



AV Festival 2003

Evaluation

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AV EVALUATION REPORT¹

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¹ The opinions contained in this report are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the University of Teesside. The qualitative aspects of this research was carried out by the authors and funded by the University of Teesside Research Fund as part of another on-going research project. Please contact Jeanne Moore (j.m.moore@tees.ac.uk) or Andrea Abbas (a.abbas@tees.ac.uk) for further details.

Executive Summary

This is an evaluation of the **Audio Visual Festival** which was held in Newcastle, Middlesbrough and Sunderland between the 8th and 22nd November 2003. It was organised by a unique multi-agency partnership that included The Tyneside Cinema, Middlesbrough Council, The University of Teesside and Sunderland City Council in association with onedotzero, “the world leading digital film and new media festival”. This was the first festival of this type to be organised within the region, but it is to become a biannual event seeking to promote digital media and enhance the experience of living in the region. In general the aims of the festival were extremely pertinent to the regional cultural strategy because they involved promoting existing digital media talents and businesses regionally, nationally and internationally as well as developing new skills and audiences from diverse backgrounds. In particular the aims were to:

- ❖ Create a region-wide arts festival, with simultaneous activities in the three major population centres of the North East Coast (Middlesbrough, Newcastle and Sunderland).
- ❖ Raise awareness of the digital expertise within in the region.
- ❖ Introduce new audiences to new work, ideas, technology, and new creative talent, stimulating the future market and laying the foundations for future commercial success.
- ❖ Raise the profile of female digital artists and raise the level of attendance by women
- ❖ Provide a platform for established and newly emergent practitioners and entrepreneurs to showcase new work, ideas and concepts.
- ❖ Commission work by 35 regional digital media practitioners/professionals.
- ❖ Promote the North East as a significant UK leader in media convergence and creative content development.
- ❖ Add value and demonstrate regional impact to enhance Newcastle-Gateshead’s bid for European Capital of Culture 2008.
- ❖ Increase the international media perspectives in the region.
- ❖ Involve over 450 people in participatory education and training activities.
- ❖ Provide inspiration and encourage aspiration and ambition in regional talent.
- ❖ Encourage and stimulate new convergence and networks.
- ❖ Broaden the skill base of festival participants.
- ❖ Increase co-operation and partnership within the region in new media.
- ❖ Provide accredited training in new media skills and informal “taster” training for excluded groups.

The festival events included: the premiering of digital media productions; the showcasing of new cutting edge films produced by regional, national and international practitioners; music events; screenings pertaining to the history and origins of digital media; workshops to promote digital media skills; events aimed at different groups (e.g. children, older people and women); presentations and talks by successful digital media practitioners and the blending of work from different genres. The festival events were spread across Middlesbrough, Newcastle and Sunderland and they were evaluated by:

- ❖ A targeted quantitative (survey) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) evaluation of five events (Chimera, Middlesbrough; Convergence & Calling Card, Sunderland; Workshops in all three locations; Odeon Closing Event, Newcastle; Christmas Shop Windows in all Three Locations).
- ❖ Analysis of organiser’s surveys, the media analysis conducted by Cool Blue and an materials produced for the event.
- ❖ All together the evaluation was based upon an analysis of: 174 questionnaires completed by event and workshop participants; 152 questionnaires completed by Tyneside Cinema attendees; 40 questionnaires completed by funders and organisers; and, interviews with 18 participants and digital media practitioners.

Overall the festival was found to be a major success in particular:

The festival developed new digital media audiences and encouraged digital media practice amongst existing and new practitioners.

- ❖ 6750 people attended the festival over the two weeks. The festival website had a total of 317,546 hits by February 2004. The festival was positively covered in the regional media collected by Cool Blue. Two films were shown on BBC TV regionally.
- ❖ The festival brought new audiences to venues and events they had never been to before. 74% of those participating in workshops and 55.7% of those attending events had never been to anything like it before.
- ❖ The festival organisers exceeded their own targets in terms of bringing in women audiences and workshop participants. The surveys indicated that approximately 52% of audiences were female and the workshop surveys were 40.5% female. This is impressive in an arena that is usually male dominated.
- ❖ The festival featured and previewed work by women in events such as “Boys Toys? Opportunities for Women in new Media”. Some screenings were especially targeted at raising the profile of women practitioners (e.g. Girls on Film and Happiness Machine).
- ❖ Some events especially aimed to encourage participation by older people (e.g. some Virtual Reality Tours in Middlesbrough and a Vj-ing session for older people).
- ❖ There were special films for children including Fantasia and Toy Story and workshops to encourage participation by children.
- ❖ The workshops attracted a wide age range 19% were aged between 25 and 34 years, 18.1% were aged less than 16 years and 16.2% were aged 65 or over.
- ❖ 72.2% of workshop participants said they learned new skills.
“I’d say I’ve conquered a few fears about using equipment...it’s demystified and it also makes you feel like ‘wow’, it’s achievable.” (Sarah, 19, VJ workshop).
- ❖ A significant majority of those attending workshops and events claimed they would like to attend more similar events in the future.
- ❖ 87.1% of those surveyed thought the festival should happen again.

The content of the festival was judged to be a success by: those attending workshops and events; practitioners; and, those involved in organising the event:

- ❖ 88.1% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the festival brought something new to the North East and 87.1% thought the festival should happen again.
- ❖ 75.1% of people attending events and 78.1% of workshop participants found the content to be original and different.
- ❖ 90% of those surveyed enjoyed the workshops.
- ❖ The most frequently mentioned ‘best thing’ about the events by those attending was ‘originality / something new or different’.
- ❖ 80% of those surveyed viewing the shop window displays thought they should happen again and 80% would like to see more.
- ❖ 85.4% of workshop participants agreed that the quality of teaching was high
“I thought the workshop was very good. I thought the people here, been teaching it for a while, know their stuff, know it in detail. It’s a very good place to come back to, to do a course” (James, 54, participant at Final Cut Pro and Sound4Screen in Middlesbrough).

The festival raised awareness of the creative talent and the commercial potential of digital media regionally and succeeded in involving a wide-range of local, national and international practitioners.

- ❖ It brought together a unique partnership across the region forging links between commerce, practitioners and local authorities. This is best evidenced by the programme (Appendix I), which demonstrates the geographical spread and the wide range of events.
- ❖ It showcased work by international artists. For example, onedotzero_ne bought the biggest selection of their work ever shown outside London plus an exclusive world premiere Shynola programme. Richard Fenwick who hails from the north-east and now has an international reputation had some work commissioned.
- ❖ The festival commissioned important work by over 35 practitioners including the Chimera project that linked local practitioners with members of the Light Surgeons who are internationally acclaimed in this field. Among the works commissioned by local practitioners were those that were produced for the shop windows.
- ❖ Overall the survey indicated the festival audiences consisted of approximately 40% new audiences.
- ❖ Calling Card featured work produced by students at the regions universities and a prestigious prize was awarded by Codeworks, who whilst short-listing were so impressed that they added a second and third prize.
- ❖ Most participants considered the brochure eye-catching (58%) and most people accessed the festival by consulting the brochure.

The organisers are keen to build on the achievements of the 2003 festival to develop an even more successful festival in 2005.

- ❖ The organisers have already produced a strategic document to address the challenges outlined below. For example, they are keen to appoint a full time person to work on programme development with a view to further expanding audiences to excluded groups and to generate more commercial sponsorship.
- ❖ The organisers will seek to learn from other festivals across the country.
- ❖ The organisers intend to strengthen the partnership and further develop the three centre regional focus.
- ❖ The organisers intend to direct more money towards the creation of a more accessible brochure and publicity.
- ❖ The advertising and media strategy will be reviewed.

As with any event there are lessons to be learned from this year's festival. In particular the evaluation suggests:

- ❖ More effort should be directed towards fostering digital media audiences and developing practitioners amongst a wider range of socially excluded groups. For example, there were few participants from lower socio-economic groups. This could be tackled through more strategic advertising. Alternatively groups could be targeted through events, workshops and commissions, building on the success of this year's festival with women, older and younger people.
- ❖ People found the brochure difficult to read. The publicity, marketing and organisation of the festival attracted the most critical comments.
- ❖ The festival should benefit from media coverage, which features the festival as important news of itself. Media coverage tended to focus on the human-interest aspects of particular activities.
- ❖ It was encouraging that 25% of people surveyed thought that the festival was for everyone. However, more effort needs to be directed towards developing this view amongst a wider range of participants. A clearer message regarding the nature of the festival and digital media needs to be created.

