadband technologies that are 100 times faster than what is currently available to the majority of U.S. communities, homes, and businesses, which threaten our nation's economic well-being. Added Estrada: "With the right policies and the right incentives, the U.S. can be the global leader in big broadband deployment." President Bush has called for universal and affordable broadband for every American by 2007.
**About FirstMile.US** The FirstMile.US objective is to build demand for big broadband through grass-roots education activities -- creating the "I need that. When can I get it?" broadband attitude across the nation.

**About Calit2** The California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology, a partnership between UC San Diego and UC Irvine, houses over 1,000 researchers organized around more than 50 projects on the future of telecommunications and information technology and how these technologies will transform a range of applications important to the economy and citizens' quality of life.

**Related Links**

FirstMile.US

**Media Contacts**

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**CITY OF TORONTO**

**Attention News/Assignment Editors:**

# Toronto links with international digital cities network

TORONTO, March 21 /CNW/ - Toronto Mayor David Miller signed an agreement with San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom today that links Toronto with other international cities and regions in a global Digital City Network, which supports the commercialization of innovative digital media technologies and advancements. Cities that have signed on to the Network that San Francisco is spearheading include: Paris, France; Prague, Czech Republic; Dublin, Ireland; Guadalajara, Mexico; Skopje, Macedonia and Singapore.

"Businesses in Toronto's ICT sector constantly develop and use new technology to increase the city's international profile and presence in the global economy," said Mayor David Miller. "Developing partnerships with our international counterparts through initiatives, such as the Digital City Network are a positive step towards increasing global connectivity and collaboration."

"We're delighted to be working with Toronto on this initiative," said Mayor Gavin Newsom. "Both of our cities have strong ICT-based industries and creative enterprises. This agreement lays the foundation for the commercialization of new, innovative technology that will enable closer ties between our two cities and other regions around the world."

The signing was facilitated through video conference held at Autodesk in

Toronto and at San Francisco State University (SFSU) and can be viewed at http://events.telemerge.ca/cityoftoronto/022107/index.php

The event was supported by Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada and by the Consulate General of Canada in San Francisco and Telemerge Canada.

The initiative is lead by Joaquin Alvarado, Director of the Institute of Next Generation Internet at SFSU. "The Digital City Network involves cities and regions that we believe are forward-looking," said Alvarado. "Toronto was chosen to be part of the Network because of its New Media and IT industry. We were looking to partner with cities and regions that we believe are creative and technological hubs. Toronto was a perfect choice to join the Network. "

Alvarado was introduced to City Council in March 2006. At that time, he invited Toronto to be part of the Digital City Network and was encouraged to move forward to strengthen the ties between the two cities. The signing of the Digital City Network Agreement formalizes this relationship.

The nine objectives outlined in the Digital City Network Agreement are to:

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- broker international relationships between educational, business, and community-based digital media organizations
- create new business to business ventures between jurisdictions
- support the growth and innovation of existing digital media businesses
- develop new cutting-edge digital media companies in each location
- encourage private and public investment in

advanced digital
technologies and linkages between jurisdictions
- expand workforce development and education opportunities in digital
media
- provide technical support for digital media incubators and business
accelerators
- develop strategies to respond to the rapid changes in new media
technologies
- inform shareholders about emerging digital media issues, innovations
and best practices.

Toronto ICT firms have already designed and implemented some of the
world's most advanced broadband networks and technologies for business,
research and educational applications.

Projects the Digital City Network may work on include:

- promoting cultural exchanges through specific digital media projects
- identifying and supporting the development of business to business
relationships, co-productions, joint ventures and investment
opportunities
- conducting joint research and development projects
- defining Next Generation Internet in terms of networking standards
and protocols
- creating cost-effective opportunities for existing companies and to
experiment, develop and prototype products using next generation
internet technology.

For more information about the City of Toronto's ICT cluster, visit
www.toronto.ca/invest-in-toronto/informationtech.htm.

Toronto is Canada's largest city and sixth largest government, and home to a diverse population of about 2.6 million people. It is the economic engine of Canada and one of the greenest and most creative cities in North America. In the past three years Toronto has won more than 50 awards for quality and innovation in delivering public services. Toronto's government is dedicated to prosperity, opportunity and liveability for all its residents.

Visit our website at www.toronto.ca >>

For further information: Media contacts: Rob Berry, Manager, Sector and Strategic Partnerships, (416) 392-3387, (416) 576-7026, rberry@toronto.ca;
Joaquin Alvarado, Director, Institute of Next Generation Internet, (415) 405-4059, (510) 761-0657, joaquin@sfsu.edu

CNW Group

**CITY OF TORONTO**

**Attention News/Assignment Editors:**

# Media Advisory - Mayor David Miller advances Toronto's economic prospects by joining San Francisco-led Global Digital City Network

TORONTO, March 19 /CNW/ - The City of Toronto will sign a Digital City Network Agreement with San Francisco to advance Toronto's important Digital, ICT and New Media sectors. Toronto will join a global collaborative membership network of digital centres that includes Paris, Dublin and Singapore.

Toronto Mayor David Miller and San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newson will be linked by video conference for the signing.

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Date: Wednesday, March 21
Time: 2 p.m.
Location: Autodesk, 210 King St. E.
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The signing will be streamed live, online at http://events.telemerge.ca/cityoftoronto/022107/index.php.

Autodesk, Inc. is the world leader in 2D and 3D design software for the manufacturing, building and construction, and media and entertainment markets.

Rob Berry, Manager, Economic Development, Culture and Tourism, City of Toronto, and Joaquin Alvarado, Director, Institute for Next Generation Internet, San Francisco State University will be available for questions following the signing.

Toronto is Canada's largest city and sixth largest

government, and home
to a diverse population of about 2.6 million people. It is the economic engine
of Canada and one of the greenest and most creative cities in North America.
In the past three years Toronto has won more than 50 awards for quality and
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<< Visit our website at www.toronto.ca >>

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# Digital Hub
# Dublin, IRELAND

## DIGITAL HUB TO BENEFIT FROM NEW COLLABORATIVE CHANNELS THROUGH 'DIGITAL SISTER CITIES' INITIATIVE

**10 March 2006**

The Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Noel Dempsey T.D., has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Mayor of San Francisco, Gavin Newsom which will benefit Dublin's Digital Hub by providing new collaborative channels for its companies and research activities.

"The Digital Sister Cities MOU is designed to stimulate economic development by connecting cities and regions around the world through advanced technologies," said Minister Dempsey today. "The Digital Hub, with their existing connection to Dublin City Council, the third level sector and the creative and enterprise participants in their project, has the right mix of capabilities to drive practical initiatives within the Digital Sister Cities framework," he added.

Ireland was among the participating countries when the Digital Sister Cities Initiative was launched in November last year by way of an international video conference.

The initiative will focus specifically on four target areas:

1. Growing the digital media industry by encouraging greater integration and investment in digital media companies located in digital sister cities and regions.

2. Promoting cultural exchanges through specific digital media projects between digital sister cities and regions.

3. Developing joint educational programmes and exchange opportunities between Digital Sister Cities to prepare our students for the global future.

4. Enhancing next-generation connectivity between Digital Sister Cities.

**San Francisco Business Times**
2/16/07

## Westfield plugs SFSU into digital media mix

**San Francisco Business Times 2/16/07**
*By Adrienne Sanders*

Tech geeks and Hollywood hopefuls are elbowing their way into Westfield Centre, where San Francisco State University's month-old downtown campus is fast becoming a hub for the Bay Area's digital arts scene. The school's Institute for Next Generation Internet has taken up residence on the sixth floor, where about 80 students are brewing technology, talent and business relationships.
One of those initiatives, the Digital Sister Cities lab, is developing software to allow filmmakers to co-produce movies in real time with teams far away. Visual effects studios such as San Francisco's Giant Killer Robots would be able to edit video and make notes on frames as if they were in the same room with partners at, say, Australia's Animal Logic, with whom they worked on the recent movie "Happy Feet." For now, they still must bounce bulky files back-and-forth, send late-night emails and hold after-hours conference calls.

"Digital moviemaking is an increasingly collaborative endeavor," said Giant Killer Robots co-founder Peter Oberdorfer, "A business like ours would benefit greatly from being able to exchange media-rich content with remote partners and clients."

Michael Mages, the former lead developer of Apple Inc.'s top video and photo editing tools, is running the lab and its pilot project, named Sebastian, which will produce an Internet desktop tool for use over a high-speed fiber network. He eventually hopes to license the technology or have it sold as software, which would retail for about $150.

San Francisco companies such as animation house Wild Brain and Lucasfilm have agreed to test the software from the lab with studios in "sister cities" involved in the project such as Dublin and Paris.

"We specifically targeted the sweet spot -- the people who are creating digital media right now. They would die for this," Mages said.

Access to high-speed networks, at least 500 times faster than standard broadband, is prohibitively expensive for smaller companies. So the firms will work in the lab, linking into the Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California, or CENIC, the state's high-speed fiber network for education and research.

"They'll get exposure to it as the market figures out how to make access feasible," said Joaquin Alvarado, director of the Institute for Next Generation Internet, which oversees the lab.

Promising students from outside the university will also work on research projects, thanks to an $1 million endowment from Youth for Service, a 50-year-old San Francisco nonprofit that helps underserved youth find job training.

"We want to build the human capital at the beginning," Alvarado said, "We want them to be patent-holders in new technology and develop relationships you would grow in any startup environment in South Park."

The university is inviting existing startups such as UthTV and Indielives to use the lab as a sort of incubator, where they can avail themselves of computers, try out the latest technology and, Alvarado hopes, eventually create jobs for students.

"We want it to be a home for these collaborations since there's no one place to park and find these relationships in San Francisco."

# Bay Area Video Coalition News

02/01/2007

**Digital Sister Cities and Digital Pathways**

After hosting BAVC visitors from Reseau 2000 in Paris, BAVC Interim Executive Director **Ken Ikeda** will travel to Ireland with **Joaquin Alvarado,** Director of San Francisco State University's Institute for Next Generation Internet, and **Jeff Fino**, founding chair of the Mayor's Digital Media Advisory Council (DMAC) and co-founder of Wild Brain. The agenda includes a meeting with the Consulate General and city leaders in economic development, youth services and education to discuss implementation of a Digital Pathways youth training program in Dublin.