Introduction and Background

Background to the AV Festival

The Audio Visual Festival was held in Newcastle, Middlesbrough and Sunderland between the 8th and 22nd November 2003, the first of its kind within the region. Its aim was to promote digital media within the region, enhance the experience of living in the region and get the North East on the international digital media map². The Tyneside Cinema, Middlesbrough Council, the University of Teesside and Sunderland City Council came together to organise the festival. It attracted a broad range of funding, principally from the Northern Rock Foundation, Arts Council England North East and Northern Film and Media. Codeworks and Onedotzero also supported the festival. Onedotzero are a London based organisation who collaborated with the North East especially for the festival, both of whom were also involved creatively with the festival. Tyneside Cinema, Sunderland City Council, University of Teesside and Middlesbrough Council also contributed funding, as did Newcastle City Council, University of Sunderland and Culture North East. The festival has grown out of an emerging interest and industry base across the region in audio-visual arts. For example, the existence of Codeworks supported the festival as *'a Centre of Digital Excellence developing the region's digital media and technology excellence, by linking in-depth knowledge, skills and commercial expertise in the region's universities, companies and individuals'* (www.codeworks.net). The region is already host to an annual international animation festival (Animex) at the University of Teesside and the Northern Lights Film Festival.

The AV Festival and the North East

The North East is, (physically, socio-economically and culturally) a very diverse area. Sections of population have suffered from increased poverty due to industrial decline. In 2000 Middlesbrough had the greatest concentration of multiply deprived wards in the country, with five other districts in the area being identified as being in the "top ten" in this respect (DETR, 2000). In this context, great efforts have been made to enhance the cultural life of the North East. Developments like the AV festival have potential to impact on economic regeneration (through inward investment and through increased tourism) and social and cultural regeneration by making the North East a better place to

² In broad terms, digital media is the use of digital technology to make film music, video, animation, video, computer games, digital arts and web based art.

live (Culture North East, 2003). This is not just a case of bringing people into the area or enhancing existing cultural and artistic activity, but also involves trying to include the currently “socially excluded”. The AV festival has developed out of this political and social context and is a very appropriate initiative given these aims. This current context and these hopes for cultural development in the region are an important backdrop to this evaluation.

Key Aspirations of AV Festival

The festival’s aims were to contribute to the cultural regeneration agenda promoted by the regions cultural strategy (Culture North East, 2003). In the last section of the report we evaluate the success of the festival against these aims. One key aim was to raise the profile of Digital Media within the North East by:

1. Creating the region’s first truly region-wide arts festival, with activity simultaneous in the three major population centres of the East Coast.
2. Raising awareness of the digital cluster in the region.
3. Introducing new audiences to new work, ideas, technology, and new creative talent, thereby stimulating the future market and laying the foundations for future commercial success.
4. Providing a platform for practitioners and entrepreneurs, both established and newly emergent, to showcase new work, ideas and concepts.
5. Commissioning for 35 regional practitioners / media professionals.
6. Promoting the North East as a significant UK leader in media convergence and creative content development.
7. Adding value and demonstrating regional impact to Newcastle-Gateshead’s bid for European Capital of Culture 2008.
8. Increasing international media perspectives in the region.

A further aim was to foster the further growth of Digital Media cultural skills within the region by:

9. Involving over 450 people in participatory education and training activities.
10. Providing inspiration and encouraging aspiration and ambition in regional talent.
11. Encouraging and stimulating new convergence and networks.

12. Broadening the skill base of festival participants.
13. Increasing co-operation and partnership within the region in new media.
14. Providing accredited training in new media skills and informal “taster” training to excluded groups.

The festival included a wide range of events spread over the three locations (see Appendix I for a copy of the web based version of the programme). The major aspects of the festival were broadly:

- 1. Audio-visual arts were commissioned and premiered.** The “Digital Christmas Windows” were digital art pieces by local practitioners commissioned and displayed in shop windows in Sunderland, Newcastle and Middlesbrough. The Chimera Project commissioned thirteen local practitioners in Middlesbrough to create a film about Middlesbrough working with James Price of the Light Surgeons. Calling Card featured work by students at the regions universities and initially there was to be one prestigious prize provided by Codeworks, but they decided to award second and third prizes after looking at the high standard of work that was entered.
- 2. New Cutting Edge Films were showcased.** For example, “onedotzero_ne: gondry forever!” featured a collection of music video by the “AV practitioner” Gondry who is famous for making videos with/for White stripes, Bjork, Daft Punk and Massive Attack as well as with his own group Oui Oui. There was a showing of a film by the director Alexander Sukarov (“Russian Ark”) in Sunderland. The range and volume of films can be seen in Appendix I.
- 3. Music Events were organised.** There were three major events in this category including “The Cinematic Orchestra” and Deft.com, which was a night of VJ-ing showcasing some nationally and locally renowned names in this new music media including “The Light Surgeons” and D-Fuse.
- 4. A series of films featuring AV Pioneers and AV Theatre was shown.** People attending these aspects of the AV festival could get a sense of the origins of Digital Media. Events of this ilk included the film “On the Edge of Technology” which featured and explored the work of Lillian Schwartz from the 1960’s and 1970’s.

- 5. Workshops to build AV skills were offered.** Workshops aimed to develop AV skills of “practitioners” and up and coming practitioners in the region. For example, Final-cut Pro was a workshop dealing with cutting edge software.
- 6. It brought together work by international, national and local practitioners.** For example Onedotzero_ne bought the work of the biggest selection of their work ever shown outside London plus an exclusive world premiere Shynola programme. Richard Fenwick’s work was commissioned. Born locally, Richard is now an important international audio visual practitioner who the festival bought “home” to the North East to create RND#(NE), a cluster of films in collaboration with composer Stephen Jefferis, about the relationship between communities and technologies.
- 7. Events were aimed at different age groups.** For example, there were special films for children including Fantasia and Toy Story. The Games Day was also designed to attract a wider audience and there was a VJ-ing workshop for older adults.
- 8. There were presentations and talks by successful new media businesses.** Internet: XPT featured Rob Bevan & Tim Wright who are London-based and have produced “innovative story-based interactive projects, including comedy self help disk 'MindGym', Webcam & email drama 'Online Caroline' (both BAFTA winners)”. They demonstrated how to “produce an 'online drama””, discussed “different ways of using technology to tell stories and previewed the development of XPT itself as a work of fiction.”
(<http://www.avfest.co.uk/new/index3.html>). Also Eutechnyx a firm based in the north-east firm who “specialise in driving games and have created such global successes as Le Mans 24 Hours, 007 Racing, and most recently Big Mutha Truckers” (<http://www.avfest.co.uk/BrochureHTML/specialguests.html>).
- 9. It blended work from different genres.** Convergence Nights, involved commissions involving the pairing of two practitioners working in different fields from the region.

Audience of the Festival

6750 people attended films, events and workshops at the AV Festival in 2003. 4746 of those came to the Festival at an event, film or workshop in Newcastle. In addition to this attendance, there were 317,546 hits to the AV website as of February 2004.

Table 1: Audience by Region and Activity*

	Sunderland	Middlesbrough	Newcastle	Totals
Screenings	132	263	2286	2681 (39.72%)
Other	552	1000	2420	3972 (58.84%)
Events				
Workshops	37	20	40	97 (1.44 %)
Totals	721(10.68%)	1283 (19.01%)	4746 (70.31%)	6750

***Figures supplied by AV Festival**

70.31% of the AV total audience was in Newcastle. Some effort needs to be made to even out attendance across the three sites. However, these figures do indicate that the festival was successful in drawing in people, given the relatively low profile of Digital Media nationally and internationally. As our research will demonstrate, there is potential for new audiences to be reached for future festivals, particularly as many of those attending events came through a personal contact.³

Overview of Evaluation Strategy

Aims of Evaluation

The evaluation aimed specifically at five aspects of the festival, agreed with the organisers:

- Chimera Event in Middlesbrough
- Convergence & Calling Card - Sunderland event
- Workshops in Middlesbrough, Sunderland and Newcastle
- Newcastle Closing event - Odeon

³ Ars Electronica has been going since 1987 and has now reached a stage where it attracts "about 30,000 visitors, 434 participants and 491 journalists representing a total of 35 countries as well as a multitude of projects carried out together with partner universities or developed in collaboration with guest curators" It can be seen from this that the numbers at the AV fest were relatively good considering this was the first year of the festival.

- Christmas Shop Windows in Middlesbrough, Newcastle and Sunderland

These were targeted in order to evaluate whether the festival was meeting some of its key specified aims.

AV Festival Evaluation: Key selected aims

1. *Create the region's first truly region-wide arts festival, with activity simultaneous in the three major population centres of the East Coast.* This was evaluated by targeting the Christmas Shop Windows at Eleven, Sunderland; Psyche, Middlesbrough; Strand, Newcastle, running for the entire festival.