# Cap Digital
paris region

## Mission of Cap Digital in San Francisco - November 6 and 7, 2006

**Digital Sister Cities / Sebastian Project - A joint mission of Cap Digital and Paris Development with the city of San Francisco (November 6-7, 2006)**

Our mission with the city of San Francisco is carried out within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the mayors of Paris and San Francisco which seals the Digital Sister Cities pact. The MoU places special emphasis on the cooperative relationship between Paris region's digital competitiveness cluster, Cap Digital, and San Francisco's Digital Media Advisory Council (DMAC). The two clusters aim to bring about industry collaboration between leaders, entrepreneurs and researchers specialising in communications, multimedia content and related technologies. The primary objective is to develop a real-time co-production multimedia platform between the two cities.

Our visit on November 6 and 7, was to meet the principal stakeholders of the project in San Francisco such as Institute of Next Generation Internet, Lucas Film, WildBrain Animation, Giant Killer Robots … in order to set up a project roadmap together. We will in return receive our American counterparts during a visit scheduled for early December 2006.

**For International Projects please contact** Tigran Bejanov / International Project Officer tigran.bejanov@capdigital.com

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CNET.co.uk

# Web tech splices filmmakers' global divide

**Go back to review | Print**
**http://news.cnet.co.uk/networking/0,39029686,49284927,00.htm**

**November 6, 2006**
Stefanie Olsen

Behind the making of the upcoming animated film *Happy Feet* is a tale of two film producers struggling to work together from different continents.

Like most global team efforts, the story features off-hour conference calls and a lot of email trickling in overnight. But for a small digital-effects house like San Francisco's Giant Killer Robots, it also meant sending large, bandwidth-hogging digital video files to the director's company, Animal Logic, in Sydney, Australia.

That's not an easy task when you're a little company that can't afford fibre optic lines into the office. But if an innovative joint university-government project works out, global filmmaking teams like the one behind *Happy Feet* -- due in US cinemas 17 November -- could have an easier time getting their jobs done.

A small group of engineers in San Francisco is developing a Web browsing tool for use over a high-speed fibre network that would allow animation and film producers to co-produce a movie in real time. The application, called Sebastian, would work over a dedicated, point-to-point Internet connection, or so-called dedicated light paths, and would let remotely located artists do things like mark up frames, edit video and change colour palates as if they were in the same room.

It would make a huge difference to smaller outfits like Giant Killer Robots. When the two *Happy Feet* teams were collaborating over broadband from different time zones, using a QuickTime video editing tool called CineSync, the video clips were more like watching a YouTube clip than a high-resolution wide-screen shot, making it hard for the director to form an educated opinion. That sometimes painful process, suffice to say, slowed the filmmaking process.

"It's a two-cans-and-a-string-in-between-them kind of problem. You're really trying to break down the walls of globalisation. And it all depends on really wide pipe," said Pete Oberdorfer, co-owner of Giant Killer Robots.

Sebastian is under development at the Digital Sister Cities Lab, a research and development team that's part of San Francisco's Digital Sister Cities Initiative (DSCI). DSCI is focused on connecting cities and promoting economic development through advanced technologies.

One of the major goals of the organisation is to get high-speed fibre connections beyond universities and big companies -- who are right now about the only people who can afford them. By first working with data-intensive businesses like film companies, they hope to begin seeding a market and sparking demand that will eventually convince big telecommunications companies to decrease their sometimes dizzying fibre line rates.

In other words, build the market, and just maybe the carriers will come. Of course, it won't be easy, but the DSCI researchers see their project in two parts. First give filmmakers the tools to collaborate remotely. The second, and probably more difficult step -- give them the high-speed network to make real-time collaboration possible.

"Cisco and (Industrial Light & Magic) can burn thousands of dollars to create infrastructure themselves," said Oberdorfer. "Companies (like us) don't have that option. As this progresses, we see it scaling so that anyone can get access to it."

A key to this project is the Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California (CENIC), which operates California's high-speed fibre network for education and research purposes.

Since DSCI has access to the network, Sebastian's developers can work on it in a high-speed environment. For companies to participate in the Sebastian development process, however, they also need access to a fibre-optic network. That's where's CENIC comes in. Sebastian's core team hopes to extend the network to small production houses, have them come to a California university campus to try it out, or acquire their own fibre network

There's little question fibre connections are making modern filmmaking easier.

For example, Lucasfilm's San Francisco office has a 10-gigabit-per-second fibre network, which it uses on some filmmaking projects, according to Joaquin Alvarado, director of DSCI. Of course, the studio behind the *Star Wars* movies isn't exactly a little company, and therein lies the challenge -- getting small outfits access to fibre.

That's a problem, because it isn't cheap. Large telecommunications carriers typically charge between $15,000 and $20,000 (£8,000-£11,000) per month for these services. Warner Brothers can afford that. So can other big production houses.

Michael Mages, former lead developer of Apple's Final Cut Pro, is heading up the development of Sebastian, which is named after one of Mages' favourite musicians, John Sebastian.

"We're developing a product to enable the next generation Internet... That's available in a research capacity right now, but we have early access to it, so we can build one of the first working tools for creative professionals," said Mages.

Alvarado believes that DSCI needs to develop compelling applications for business collaboration. Hence, the work with filmmakers.

"Filmmakers want to collaborate with people directly, and either you buy a dedicated line, which is mostly not accessible to low and mid-level production houses, or you don't. We're going to build a ubiquitous tool that's inexpensive, runs on standard platforms and allows people to preview video and film content remotely and interactive with each other," said Alvarado.