2. *Introduce new audiences to new work, ideas, technology, and new creative talent, thereby stimulating the future market and laying the foundations for future commercial success.* This was evaluated by targeting the closing event: AV: EON at the Old Odeon, Newcastle and Tyneside Cinema on the 22nd November.

3. *Provide a platform for practitioners and entrepreneurs, both established and newly emergent, to showcase new work, ideas and concepts.* This was evaluated by targeting the Chimera Event at the Empire, Middlesbrough on the 15th November.

4. *Promote the North East as a significant UK leader in media convergence and creative content development.* This was evaluated by targeting the Convergence and Calling Card events at DMC, Sunderland on the 18th November.

5. *Broaden the skill base of festival participants.* This was evaluated by targeting all the workshops held during the festival.

However, the report as a whole draws upon the full range of data collected by the organisers, the media analysis conducted by Cool Blue⁴, material supplied by the festival and interview data collected by the evaluators as part of a research project funded by the University of Teesside, which was not paid for as part of the evaluation,

⁴ This was the company handling media for the AV festival.

but provides greater insight into the participant's experience of the AV festival. These methods are outlined below.

Designed by the evaluation team

D1: A questionnaire survey of those attending events, workshops and shop windows in the three localities (n = 174 [people]). Events = 53 (not including D2); workshops = 111; shop windows = 10

D2: Survey of events at the Tyneside Cinema data using a shortened questionnaire (152)

D3: Interviews with AV practitioners (1)

D4: Interviews with people attending workshops and viewing the shop window displays⁵ (17)

Additional data

D5: Sunderland event survey of (40)

D6: Media outputs were monitored and collected by the company Cool Blue

D7: A survey of Chimera participants (12)

D8: A survey of practitioners, funders and employees (40)

D9: Documentary analysis of written material relating to the AV festival (e.g. bids to funders and proposals)

These data collection techniques combined both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This multi-method approach provided an overview of the festival as well as eliciting a deeper understanding of key issues from smaller number of participants. In addition, those involved in producing artwork, organising and funding events were also included in the evaluation process. The documentary analysis was important in establishing the stated aims of the festival.

The questionnaire was tailored for each type of event (see Appendix 2). The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS. Where appropriate qualitative responses were coded and analysed thematically. The interview data was analysed thematically.

The Questionnaire Survey: Total Sample

174 people filled in a questionnaire, devised by the evaluation team during the AV festival. This included all workshops in the three regions, the Chimera event in Middlesbrough, the Convergence night in Sunderland and the Christmas shop window displays. In addition to this data, participants at other events completed other questionnaires not devised by the evaluation team. Consequently, some of the questionnaires asked different questions and are therefore reported separately where this is the case. To this end, 152 people filled in a questionnaire at the Tyneside cinema events and screenings and 40 people filled in a questionnaire at the Sunderland events and screenings. Therefore, the total questionnaire data collected from participants is 366. 67% (245) of these went to events and 30.3% (111) participated in workshops and 2.73% (10 people) were approached outside Psyche in Middlesbrough to fill in a shop window questionnaire (see graph 1).

Events

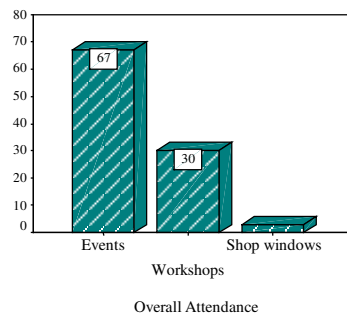
Of the 245 people who attended events, nearly two thirds, 62%(152), were in Newcastle, 19.6% (48) attended the Chimera event in Middlesbrough and 18.4% (45) attended events in Sunderland (see graph 3). The lack of response from Newcastle and Sunderland was disappointing, as questionnaires had been provided to the organisers for each of the three regions⁶.

Workshops

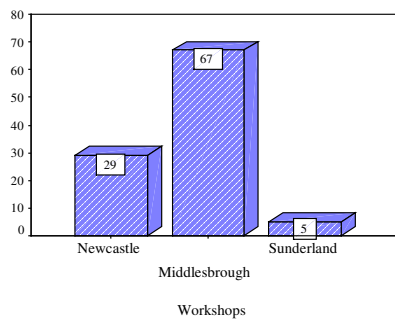
Of the 111 people who we surveyed who participated in workshops, 28.8% (32) attended in Newcastle, 66.7% (74) in Middlesbrough and 4.5% (5) in Sunderland, (see graph 2). The higher percentage here for Middlesbrough is due to the virtual reality (VR) tours, which were able to accommodate and attract more people than workshops. These were strictly speaking introductions to VR rather than workshops but have been categorised as workshops as the mode of evaluation was similar. They attracted larger audiences because no specialist skills were required and access was made easily through existing groups. Of the 74 people who attended workshops in Middlesbrough, 74.3% (55) participated in the VR tours. The graphs below summarise this information.

⁵ This was not part of the evaluation but was funded by the University Research Fund at the University of Teesside as part of a wider project exploring cultural inclusion.

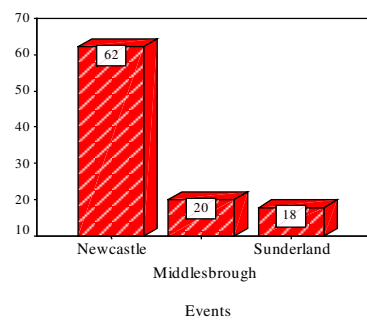
Graph 1: The survey sample: Percentage at events, workshops and shop windows (n = 366)



Graph 2: The survey sample: Workshops by region (n = 111)



Graph 3: The survey sample: Events by region (n = 245)



The gender split of the respondents was ideal in that approximately half, 52% were male and 48% were female. This was extremely unusual for digital medial events and is important in that encouraging female attendance and participation was one of the key aims of the festival. It is possible that some of this is due to females being more likely to fill in questionnaires than males. However, the workshop questionnaires suggest this is not the case because all participants were encouraged to complete these. Of those participating in workshops, 59.5% were males and 40.5% females. The gender split around the different types of activities perhaps reflected the gendered nature of participation in the creation of digital arts and media. Fewer males (49.4%) than females (50.6%) attended events in the sample. 50% of the shop-window sample were male and 50% female. Nearly half of those who filled in questionnaires at the events were aged between 25 and 34 years (44.7%) with 32.4% aged from 16 to 24 years. A broader age range attended workshops than events, due to the participation of a children’s art club and the University of the Third Age at the VR tours in

⁶ The evaluation team was responsible for designing the evaluation, data analysis and the preparation of

Middlesbrough. At the workshops, 19% were aged between 25 and 34 years, 18.1% were aged less than 16 years and 16.2% were aged 65 or over. The top age range for the shop windows was 19-34 years at 60%. Therefore, of the total questionnaire sample (366 respondents), over a third (36.8%) were aged between 25-34 years.

Of the total respondents 92.3% described themselves as white. Of the total respondents 79.5% described themselves as non-disabled.

Excluding data from the Sunderland events (40 people), which did not ask participants about their occupation, 29.3% of the remaining 321 respondents were students, 13.1% were practitioners and 8.10% were retired. More students participated in workshops than events and more practitioners went to the events as opposed to participating in workshops. 25% of the workshop participants were retired, again due to the involvement of the University of the Third Age at the VR tours in Middlesbrough. A further 8.10% of participants were either teachers or lecturers, 4.36% worked in sales or marketing and 2.80% worked in film production or animation. Other occupations cited by participants were diverse, the resulting percentages being very small. In consequence, only the larger percentages and therefore most frequent occupations are mentioned above.

Excluding data from the Sunderland events due to a different questionnaire, of the remaining 326 respondents, the most frequent method of transport was by car (45.7%) followed by public transport (32.8%). Of the 40 people at the Sunderland events, 47.5% walked to get to the venue, 32.5% used their own transport and 30% used public transport.

From the data, postcodes tended to correspond with where an event took place. For example, the most frequent postcode for the Sunderland events was SR2 (42.5%), for the Newcastle events NE6 (13.8%) and for the Middlesbrough events TS1 (16.7%). For the workshops however, the most frequent postcodes, although low, were SR6 (8.65%) and DH1 (7.69%) showing that people travelled away from where they lived to attend the workshops. This is consistent with qualitative data from workshop interviews where participants had travelled from Newcastle, South Shields, Crook and Durham to

this report but they were not responsible for distributing the questionnaires.

Middlesbrough. This may have been due to the cancellation of some of the workshops in Newcastle and Sunderland although it was always intended that there would be a greater number of workshops in Middlesbrough. One of the Middlesbrough workshop participants thought that people had travelled far because they were interested in the workshops:

“Erm, none of the people here today are from Middlesbrough are they so I think that says quite a lot. People have travelled really far to come to this workshop because they’re really interested in it.”
(Emma, 39, from Crook).

In addition to the above data, the AV festival team gathered two surveys. 40 people completed a funders/practitioners/employees questionnaire and 12 people completed a questionnaire concerning the Chimera residency.

The Results of the Evaluation

Audience Profile

“New Labour define ‘access’ as “building audiences for the many not the few”” (Smith 1998, p. 5 cited in Hayes and Slater, 2003). The terms audience development and increasing access can have different meanings. For commercial event organisers developing a consumer base that will make an event viable might be more important than reaching socially excluded groups. The current government sees leisure and cultural activities as one means by which the presently “excluded” can become “included”. With something like new digital media it is important to introduce the diverse range of activities and products that form the genre to existing arts/cultural activities audiences. However, the festival organisers also wished to target groups who are not usually associated with new digital media or arts attendance in general. In particular they targeted younger and older age groups and women.

The audience of the festival was broad ranging. As mentioned above successfully drawing in equal numbers of men and women, was a major achievement for the organisers. Although the proportion of older people was not high, drawing in even small numbers to complement the mostly young audience, is also an important achievement as this provides a base to build upon. The audience were mostly students, practitioners, professionals and retired people, (social groups ABC1). Future festivals could do considerably more to include lower income groups and those groups most

often excluded from arts activities and events, including a broader range of minority ethnic groups and disabled people.

The evaluation focused on the usual leisure interests of a sub-set of participants. This helps to profile the audience more fully, and raises questions about targeting future festival audiences. Workshop questionnaires, the Chimera event in Middlesbrough and Convergence night at Sunderland asked participants their main reasons for participating in leisure activities. This was to get a sense of what type of things motivated the people that attended these events to participate in leisure and arts and get some indication if the population targeted were likely to be attending the event for reasons suggested as desirable by the aims. The top reasons were, 'to pursue interests and hobbies' (84.9%), 'to be entertained' (78.5%), 'for my own education' (78.3%) and 'to hang out with friends' (77.4%). This indicates that the festival's aim to educate and entertain were likely to be succeeding with the audience it attracted. The least frequent reasons were, 'to contribute to the community' (54.1%) and 'to network or make contacts' (45.7%). However, these are still significant numbers of people. Respondents also mentioned reasons such as 'to have fun', 'to fight middle age' and 'to stimulate and open my mind'. This suggests that for these participants, the primary reasons for engaging more generally in leisure are not primarily social or for entertainment but also to pursue their interests. In this way, this might be viewed as a discerning audience, targeting events and activities rather than an opportune audience, casually coming along with their friends. In future festivals, audiences could be enhanced through focusing on the entertainment and social value of the festival as clearly, those with special interests are going to be self-motivate to attend.

The same participants were asked whether things prevented them from participating in leisure activities. 62.3% agreed that there were. The most frequent reasons were cited as 'not enough time' (72.6%) and 'not enough money' (62.4%). The low cost of many of the events may therefore have been a factor in attracting people. The least frequent reason was 'lack of confidence' (10.4%). Participants also mentioned childcare, family ties, work and lack of publicity as reasons that prevented them from participating in leisure activities. Tackling some of these (for example some events with childcare facilities) could expand attendance further.

In addition, the most popular activities to do or places to see for these participants were: cinemas (81.4%) compared to 51% of the general population who had visited in the previous 3 months in the 1995/96 general household survey (Torkildsen, 1999), art galleries/exhibitions (69.9%) (compared to 22% in the general household survey of visits in the past three months 1995/1996 (Torkildsen, 1999)), museums (69.2%) (compared to 36% of people in social categories A and B who claimed to have visited museums in the past three months in the 1995/1996 general household survey, Torkildsen, 1999); and dance workshops or nightclubs (58.3%) (compared to 26% AB's and 29% Cs visiting in the previous 3 months in the 1995/1996 survey). In other words, even accounting for the shorter visit survey period of the general household survey this was a culturally active group. This is to be expected when workshops (apart from the VR tours) were often marketed as expanding the skills of people with some level of AV proficiency.

Although this indicates that many of the people who attended were already arts participants and audience members, on the whole they were not familiar with AV, hence audiences for Digital Media were expanded through the festival. 74.0% of workshop participants and 55.7% of event attendees agreed that they have never been to anything like the AV festival before, as opposed to 15.0% and 28.9% who disagreed that they had. In addition, approximately 30% of those who attended claimed not usually to frequent art/galleries and exhibitions, giving some indication that the festival was attracting new people to an arts event.

This suggests that this audience is more time restricted than money restricted, although both figure highly for the majority of participants. Many of the AV events and workshops were free, and it would be advisable that next years festival workshops focused on drawing in a more representative regional audience.

Perceptions and opinions of the AV festival

What is AV all about?

When asked *'what's the AV festival all about?'* the largest group of participants who answered the question (n = 249) thought it was about *'multi-media.'* This is a fair description of the event but does not really tell us much beyond their basic understanding of the type of arts they were likely to see. Others gave various answers which indicated that they saw the event as extremely important and exciting, including *'life'*, *'the future'*, *'pushing boundaries'*, *'involvement and access to the industry'*, *'exhibiting and celebrating art'* *'reinvention, promotion of the region'*, *'raising awareness'* and *'connecting with people'*. The other most frequent answers resonated with the aims of the festival in terms of its expansive and educational aims for example, *'introducing, developing, promoting the art form'* (9.24%), *creativity, expression, experimentation and inspiration'* (7.63%), *'learning, education, new skills'* (4.42%). A low but still significant proportion were at events without being aware of the festival - *'don't know / didn't know there was a festival'* (10.4%). This indicates that more work needs to be done to make it clear to participants and audiences that events are part of the AV festival.

The evidence also suggests that the festival organisers need to put across a more coherent message about the nature and purpose of the AV. The festival slogan *"your eyes won't believe what they hear"* is catchy but maybe did not get the message over sufficiently well to people unfamiliar with Digital Media. The diversity of understandings of what the festival is about, are also reflected in comments made by participants in the questionnaires:

"Good question – it's confusing, non-specific and un-focused"

(Claire, 22-34, Newcastle)

"Unsure! Raising awareness of local culture? Bringing community together?"

(Anna, 24, Chimera)

People attending events, more frequently thought that the festival was about *'introducing, developing and promoting the art form'* than did people at workshops (19 as opposed to 4). This is possibly because people in the workshops were already familiar and convinced by AV as a valid practice and were therefore less likely to see

themselves as being targeted in these respects. People attending events also more frequently believed the festival was about ‘*creativity, expression, experimentation and inspiration*’ than did those attending workshops, (14 as opposed to 5). This might be because the workshops were more aimed at promoting and developing the practical skills required to produce Digital Media. This interpretation was reflected in the fact that people attending workshops more frequently thought that the festival was about ‘*learning, education and new skills*’ than those people attending events, (10 as opposed to 1).

The expansion of audiences is obviously dependent on the audience seeing the festival as being for people like them. It is encouraging that of the 164 participants who answered the question ‘*who is the AV festival aimed at?*’ (N = 131), the most frequent responses were ‘*everyone*’ (25.2%) and ‘*students/young people*’ (23.7%). This is a good base to start from in convincing the other 75% that digital media is for everyone and work towards broadening the appeal and the image of Digital Media. Although the percentages were much lower, the next most frequent responses were ‘*local people*’ (7.63%), ‘*practitioners / creative people*’ (6.87%) and ‘*people specifically interested in a certain subject or program*’ (6.11%). There were fourteen categories in total from this question and people had a large range of opinions. A more coherent message regarding this would further the aims of the festival in the future. From interviews with workshop participants, the majority believed that the AV festival would appeal only to certain groups of people. Tony, who is retired, thought the workshops were aimed at students or young people and were therefore excluding the ‘older generation’ or people who wanted to learn the basics. Emma, 39, commented:

“I don’t know who they’re aimed at but all the people here are all similar to me, who are kind of professional at entry level – struggling practitioners [laughs]”.

Furthermore, James, 54, from South Shields commented:

“For the AV festival, what you’re doing is preaching to the converted, that’s your market, people who understand that they have a creative side and they want to express it. They’re the only individuals you’re really gonna get in the AV festival. I’m the kind of person who actively goes looking for these things, I see a sign saying ‘festival’ I’ll pull over and take down the number, you know, I’m looking for this sort of project. The majority of people wouldn’t do that.”

Access and publicity

70% of the practitioners/funders/employees sampled, agreed or strongly agreed that the festival was well publicised. The following table shows percentage agreement with statements about the AV website and publicity. Three quarters thought the publicity was eye-catching but only 15% thought the publicity was easy to read. The practitioners were most critical of this aspect of the AV publicity material. However, these views do have some resonance with audiences and workshop attendee's comments.