Sebastian will work like a Mosaic or Safari browser with a secure IP connection, according to Mages. The tool might offer the user a selection of production houses to link to from a list of menu options, and then once selected, it would connect the two companies in real time, with about an eighth of a second latency, Mages said.

An editor in San Francisco, for example, might select a video clip for review, and the director in Paris, could mark it up with suggestions. The two sides will also be able to talk over separate pipes designated for voice conferencing and over-the-shoulder video conferencing. With the tool, producers can also record the connected session for later review. Sebastian's player engine will support the film-editing tools Apple Final Cut Pro and QuickTime.

Mages said the lab plans to complete a prototype within the next year, developing it in partnership with production houses from San Francisco and international cities like Paris. Ultimately, he said, DSCI hopes to license the technology or sell it as software for around $149 (£79).

So far, several film and animation producers in San Francisco have agreed in principal to test the software. Giant Killer Robots' Oberdorfer said he hopes to eventually work with the technology. Wild Brain, another San Francisco digital-effects company, said it is in preliminary discussions with DSCI about using the technology, according to a company representative. And according to Alvarado, engineers from Lucasfilm and several animation companies in Paris have also signed up to the project.

"This is our pilot project," Alvarado says of Sebastian. "Our focus is this network and what kind of intellectual property we can build on top of this that incubates the students' and the city's relationship with all these other tech centres and companies. It's the next level of globalisation."

# DMW Digital Media Wire

November 3, 2006

## CNET: Digital Sister Cities Lab Project Links Productions via Fiber

Submitted by Mark Hefflinger on November 3, 2006 - 12:55pm.

*San Francisco* - CNET News.com on Friday reported on a project called "Sebastian" at the Digital Sister Cities lab in San Francisco, where engineers are developing a Web browsing tool that would allow smaller production companies to simultaneously work on a movie over the Internet in real time.

# ZDNet News

November 2, 2006, 10:58 AM PT
By Stefanie Olsen, CNET News.com
Published on ZDNet News: November 2, 2006, 10:58 AM PT

TrackBack Print E-mail TalkBack

**Joaquin Alvarado might not be the only indie filmmaker-turned-Internet ambassador, but he may be the most ambitious.**
Alvarado, 33, is founding director of the Institute for Next Generation Internet at San Francisco State University. The project aims to build commercial applications for high-speed fiber networks, which can be 500 to 600 times faster than standard broadband. He's also founder of the Digital Sister Cities Initiative, a program to connect cities around the world with the goal of promoting economic development through advanced technologies and those high-speed fiber networks.
From his background as a graduate of the UCLA film school, it's not obvious how Alvarado might have come to these roles. But to hear him tell it, his epiphany came while he was a starving indie filmmaker in the early '90s, toting a "lowball, flea-market mentality and high moral standards." Technology and high-speed networks, he thought, were the future means to ensure that alternative filmmakers would be able to produce art and distribute it inexpensively.
Fast-forward to present day and Alvarado is busy proselytizing fiber networks--or the next-generation Internet, as it's called--for business and community advancement. In California, that means using the high-speed fiber network run for educational purposes by CENIC, or the Corporation for Education Network Initiatives in California. He's also busy rallying digital sister agreements from cities, including Paris, Shanghai and Amsterdam. (Not to neglect his filmmaking, he also just finished directing "Silent Cross," a documentary about immigration over the Mexico-California border.)
CNET News.com recently caught up with Alvarado to discuss his projects.
**Q: Why did you start the Digital Sister Cities project and what does it mean to be a sister city?** Alvarado: Last November, San Francisco State University and the institute I run, the Institute for Next Generation Internet, (had) been working with Mayor Gavin Newsom's office on projects that allow the city, the university and partners to engage on some of the big issues, like globalization and how it's impacting the digital media sector.

Rather than put our heads in the sand, we're trying to figure out ways to engage the global community around collaborating, building productive relationships and sharing some of the values we hope to happen over the

next generation.

So we created the Digital Sister Cities Initiative to create bilateral agreements between San Francisco and governments around the world that focus on four things: community-to-community relationships; company-to-company partnerships, especially in the digital media sector; research partnerships, or linking university researchers around the world in co-development of technologies. Fourth is open access to really high-speed networks.

**Can you elaborate on the high-speed networks?** Alvarado: On the research side, we've been doing a lot of work with dedicated light paths over fiber to create this new architecture for the Web. And it's based on user-controlled light paths, so we can create dedicated point-to-point wavelengths at 10 gigabits per second between you and me in San Francisco, or out to Paris or to Dublin.

What we're doing is creating a virtual private network that's point-to-point. We want to (promote) this as the next architecture that's going to expand the capacity of our infrastructure; then second, get people using any amount of it.

So we're trying to encourage government and industry to work together by whatever means is appropriate in the local environment, and let companies, community organizations and universities get onto this next-generation Internet.

**What progress have you made since you've founded the Digital Sister Cities Initiative?**
Alvarado: In the case of Ireland, for example, Dublin is building a Digital Hub around the old Guinness plant that will be this incubation space for research and development and community organizations. Slowly they've grown this indigenous consortium of Irish companies and researchers. This fall, it's opening in stages.

We saw that (the) project is like the Mayor's Digital Media Advisory Council here in San Francisco. And those two things partner really well.

Same thing in Paris. They have what's known as Cap Digital, which is their big digital-media cluster development. They have companies and universities already engaged, so we said let's build a linkage between that and the Mayor's Media Advisory Council, as well as the universities and companies involved. We've done a lot of connecting the dots.