Table 3: AV Publicity: Percentage agreement of practitioners, funders and employees

Statement	AV publicity – Agreed & Strongly Agreed	AV website – Agreed or Strongly Agreed
Eye-catching	75%	38%
Useful	63%	40%
Informative	60%	38%
Easy to read	15%	38%

In terms of reaching people who attended the event the brochure was the most effective form of publicity. Excluding Sunderland event data and shop windows, 35.0% (109) of respondents participating in events and workshops found out about the event or workshop through the AV brochure. 19.6% (61 people) found out through a friend or by word of mouth, 6.75% (21 people) through the website and 4.18% (13 people) from a newspaper. The least frequent percentages were for posters and radio, 1.29% and 0.64% respectively.

Although a large proportion of people thought that the festival was well publicised, there is obviously room for improvement as a greater proportion of people responded more neutrally or negatively. 42.7% of workshop participants agreed that the festival was well publicised as opposed to 20.8% who disagreed. 45.7% of those attending the events agreed that the festival was well publicised as opposed to 23.1% who disagreed. This suggests that more effective advertising might bring in even greater audiences.

The questionnaire used for workshop participants, the Chimera event in Middlesbrough and the Convergence night in Sunderland asked respondents to rate the AV brochure if they had seen it. Aspects of the brochures were positively rated. For three of the statements, over 50% of respondents agreed that the brochure was eye-catching, informative and useful. However, in terms of the brochure facilitating access, there was room for improvement particularly in terms of the readability of the brochure. The following table summarises the responses:

Table 2: The AV brochure: Percentage agreement and disagreement to statements

Statement	Agreed or Strongly Agreed	Disagreed or Strongly Disagreed
Eye-catching	58.6%	11.1%
Useful	52.5%	8.08%
Informative	51.5%	11.1%
Easy to read	41.4%	30.3%

The largest percentage (30.3%) where respondents were in disagreement was with the statement that the brochure was easy to read. This disagreement is consistent with the views of participants who were interviewed and those who commented in the questionnaires that the brochure was the worst thing about the workshop or event. For example, Nicola (age range 35-44) who went to a Newcastle event commented:

“The worst thing is your programme. How confusing and annoying – dates on one page, info on another. If it wasn’t for your helpful box office staff, I’d have missed half the events” (Nicola)

Given the apparent importance of the brochure in attracting those attending the AV festival, fairly simple improvements could result in expanding audiences.

AV Brochure & Web-site

Excluding Sunderland event data, 35.0% (109) of respondents participating in events and workshops found out about the event or workshop through the AV brochure. So despite the mixed response to the brochure in terms of legibility, its wide circulation was important in bringing audiences in. 19.6% (61 people) found out through a friend or by word of mouth, 6.75% (21 people) through the website and 4.18% (13 people) from a newspaper. The least frequent percentages were for posters and radio, 1.29% and 0.64% respectively. James, 54, commented on the information on the website:

“...I think the information in it was incomplete. The evidence of that is that I followed the directions from the website to here, and the building they said on the website was housing this workshop didn’t know anything about it, so we hunted round for an hour and a half...so one out of ten for that one...it would have been useful to have a clearer, more informative website” (James, Final Cut Pro and Sound4Screen).

However, the organisers do claim that information on how to get to events was posted to all those who applied to attend. Practitioners/funders and employees were also given the opportunity to comment on the AV brochure. The following comments were made:

Assumed too much prior knowledge
Too cluttered
Needs to be clearer
Good design
Very hard to read
Too much technical jargon
Dates are difficult to identify – need to be with films

Furthermore, the publicity and brochure came up as one of the worst things of festival. Also people did not like the closing event being moved and at times felt that clearer information and better organisation would improve the festival, for example, one person comment: *“closing event being moved and confusion and lack of organisation”*. Indeed, when asked ‘what 3 things could improve the festival?’ some respondents commented: *Publicity/brochure; More national publicity; More detailed info about individual events*. Such comments have to be balanced against the very positive response to the festival content. The best things about the festival included: *Ambition; Live aspect; Cinematics; Mike Figgis; Games; Meet the practitioners; Diversity; Range of events*. Also important here are the organisers clear plans for improvements for the next festival (see below).

Media Analysis

The majority of the media coverage of the festival, as monitored and collated by Cool Blue, was published prior to the festival, advertising the two weeks and highlighting certain events or films. 'Big names' such as Mike Figgis, Richard Fenwick, The Light Surgeons and The Cinematic Orchestra were the focus of many reports, especially regional publications where news of a Newcastle born Hollywood director (Mike Figgis) was emphasised. Indeed, the majority of the media coverage was from regional newspapers such as The Northern Echo, The Evening Gazette, The Sunderland Echo, Living North and The Evening Chronicle. However, news of the AV festival did reach national papers such as The Sunday Sun, the 'what's on' sections of The Independent and The Guardian and the magazine Elle Deco. More specialist newspapers also promoted the festival such as Music – The Sage Gateshead, The Crack, BBC Tyne Music, the publications of both Newcastle and Sunderland Universities and the website www.touchNewcastle.com.

The media coverage prior to the festival was essentially very positive and expectant of great things, for example, Roughcuts, September 2003:

“... Perhaps most significantly, and uniquely, it is truly region-wide - based simultaneously - digitally - on Tyneside, Wearside and Teesside. Through this emphasis on partnership and regional integration AV will become a sustainable flagship bi-annual festival in the North East of England.”

Also, The Journal, 10th October:

“...The biggest creative digital media event ever held in the region...encompass[ing] a wide range of high profile events and film premieres, as well as a string of accessible workshops and discussion groups for amateurs and beginners.”

Media coverage also seemed to understand and promote the aims of the festival. For example, The Journal went on to describe the festival as:

“...A celebration of digital media aiming to break down the barriers which can discourage people from getting involved with the fast-growing creative industry.”

The media strategy was created to try to bring publicity to a new festival that people will not have heard of. Consequently there was a deliberate strategy to focus upon particular “human interest” stories around the festival. Consequently there was a dearth of articles that advertised and promoted the festival in its own right and this may detract from the overall goal of getting the festival “on the map” and in increasing the public’s understanding of the role and nature of the festival. The organisers intend to revise this strategy for the next festival.

Articles tended to focus on a particular story, practitioner or event and in the final paragraphs mentioned that this was part of the AV festival, giving brief details about the actual festival. For example, many newspapers concentrated their coverage on ‘Grannies’ who participated in ‘have-a-go’ DJ-ing days for the festival’s launch, (The Journal, 10th October 2003; Sunderland Echo, 10th October 2003; Evening Gazette, 11th October 2003). In Middlesbrough, attention was also given to The Chimera Project, profiling cellist Imogen Busby who helped write the soundtrack for the project, (The Northern Echo, 10th & 11th October). One article (Evening Chronicle, 7th November 2003) also featured a picture of the shop window practitioners, Dave Allinson and Michelle Tripp, outside their display at Psyche in Middlesbrough. This was the only article to explain the Christmas window displays in detail. However, where there was not enough space for a detailed account of the festival activities, some publications, such as The Crack (November 2003) gave telephone and website details:

“We have not got space here to list all the audio visual goodness which will be taking place across the region so be sure to check out their website for a full run-down of what’s on.”

Few articles mentioned that the festival was a three-region event, some only concentrating on one region, for example, Accent Magazine, November 2003. Newcastle achieved the most coverage, followed by Sunderland and then Middlesbrough.

As mentioned previously, the majority of media coverage was published before the festival. However, The Evening Chronicle (19th November 2003) gave a mid-festival account of the first week, although failed to mention any Middlesbrough involvement in the festival. The article highlighted the films, Man With a Movie Camera, Finisterre,

Interstella 5555, Cold Creek Manor, All Tomorrow's Parties, the presence of Richard Fenwick, the activities for children including the Games Day, Toy Story and Fantasia, and the closing night, AV: EON. Despite not providing a critique of the festival but rather a critique of the individual films, the article came to a positive conclusion:

“The second and final week of the festival promises to offer up even more digital delights...”

Furthermore, Pulp, the Newcastle University Publication, was the only publication to summarise and evaluate the entire festival. The magazine included a headline on the front page and then a two-page spread inside entitled, *“Pulp went to see if ‘ours eyes really wouldn’t believe what they’d hear.’* The article concentrated on individual films rather than the festival in general, but highlighted the children’s events as being successful and the opening night as a bit of a ‘let-down’. However, as in the publication above, the article came to a positive conclusion:

“All in all, the festival was a mixed bag of local and international talent, with some turkeys, and some treats. It offered a greater variety to the alternative and art house cinema that already features on Tyneside, and we welcome the return of AV in 2005.”