**What kinds of applications or projects can we expect from these partnerships?**
Alvarado: The real specific project is the Digital Sister Cities lab, which Mike Mages is designing. He was lead on Final Cut Pro at Apple for years.

He's proposed a tool, which we've dubbed Sebastian, which would serve as a next-generation browser environment for media collaboration. It would configure the network for you; it would give you a real-time uncompressed environment to comment and review (video and film clips) on.

Animation and film production houses in San Francisco and other cities have agreed to participate in being the guinea pigs for their workflow around it. And we're just trying to solve the problem of giving people a tool that turns on the next-generation Internet without having NTP be your partner.

**Which San Francisco companies have signed on?**
Alvarado: Before we did DSC, we worked with Mayor Newsom's office on the Digital Media Advisory Council (DMAC), (a government-industry consortium designed to promote San Francisco as the new "digital Hollywood") with 20 or so representatives from companies including Lucasfilm and Baycat.

(Editor's note: Other DMAC members are from Dolby Laboratories, Fuji Xerox Palo Alto Lab, Wild Brain, Skywalker Sound, CalIT2, LucasArts and ILM.)

**Continued:** ...

CNET News.com
November 2, 2006
By Stefanie Olsen

# Newsmaker: Forging a digital world one city at a time

**newsmaker Joaquin Alvarado might not be the only indie filmmaker-turned-Internet ambassador, but he may be the most ambitious.**

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(Editor's note: Other DMAC members are from Dolby Laboratories, Fuji Xerox Palo Alto Lab, Wild Brain, Skywalker Sound, CalIT2, LucasArts and ILM.)

**Starlight PUBLICATIONS Archived Press Releases**
October 25, 2006

# Letterman Digital Arts Center Hosts Audio Engineering Society (AES) for a CineGrid@AES Special Event

## 4K digital motion pictures and 24-channel digital audio streamed in real-time via CineGrid to San Francisco from Tokyo, Los Angeles and San Diego

**October 25, 2006**

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. -- For the first time anywhere, 2K and 4K resolution digital motion pictures and 24-channel digital audio were streamed from three different locations in real time using CineGrid!", then mixed live for an audience of audio and video professionals at the Letterman Digital Arts Center in San Francisco.

CineGrid™ is a virtual network for extreme media collaboration running on advanced research IP networks. CineGrid was one of the first major research projects at California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2). Overseen by Pacific Interface, joint CineGrid research between Calit2, the Research Institute for Digital Media and Content, Keio University (Keio/DMC), and the University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts (USC/SCA) laid the groundwork for the CineGrid@AES demonstrations

2K images have roughly 2,000 horizontal pixels and 4K images have roughly 4,000. 4K offers approximately four times the resolution of the most widely used HD television format, and 24 times that of a standard broadcast TV signal. 2K and 4K are particularly significant new image formats because they will be widely used for future digital cinema theatrical distribution under new specifications proposed by Digital Cinema Initiatives, LLC, a consortium of the major Hollywood studios.

"The CineGrid@AES event showed that high-quality, real-time

remote collaboration is possible with current equipment and technology. It is our hope that all of us working together in the industry will adopt systems like this, which will eventually decrease costs while increasing efficiency and creativity for everyone," said Craig Mirkin, manager for Media Systems Engineering at Industrial Light & Magic (ILM), a Lucasfilm Ltd. Company and housed at LDAC.

At this AES event, the picture and sound streams originated in real time from CineGrid server nodes in Los Angeles, San Diego and Tokyo, carried at the speed of light over more than 10,000 miles of CineGrid virtual local area networks (VLAN). The streams were synchronized and then mixed "live" in full fidelity for an audience of 250 audio experts, cinema professionals and international technology leaders gathered in the Premier Theater at LDAC.

"The concept of distributed post-production for high-end audio has long been a dream of audio engineers," explained Peter Otto, Music Technology Director at UCSD's Department of Music and a member of the AES Technical Committee for Network Audio Solutions. "The CineGrid@AES demonstration proved that multi-channel, non-compressed cinema-quality audio streaming over IP works well, sounds good, and is now feasible for real-world applications."

Chris Sarabosio, a sound designer at Skywalker Sound, a Lucasfilm Ltd. Company, said: "With the experimental system used at the CineGrid@AES event, I was able to control playback and mix 24-channel audio interactively while watching the synchronized picture on the big screen just like I do normally, only this time the audio servers were 500 miles away connected by CineGrid. This approach clearly has the potential to eliminate distance as a barrier to collaboration."

Working with engineers from ILM and Skywalker Sound, the CineGrid team re-configured the LDAC Premier Theater, normally used to show traditional movies, to enable network delivery of up to 10 Gigabits per second (Gbps) for real-time playback and control of 4K digital motion pictures and 24-channel digital audio from three remote sites: the University of California, San Diego

(UCSD) division of Calit2; Keio/DMC in Tokyo; and USC/SCA in Los Angeles.

Calit2 Director Larry Smarr, the Harry E. Gruber professor of computer science in UCSD's Jacobs School of Engineering, said that CineGrid's long-term goal is to "create a global experimental infrastructure for extreme digital media like 4K, using it to drive innovative applications from scientific research to global digital cinema production."