Venues and patterns of attendance: Views of participants and attendees (cont).

There is evidence that the AV festival brought people to events and venues they had not previously visited. 78.3% of the workshop participants and 55.1% of the event respondents did not know anyone involved in the AV festival. This perhaps indicates that the workshops were more successful at bringing in new people with no connections to practitioners or employees of the festival. This suggests that half the audience for events may have been drawn in through personal contact. However, it could also indicate that the events met another aim, which was to foster networks around Digital Media. We know from our interviews that other AV practitioners attended Chimera in Middlesbrough. Of the participants who were asked whether they had been to the venue before, 58% of the event population *had* been to the venue before as opposed to 16.2% of the workshop population. When this is broken down into the different regions, 63.0% of respondents at Newcastle events and workshops had been to the Newcastle venue before, 22.1% of respondents at Middlesbrough events and workshops had been to the venue before and 18% of respondents at Sunderland events and workshops had been to the venue before. This means that even in Newcastle 47% of

attendees had not been to the venue before and Sunderland and Middlesbrough were even more successful in this respect.

The workshops were largely reaching people new to Teesside and Sunderland. People we interviewed indicated that they felt that links between the university in Middlesbrough and local AV practitioners could be better developed and that they would return to the venue for a similar event:

“...Even though I live and work in Teesside I wouldn't have known what the university was doing, I mean it's publicised within the university, everywhere you go there is leaflets, but outside, I don't think it is. They may have approached anyone who's in the media business and different organisations, television and that, but I don't know whether it's been done or not.” Ben, 34, Sound4Screen.

Workshops in Middlesbrough were at the University of Teesside in Club One - the student's union's nightclub venue and in the university's media lab where there were such facilities as video and audio editing and multi-media workstations. Workshops in Newcastle took place at the Newcastle Central Library and workshops in Sunderland took place at the Museum and Winter Gardens.

Why attend?

In the questionnaire given to workshop participants and those attending the Chimera event in Middlesbrough and the Convergence night in Sunderland, respondents were asked to give three reasons why they were attending the workshop or event.

Respondents gave many diverse reasons, which were assorted into categories. The most frequent reason participants gave for attending the workshops was 'self-development' (26.2%), which included more detailed reasons such as:

*Learning new skills/improving skills
To aid my career/college or university course
To keep up to date with new techniques/equipment
To gain experience/knowledge
Because there was one-to-one teaching and I could ask questions*

The second most frequent reason was 'experience' at 20.4%, which included:

*Stimulation
Inspiration
To get involved*

To do/experience something new/different

Events clearly fulfil different purposes, and for the respondents attending the Chimera and Convergence events, the most frequent reasons (both 20%) for attending were, ‘social reasons’ and ‘heard of the practitioners/want to support the practitioners’. The ‘social reasons’ category included:

To meet others with the same interests and share my ideas

To have fun

Because my friends were going

To meet people/socialise

To get out of the house

There were free drinks

I am supporting friends involved

Evaluations of events

Participants were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with a statement about various aspects of the festival or the particular workshop or event they attended. The following table displays some of the responses to this question, indicating the percentage of people who agreed and disagreed with the statement presented on the left of the table. Of those surveyed, over 90% enjoyed the event they attended and wanted it to happen again. While three-quarters of those sampled thought the events were original, the lowest of these complementary statements. This is still clearly an indicator of success for the festival.

Table 4: What people thought about events: Percentage Agreement

Statement	Events	
	Agreed & Strongly Agreed	Disagreed & Strongly Disagreed
The festival should happen again	92.0%	1.99%
I am enjoying it	91.9%	2.03%
The festival brings something new to the North East	88.1%	0.50%
It is well organised	81.0%	5.53%
It was original	75.1%	8.63%

The venues were popular (88.5% of attendees) and events were seen as value for money (78.1% of attendees). The majority of people attending events (89%) also agreed that they would like to see more of this work produced in the region.

Nearly a fifth of those sampled saw the events as something new, with 19.5% of the event attendees stated that the ‘best thing’ about the events was ‘*originality / something new or different*’ which was the most frequent response. Other comments included the opinion that it was good that the festival happened at all and that it was in this part of the country. For example, in answer to the question ‘what is the best thing about the event?’ participants responded:

“*It’s in the North East*” (Bill, retired, event at Tyneside cinema).

“*A chance to see film / media that would normally be shown in the South / London*” (Jack, 25-34 years, event at Tyneside cinema).

For those attending events, the most frequent ‘worst thing’ was ‘*facilities*’ (23.2%), followed by ‘*organisation*’ (16.1%) and ‘*publicity and information*’ (10.7%). A further 13.4% stated ‘*nothing*’. The facilities for some of the events could be improved, but overall, this was not considered a problem.

Sunderland Events

Those people attending events in Sunderland (at the university and the Museum and winter gardens) filled out a questionnaire (D5) different to that compiled by the evaluation team. As the data was different, the findings for Sunderland events are reported separately. In total, 40 people attended screenings or events at Sunderland (not including the Convergence night, n = 5, which has already been reported). The most frequent age range in this group was 19-24 years (35%), followed by 22-34 years (33%). However, a significant amount of respondents were aged between 45 and 54, (18%). 73% of respondents were male and 28% were female.

Again, the AV brochure was the most popular method of publicity as 55% of respondents found out about the event from the brochure. A further 18% found out through the Internet or the AV website, another 18% found out by word of mouth, 17.5% found out through the posters and 10% through newspapers. When asked, ‘what do you think the AV festival is about?’ the most frequent responses were to do with multi-media and digital technology. In contrast to the other event respondents, the

Sunderland group only gave a few, more diverse reasons such as ‘food for my brain’, ‘expanding horizons’, ‘fun’ and ‘entertainment’.

32.5% of respondents had been to the venue before and 87.5% thought the venue was easy to find. 20% of respondents knew someone involved in the event. Most respondents indicated that they went to the events due to a particular interest in the subject or the film being screened. However, 23% went because the event was cheap, 18% because it was local and 5% went to see what the festival was about.

Furthermore, 100% of respondents said they would like to see more screenings at the Sunderland venue in the future, indicating that this could be a popular venue in future festivals. Respondents were asked what kinds of films they would like to see. The most popular at 37.5% were Arthouse / Indie films, followed by World and Mainstream both at 30%. Animation and Documentaries were also very popular, both at 17.5%. 70% of respondents thought screenings should take place in the evenings, 60% thought at weekends and 53% thought on weekdays. 45% thought the screenings should be weekly and 38% they should be monthly.

Chimera participants

A questionnaire was given to people attending the Chimera *residency* (D7), supplied by the AV festival team. This was in addition to the questionnaire compiled by the evaluation team, given to people attending the Chimera viewing. One questionnaire was given to participants before the residency and one after, but only 3 ‘afters’ were returned. However, the personal goals of the participants were outlined in the ‘before’ questionnaire, providing useful information in regards to the festival aims.

Professional development was very important for the participants, who highlighted goals such as, ‘to gain experience’, ‘to meet, work with and learn from other practitioners’, ‘to network’ and ‘to develop professional portfolios’. The quotes below demonstrate these residency goals:

“To meet other practitioners and learn other ways of approaching creative projects.” Peter

“Learn new skills, broaden views, meet other practitioners for larger network.” Sandra

The data clearly shows that it was important for the participants to network and learn from other practitioners. Many highlighted that they wanted to be involved in ‘the experience’ of the project as well as developing creative skills, their CVs and attaining recognition as practitioners in their own right and for their own work. Others thought the project sounded interesting, fun and something different to get involved in. Personal and social development was also important for many of the participants who wanted to meet creative and like-minded people and be involved in teamwork. Many also wanted to gain confidence and a sense of achievement from the project. For example, Anna commented that her reasons for applying for the project were, “*To build my confidence, to grow as a musician, to meet people.*” Furthermore, two participants wanted to be part of the project due to its regional connections, wanting to explore and learn more about Middlesbrough.

From the 3 questionnaires collected *after* the Chimera residency, all participants felt the project had developed their creative skills and that they had gained something from participating. All were confident that the project would lead to opportunities for them as practitioners in the future: “*Not as yet, but am confident by doing this project it will open doors to new opportunities.*” [No names supplied].

Commenting on the impact of the residency, one participant said:

“The impact of the project has been one of success. I have had very positive feedback on my work, I feel proud of the project created, I have made new friends, improved my camera skills and learned new skills, and the project has boosted my confidence. It has influenced me to do further work with music/moving image. Also, new contacts made with practitioners on this project for future collaborations.”