"Given the long-standing relationship between USC and Lucasfilm, it was particularly meaningful for me to be able to connect our facility in L.A. to the Lucasfilm campus at the Presidio in San Francisco and stream digital cinema quality movies using CineGrid," said Richard Weinberg, Chief Technologist at USC/SCA. "The CineGrid@AES presentation brought into clear focus CineGrid's potential for ultra-high-quality collaboration over long distances for education, science and entertainment."

"The CineGrid@AES demonstration showed the potential to leverage advanced networking in support of economic and cultural development, such as the San Francisco Digital Sister Cities initiative, a city-to-city partnership between education, industry and community-based organizations in the digital media sphere," said Joaquin Alvarado, Director of San Francisco State University's Institute for Next Generation Internet (SFSU/INGI) and a member of San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom's Digital Media Advisory Committee (DMAC).

The program for the CineGrid@AES special event was structured in four acts, each demonstrating a different facet of the CineGrid philosophy of networked extreme media. In Act 1, a sequence of 4K "digital shorts" at 24 frames per second (fps), together with fully mixed synchronized audio, were pulled in real time from network-connected servers in Los Angeles and San Diego. In Act 2, 4K telepresence was used for interactive video-conferencing and ultra-realistic reproduction of a classical music performance from Tokyo. Acts 3 and 4 were designed to prove the concept of networked, remote audio post-production for digital cinema by creative teams spread around the world, who demand the

highest-quality production values. In Act 3, 4K motion pictures were sent compressed from Tokyo, and 24-channel non-compressed digital audio was streamed from San Diego. In Act 4, the performance system was re-configured to use uncompressed 2K motion pictures coming from ILM servers in the LDAC facility, synchronized to 24-channel, non-compressed digital audio streaming from San Diego.

Akinori Ito, producer at Tokyo University of Technology's (TUT) Creative Lab, said: "CineGrid@AES was a good test of the CineGrid concept of using 4K cameras and multi-channel, non-compressed audio to present ultra-realistic 'live' experiences of music concerts and other kinds of performing arts to distant audiences in theaters connected by high-speed networks. I look forward to refining this concept further with my CineGrid colleagues around the world."

"I believe the very high-speed optical networks such as now being deployed by research organizations will become an essential infrastructure for digital cinema production and distribution," said Tomonori Aoyama, Professor at Keio/DMC and Chairman of the Digital Cinema Consortium of Japan (DCCJ), "But, we still have to learn how to integrate systems that creative people can use to make beautiful 4K content _ picture and sound _ in new ways appropriate for the 21st century. Demonstrations such as CineGrid@AES force us, in a good way, to learn by doing."

At 8 million pixels per frame, uncompressed streaming of 4K motion pictures requires more than 6 Gbps bandwidth. However, in many places, the signal must be carried over 1 Gbps circuits. To do so efficiently, the CineGrid@AES demonstration utilized 4K real-time JPEG 2000 codecs originally designed by NTT Network Innovation Labs to compress and decompress 4K digital video at streaming bit rates of 400-500 Megabits per second (Mbps).

Compressed 4K motion pictures were transported in real time over CineGrid to the theater in San Francisco, decompressed on-the-fly, and projected onto a 30-foot screen for the audience using Sony Electronics' SXRD 4K digital projector. 4K live content shown to the AES audience was shot in Tokyo with Olympus SH-

880TM digital motion picture cameras. In-theater audio mixing was performed using a Yamaha DM2000 digital audio controller. A Christie DLP digital projector was also used to screen 2K digital cinema excerpts.

Jim Dolgonas, President and CEO of CENIC, which provided the network connectivity for this event in California over its California Research & Education Network (CalREN), said: "Using a new generation of cyberinfrastructure featuring multiple 10 Gigabit and 1 Gigabit lightpaths over optical fiber, we were able to extend CineGrid to the Letterman Digital Arts Center in San Francisco for the first time. CineGrid@AES and other ongoing CineGrid experiments are helping network operators better understand the requirements for large-scale digital media collaboration."

###

**CineGrid@AES Event Organizers** CENIC/CalREN Industrial Light & Magic, a Lucasfilm Ltd. Company NTT Network Innovation Laboratories Pacific Interface, Inc. Research Institute for Digital Media and Content, Keio University San Francisco State University, Institute for Next Generation Internet Skywalker Sound, a Lucasfilm Ltd. Company Tokyo University of Technology Creative Lab University of California, San Diego - California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology - Center for Research in Computing and the Arts University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts

**CineGrid@AES Contributors** Digital Cinema Consortium of Japan Immersive Media Research Keio Wagner Society String Ensemble National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (Japan) Meyer Sound Laboratories Olympus Corporation Recombinant Media Lab San Francisco State University, Cinema Department Sony Electronics, Inc Tatsunoko Production Co., Ltd. University of Illinois at Chicago Electronic Visualization Laboratory University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign's National Center for Supercomputing Applications Yamaha Corporation of America

**CineGrid@AES Cyberinfrastructure**

**Providers** CAVEwave CENIC/CalREN JGN2/NICT National LambdaRail (NLR) PacificWave Pacific Northwest GigaPOP StarLight WIDE/IEEAF

**Contact:** Laurin Herr, Laurin @ pacific-interface.com

## Upcoming.Amsterdam

**September 27, 2006**

# Berkeley Amsterdam Cybersalon: Cities as Digital Communities

The modern metropolis is about to get wired. Open, low-cost or free access to digital networks is no longer a dream, but is happening in major cities around the globe, thanks in part to the Digital Sister Cities Initiative, which started right here in San Francisco. Want to know how this is going to revolutionize the world?