Another participant commented:

“Good, met some nice people, good for my portfolio, quite a buzz at the end.”

All participants felt that the most positive aspect of the residency was the collaborative input, the sharing of ideas, knowledge and influences, the feeding of creativity which seemed to reach those who perhaps were not quite as creative, vibrant discussions and

networking. Participants felt the disadvantages were also due to group work in that there was more disagreement and disorganisation:

“Sometimes became a little disorganised, nobody was entirely sure of the brief, it was easy for quiet participants to be a little stifled or for people to move to the background.”

Participants were also invited to give opinions on the AV festival, suggest changes to the residency, the planning and management of the festival partnership and the commissions for the festival. Most participants felt that there is always room for more commissions and one had not heard much about them, attributing this to the AV brochure being a ‘nightmare’ to read. One participant wanted the project to have more regional input, suggesting:

“I think the film should have been edited up North in collaboration with the participants as I feel this is possibly the most creative part of the process in this case and certainly where the actual message(s) are finally formulated.”

Furthermore, participants commented on the planning and management of the project:

“I think it was adequate. We came across a number of organisational and communication problems but we got through them. It would also have been nice if more was shown in M’boro and other places since it was advertised so heavily as for the North East. I’m sure the organisation will be better next time!”

“I think the management could be improved by closer liaising with the team throughout the whole project especially at the weekly meetings. Also the promotion of the project could maybe have been promoted earlier in the stages of production.”

These are improvements that can be rectified for future projects. However, this final comment reflects the generally positive experience of those involved in the Chimera project:

“May I take this opportunity to say well done to all at Teesside University for their involvement in the Project & AV Festival and for providing the practitioners in Middlesbrough to showcase their talents, the whole team worked as a unit alongside the Light surgeons and had so much fun creating the film which was a great success, I think the final cut film was amazing as well as so many others and was a 'True' & honest representation by the people of Boro for the

people of Boro.” DJ Rice (Rumbah Recordings / Rumbah Tribe) Participant of Chimera Middlesbrough

Evaluation of Workshops

Overall, the workshops were equally positively evaluated with over 90% enjoying the workshop.

Table 5: What people thought about workshops: Percentage Agreement

Statement	Agreed & Strongly Agreed	Disagreed & Strongly Disagreed
I am enjoying it.	92.2%	1.94%
It is well organised.	92.2%	1.96%
The festival should happen again	87.1%	1.08%
The festival brings something new to the North East	84.1%	1.14%
I think it’s important to involve local practitioners	82.4%	2.20%
It was original	78.1%	4.67%

85.4% of workshop participants agreed that the quality of teaching was high, for example, one workshop participant commented:

“I thought the workshop was very good. I thought the people here, been teaching it for a while, know their stuff, know it in detail. It’s a very good place to come back to, to do a course” (James, 54, participant at Final Cut Pro and Sound4Screen in Middlesbrough).

Other participants commented that it made a difference when the tutors were down-to-earth and approachable, often disclosing their experiences. For example, Sarah, 19, and Daniel, 27, commented that the tutor made a big difference to their experience at the Vjing workshop in Middlesbrough:

“...The guy who ran it didn’t get lost in the jargon...he was dead approachable too which was dead nice. It’s also like hearing his story and the way he’s progressed through what he’s done, where he’s at. That’s pretty cool I think. I like the way he’s sharing his skills...he’s been given a place at the front talking and we were given an opportunity to listen and to interact and to learn. It gives value to it.”

Other participants also valued the experienced tutors:

“...I was not as keen to come until I knew that there were actual people from the industry coming into it...no disrespect to the lecturers, but knowing that there is actually people coming in who are working in that field

and they are coming in and telling you what they are actually doing in their studio and that always makes a difference” (Ben, 34, Sound4Screen workshop in Middlesbrough).

In addition, 72.2% of the questionnaire respondents agreed that they had gained new skills and 87% agreed that they would like to attend more workshops. Again, this is consistent with the views of those interviewed:

“I learnt a lot from the workshops yeah, so it gives me food for thought – where am I going on the next mission type of thing.” (Bob, retired, Sound4Screen and VJ workshops).

“I’d say I’ve conquered a few fears about using equipment...it’s demystified and it also makes you feel like ‘wow’, it’s achievable.” (Sarah, 19, VJ workshop).

“Erm...a day really is just an introduction. It would be nice if there could be something offered on a bit more of a regular basis, so you get a longer period of time. It’s very good but you won’t be able to retain all the information” (Emma, 39, Final Cut Pro).

Participants were asked to state the worst thing and best about the workshop they attended. The most frequent responses from the workshop participants for the ‘best thing’ were, ‘*teaching and content of the workshop*’ (27.4%), ‘*novelty / new experience*’ (14.3%), ‘*hands-on experience / working with equipment*’ (13.1%) and ‘*learning / keeping up to date*’ (11.9%). Furthermore, a frequent answer (28.2%) was that the ‘best thing’ was the actual Chimera project and the VR tours.

The most frequent (29.6%) ‘worst thing’ for those participating in the workshops was ‘*organisation*’, which included timing of workshops, information about the workshops, in particular more in depth explanation about what they would be doing, and information about car parking facilities and directions. This was closely followed by ‘*facilities*’ (22.5%), which included equipment, availability of refreshments and temperature of the room as some participants complained about it being too hot or too cold. The next frequent response however, was ‘*nothing*’ according to 18.3% of the participants. This suggests that one way to improve the overall success of workshops would be to ensure consistent quality in their organisation and venue.

The most frequently cited area for improvement was greater publicity and information rather than the content of the festival. When asked to suggest improvements, participants most frequently suggested, *'more publicity and information'* (41.0%), *'better facilities'* (30.0%), and *'more time in the workshops and regular workshops'* (24.3%). Other improvements suggested included; different ability groups in the workshops, changes to course content and teaching, better equipment, better facilities and to aim at a wider audience.

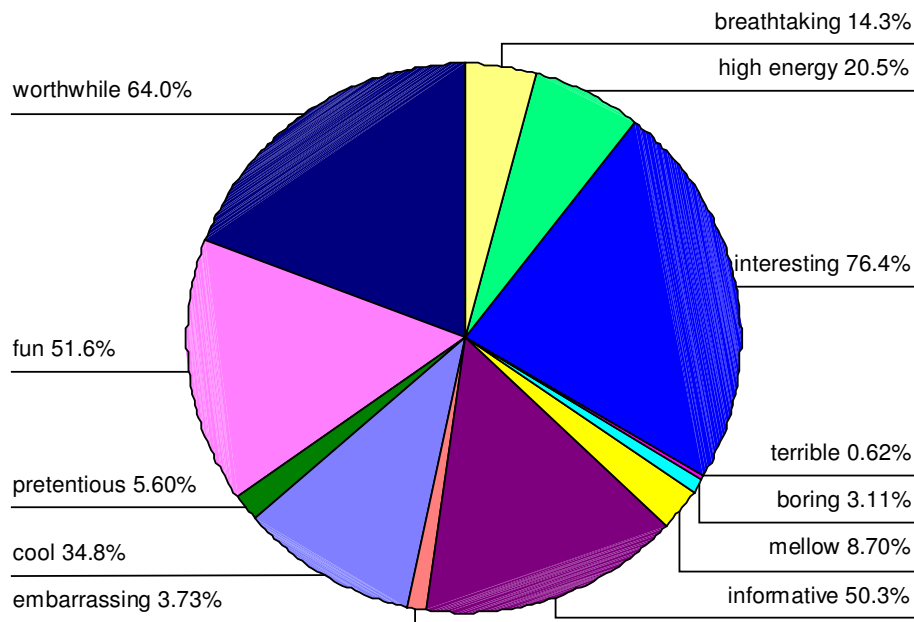
Some of the workshop participants commented on the level of training. Some thought workshops were too basic and some thought there was too much to take in for a beginner. For example, Lee, 27, commented:

"I mean if you weren't interested in this workshop anyway then I don't think it'd be any good. I mean the only reason why I've got through today is 'cos I've got a basic grasp of how video editing works. If I'd just come straight off the street then it would have just gone straight over my head."

Many respondents said that an improvement would be to include more workshops at different levels in future festivals. Future festivals could include workshops for beginners, which seek to bring in new audiences.

In general terms, the impression of the festival from these respondents was very positive with over three-quarters viewing the event or workshop as interesting. Participants were asked to circle words that best described their reaction to that event or workshop. The most frequent words circled were, *'interesting'* (76.4%), *'worthwhile'* (64.0%) and *'informative'* (50.3%). The following pie chart displays these results.