Come find out from some of the folks who are making it happen:

Joaquin Alvarado, director, San Francisco State University's Institute for Next Generation Internet, and cofounder of the Digital Sister Cities Initiative
Brendan Tuohy, Secretary General of Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Ireland
Chris Vein, CIO of San Francisco, and key architect of many SF digital initiatives
Marleen Stikker, founder, Digital City Amsterdam; director, media lab Waag Society
Martin Varsavsky, CEO of FON, enabling the largest wifi community in the world
TBA, Paris
TBA, Toronto
Esme de Guzman Vos, founder of Muniwireless.com, the portal for news and information about municipal wireless broadband projects.

This Cybersalon is part of Picnic ’06, an annual cutting-edge media conference celebrating creative genius. Cross Media Week Foundation, the nonprofit sponsor of the conference, was founded by Marleen Stikker (see above) and Bas Verhart, a Dutch media entrepreneur and CEO of Media Republic, a leading digital media and entertainment company.

DETAILS: Picnic ’06 runs from Sept. 27 to the 30th (see

www.crossmediaweek.com) and kicks off with the Cybersalon. Cybersalon attendees get a discount ticket price (500 euros) to Picnic '06. To register, go to here and type in the access code: 649251. For hotel information, check out weekendhotel.com, and for travel, KLM seems to have the lowest fares at the moment. Feel free to contact me if you need any advice. Even though this is billed as a picnic, I'd bring rain and cold weather gear….the Netherlands is pretty far north, compared with the Bay Area.

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SF Sate News
November 30, 2005

**SFSU hosts digital sister city launch**

SFSU hosted a Nov. 22 teleconference to launch the San Francisco's Digital Sister Cities Initiative. The event linked government officials, educators and digital industry representatives from Canada, Ireland, India, Macedonia, Mexico and Singapore to discuss the future of collaboration via high-speed networks.

San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom facilitated the event and communicated with his international counterparts via six screens in the August Coppola Theater.

"The globalization of the economy is well under way, and San Francisco is at the epicenter of new ideas and technological advances," Newsom said to an audience that included SFSU faculty, staff and students and representatives from the Mayor's Digital Media Advisory Council. "As innovators, we need to be proactive and be the first city to reach out and demonstrate that we can work with anyone, anywhere, at a moment's notice."

Also addressing the teleconference were: David Miller, mayor of Toronto; Jose Trinidad Padilla Lopez, president of University of Guadalajara; Noel Dempsey, Ireland's minister of communications; Trifun Kostovski, mayor of Skopje, Macedonia; and Thomas Lin, director of digital games and entertainment at Infocomm Development Authority in Singapore. Each gave a perspective of his country's plans and desire for a relationship that would foster international cooperation and industrial growth.

Jeff Fino, cofounder of Bay Area animation studio Wildbrain and chair of the Mayor's Digital Media Advisory Council, emphasized that the Sister Cities Initiative places San Francisco in a pioneering position to collaborate internationally without the intrusion of time-consuming travel. "We need to signal to our neighbors that we are eager to work together for the mutual benefit of our companies," he said.

Such Bay Area companies as Lucas Film are already creating products via high-speed networks.

"Staff at Lucas Animation Singapore work hand-in hand with the team at Letterman Digital Arts Center as well as those based at Skywalker Ranch in Marin County," said Cliff Plumer, chief technology officer at Lucas Film. "We are leveraging the technology we have here to making the international integration and communication seamless and efficient."

The SFSU-based Institute for Next Generation Internet (INGI), a charter member of the Mayor's Digital Advisory Council, arranged the event. INGI was founded earlier this year to create partnerships with other educational institutions as well as government agencies, major corporations, small businesses and community organizations with the goal of improving education, employment opportunities and economic development through use of high-speed networks.

"Technology and next generation networks are transforming the nature of the economy around the globe," INGI Director Joaquin Alvarado said. "The Digital Sister Cities Initiative will help make the transition for cities more meaningful -- economically, socially and culturally."

Gail Whitaker, dean of SFSU's College of Extended Learning and associate vice president of academic program development, was pleased the mayor chose SFSU as the place to launch the initiative. "This reflects our firm partnership with city hall in setting global standards for using technology as a catalyst for economic development," she said.

-- Denize Springer

DMeurope.com

**Macedonia** > **Tech & IT**

# Skopje, Macedonia joins the 'Digital Sister Cities' initiative

29/11/2005 **by Varun Singh**

The city of Skopje has become the Eastern European partner in the Digital Sister City initiative announced last week by San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom. The initiative aims at bridging global communities in an effort to stimulate business and cultural connections through advanced technologies.

Cities that have signed up for the project, which San Francisco is spearheading, are Toronto, Guadalajara, Prague, Madras (Chennai) and Singapore.

Speaking on behalf of the city of Skopje and the Macedonian Association of Digital Entertainment, Mayor Trifun Kostovski said that Macedonia is dedicated to technological innovation and cross-cultural dialogue.

Cities like Madras and Singapore are already getting digital animation and post-production work from San Francisco based companies, and Macedonia expects this initiative to bring some of that business to Skopje-based studios.

San Francisco Chronicle
Rachel Gordon, Chronicle Staff Writer
Wednesday, November 23, 2005

# SAN FRANCISCO City enlists world's other new-media hubs

## 'Digital sister cities' say all will prosper by collaborating

Mayor Gavin Newsom, who is banking on a burgeoning digital media industry to help lift San Francisco's economy, launched an initiative Tuesday to work with a handful of other cities worldwide where the new technology businesses are clustered.

Such collaboration may seem counterintuitive as cities compete to create jobs, but backers of the "digital sister cities" initiative say there's room for everyone to thrive as companies seek a global reach.

The cities that have signed on to the project, which San Francisco is spearheading, are Toronto; Guadalajara, Mexico; Skopje, Macedonia; Prague, Czech Republic; Madras, India; and Singapore. The country of Ireland also is a member of the group.

"There's a way to compete where we also can collaborate," Newsom said during a forum at San Francisco State University in which representatives from other participating cities were on hand via video conferencing.

The idea may sound squishy, but in practical terms it's already happening informally, said Jeff Fino, who chairs Newsom's digital media advisory council and who co-founded Wild Brain Inc. animation studio.

For example, the creative talent for his company is in San Francisco, but the people who color the digitally animated pictures are in India, where the cost of labor is cheaper and

where there's a ready army of workers trained in the computer industry.

"The goal is to nurture the relationships that are already happening in this industry and to build on them," said Jennifer Matz, a project manager in the San Francisco mayor's office of economic and workforce development.

"The feeling is that there's enough business to go around," Matz said.

She said the mayor's office can help San Francisco companies find resources in other cities, with the hope that other cities will send business to San Francisco. The city-to-city relationships also are expected to foster educational and worker exchange programs.

Lucasfilm, which has offices in San Francisco, recently expanded to Singapore, a city-state with strong intellectual property rights laws. Apple Computer and Google, two Silicon Valley companies, have set up shop in Ireland, which has poured a lot of resources into technology training.

The digital age is quickly blurring geopolitical boundaries. Project participants hope there'll be an exchange of ideas on how governments can help the industry grow. Newsom, for instance, has plans for the city to provide free wireless Internet throughout San Francisco -- something that already is close to reality in Ireland. San Francisco companies could also be tapped to provide the creative content that people see when they log into the Irish system.

*E-mail Rachel Gordon at rgordon@sfchronicle.com.*

*This article appeared on page **B - 3** of the San Francisco Chronicle*

# Nov. 22 - Digital Sister Cities Initiative

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**
Tuesday, November 22, 2005
Contact: Mayor's Office of Communications
415-554-6131

***** PRESS RELEASE *****

**MAYOR NEWSOM AND DIGITAL MEDIA ADVISORY COUNCIL LAUNCH "DIGITAL SISTER CITIES" INITIATIVE**

*City-to-city partnership between education, industry and community based organizations in the digital media sphere*

**San Francisco, CA** – At a digital press conference that linked mayors and government officials from around the world, Mayor Gavin Newsom today launched a first-of-its-kind Digital Sister City initiative. The new initiative will connect global communities in a common effort to stimulate economic development through the use of advanced technologies.

The Digital Sister City initiative is being facilitated by San Francisco State University and the Mayor's Digital Media Advisory Council. Its goals include:

* growing the digital media industry by encouraging greater integration of and investment in digital media companies located in sister cities;

* Developing joint educational programs and exchange opportunities between Digital Sister Cities to prepare our students for the global future;

* Enhancing next-generation connectivity between digital sister cities.

By creating the initiative, San Francisco positions itself to work in tandem with offshore partners around the world to produce more work more efficiently, allowing the City's digital media industry to grow.

"The globalization of the economy is well underway, and San Francisco is at the epicenter of new ideas and technological advances," said Mayor Gavin Newsom. "As innovators, we need to be proactive and be the first city to reach out and demonstrate that we can work with anyone,

anywhere, at a moment's notice. We need to attract companies to San Francisco, whether or not those companies ever intend to have a physical presence here," continued Mayor Newsom.

"This Digital Sister Cities Initiative places San Francisco in a pioneering position to work with others wherever they may be," said Jeff Fino, co-founder of Wildbrain and Chair of the Mayor's Digital Media Advisory Council. "And we need to signal to our neighbors, far and wide, that we're not just willing, we're eager to work together for the mutual benefit of our companies and our communities," continued Fino.

"Technology and Next Generation Networks have transformed the nature of the economy around the globe. The Digital Sister Cities initiative will help make this transformation meaningful for cities and their citizens economically, socially, and culturally, said Joaquín Alvarado, Director of the Institute for Next Generation Internet at San Francisco State University.

The Digital Sister City initiative was launched with eight/nine of partner communities, including:

* Toronto, Canada : Lord Mayor David Miller

* Guadalajara, Mexico : President, University of Guadalajara, Licenciado Jose Trinidad Padilla Lopez

* Ireland : Minister of Communications, Noel Dempsey TD

* Dusseldorf : Lord Mayor Joachim Erwin

* Skopje, Macedonia : Mayor Kostovski

* Sofia, Bulgaria : Mayor Borisov

* Chennai, India : Secretary of Information Technology for Tamil Nada, Dr. C. Chandramouli

* Singapore : Mr. Thomas Lim, Director for Digital Games & Entertainment, Infocomm Development Authority

* Osaka, Japan

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