Figure 1: Reaction to the workshops and events



Christmas Shop Windows

Three digital media installations were placed in central city shop windows for the period of the festival (appendix 3). These were prepared in consultation with the AV festival team by Michelle Tripp and Dave Allinson. The practitioners developed an installation that could be seen from the street. These photographs, although amateur, give an idea of the artwork. Ten people completed a questionnaire on seeing the display in Middlesbrough. In addition to the questionnaire sample, five people participated in semi-structured qualitative interviews about the window display. The practitioners commissioned to create the installation were also interviewed, as was one of the managers from one of the shops housing the displays, who did not want to be identified. The quotes and comments are taken from this sample of 15.

“We’ve taken the visual aspect of the audio-visual quite literally as our inspiration – things to do with the eye, mechanics of the eye and the way the brain perceives the information.” Michelle and Dave.

As previously stated, of the 10 respondents, 50% were female and 50% were male. The most frequent age range was 19-34 years. All respondents considered themselves to be

white. 8 lived in Middlesbrough and 2 in Darlington. 3 respondents were students, 3 were teachers, 2 were sales assistants, 1 a social worker and 1 self-employed.

Of the 10 respondents, 1 stated they had heard of the window display before and 1 said that they knew what the AV festival was. This respondent thought that the festival was about *'trying to increase interest and displaying student's work'*. Despite some local radio attention, none of the respondents had come specifically to see the shop window display: 4 respondents were on their way somewhere, 3 were on their way to shop nearby, 2 were there for 'other' reasons and 1 was there to shop at Psyche. 3 out of the 10 respondents had visited Psyche before.

4 of the 10 respondents thought the display was aimed at the public or shoppers or anyone passing by. 3 thought it was aimed at nosey or curious people, 2 thought creative people or practitioners and 1 was not sure.

There was a mixed response to this display. Most of those surveyed thought the displays should happen again. The respondents were asked to rate whether they agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed or were neutral about a series of statements concerning the window display.

Overall, the statements were positive. 80% of questionnaire respondents thought the display should happen again and 80% would like to see more. From the interviews, the majority of people thought it was good that the display was there at all, being something different and something that made you think. Indeed, 70% of the questionnaire sample agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 'it made me think'. Only 20% of respondents thought that it was a waste of money and 10% a waste of time. However, even though the general opinion was that the display was better than nothing, opinion clearly states that certain improvements would make the display more successful. For example, only 40% of respondents thought the display to be eye-catching, only 30% thought it entertaining, only 20% thought it brought life to the street and 20% agreed that it made them feel proud of the local community.

Table 6: Christmas Shop Window Evaluation: Percentage Agreement and Disagreement

Statement	Agreed or Strongly Agreed	Disagreed or Strongly Disagreed
I think it's important to involve local practitioners.	100%	-
The display should happen again	80%	20%
I would like to see more of this	80%	10%
It made me think	70%	20%
I haven't seen anything like this before	70%	10%
The AV festival brings something new to the north east	70%	10%
I liked this	50%	40%
It is art	50%	30%
The display is original	50%	30%
It's eye-catching	40%	60%
It's entertaining	30%	40%
I don't understand it	30%	30%
It's a waste of money	20%	60%
It makes me feel proud of the local community	20%	50%
It brings the street to life	20%	30%
It's a waste of time	10%	60%

There was a question about the nature of the display and its relationship to local people.

When asked 'who's the display aimed at?' one of the interviewees replied:

"I would think it's trying to aim at people but unfortunately it's failed...I imagine it's aimed at people in Middlesbrough generally who happen to be passing by...it hasn't got a meaning. It hasn't got a connection to ordinary people...I wouldn't think that there's any way that that would connect with the people of Middlesbrough" Margaret, 55, social worker, from Middlesbrough.

But others thought the displays were good because they were accessible.

"...It's good that it's in pretty much of a main street as well and it's at the front of the shop and pretty much anybody in Middlesbrough has the opportunity to look at it...there's nobody anywhere saying that certain people can't look at it...it is close to the university as well so obviously the students are there to

look...you've got the opportunity for people who wouldn't go to a gallery or anywhere else to see art, they've got the opportunity to see it as well. So it would probably reach out to people who wouldn't normally look at art and things like that so it's probably reaching out to a wider audience as well" Karen, 21, student

In answer to the question, 'what's the best thing about this display?' 30% of the respondents stated that it was '*something different and/or interesting*', 30% cited specific artistic details such as not knowing what was through the holes, 30% stated either '*nothing*' or '*not sure*' and 10% stated '*that it's there*'.

"I mean, I liked it. It was like I said, bizarre and very intriguing 'cos you've got these little holes. It was like 'what's in there' type of thing. So it was appealing in that way" Karen, 21, student.

"It's weird isn't it? I'm not entirely sure what it is, but it's interesting! It's just so different. What the nice thing about it is that it makes you think, 'what the hell is that?' I think it's cool that they're trying to put something different into your bog-standard, boring shop windows. ..I don't understand the point of it but it draws attention and it's really innovative." Claire, 20, student.

When asked what was the worst thing about the display, 30% stated '*lack of impact / anti-climax*', 30% cited specific artistic details, 20% stated '*cannot see it properly*', 10% stated '*hard to understand*' and 10% stated '*bad standard*'.

The displays had their critics:

"Well I thought it was pretty poor really... The fact that it's trying to be something and it fails and it seems to have missed an opportunity to be anything at all, anything meaningful to the people who live round here...I would think that people just think it's slightly ridiculous" Margaret, 55, social worker from Middlesbrough.

"That was the worst thing, you were looking through the window in the middle of the street. Erm, potentially it could be a hazard – people walking into you." Stephen, 43, student.

"Well, I think the average person in the street would not be aware of what it was. There's nothing to actually say we're part of the festival or what the display is supposed to be. The displays themselves without any explanation look like a poor attempt at Christmas decorations.." Tim, 28, Sunderland.

When asked 'what three things would improve this display', 50% of the respondents suggested specific artistic improvements such as having more holes to look through, 30% suggested making it bigger, clearer and easier to see and 20% suggested making it more visually appealing. Other suggestions included making it more accessible, having more of this kind of thing and advertising it more.

"...Something with more impact. Perhaps something colourful, something eye-catching, something down-to-earth. Something not so, erm, remote. Something not so...well, something that can be understood." Margaret, 55, social worker, from Middlesbrough.

The idea of mixing digital media/art and commerce in the three AV cities was clearly an interesting one, which brought a generally positive response. However, the displays themselves were not fully operational or linked to AV in the first week. Nevertheless, with greater publicity and clearer signals to link it to the wider AV festival, this interactive approach could be more successful.

Practitioners, funders and employees evaluation

The AV festival team sought the views of the employees, practitioners and funders of the festival. 40 people filled in a 'practitioners/funders/employees' questionnaire evaluating the festival. 20 were female and 19 male, one unknown. Ages ranged from 19 to 54 with 22-34 being the most frequent age range at 46%. 95% of the respondents were white and 3% were Chinese. 95% of the respondents described themselves as non-disabled. The majority of respondents lived in Newcastle.

The general evaluation of this group was very positive. 83% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed the festival and 98% thought that the festival should happen again. 63% of respondents thought that the festival was well organised. 75% liked the diversity but 23% thought it was too spread out geographically and 18% thought it was too unfocused. 45% agreed or strongly agreed that they had never been to anything like this before.

As one would expect, 78% of the respondents believed they knew what the festival was about. 73% believed they knew who it was aimed at.

78% agreed or strongly agreed that it was good to discover new work. 33% thought there were ‘*too many things to see*’. 28% agreed or strongly agreed that they had ‘*never heard of most of it*’.

In terms of future festivals, 40% wanted more live events and 20% wanted more screenings.

Respondents were asked, ‘what words best describe your feelings about AV’. The following table shows percentage of people choosing the subsequent words:

Table 7: Words associated with AV Festival

Word	Percentage
Interesting	73
Worthwhile	65
Fun	48
Cool	48
Daring	40
Informative	30
High energy	30
Complicated	28
Confusing	18
Breathtaking	13
Pretentious	5
Embarrassing	3

There were some very positive comments from various practitioners and others associated with the festival, which were collated at the end of the festival. A selection of these is shown below.

“I feel very fortunate to have attended Mike Figgis's performance of Timecode last night at the Odeon. It was one of the highlights of the AV festival. The whole evening was an event that I will remember forever.” Deanna Georgeson (Fine Art Student Newcastle University)

“The Cinematic Orchestra event was superb, you all did a brilliant job. The event was truly glamorous, fun, and really showed the city that we could do, given half a chance.” Tina Gharavi (Film maker)

Improvements

53% of this group agreed or strongly agreed that the festival should stay in Newcastle, Middlesbrough and Sunderland. This reinforces the views of the audiences and workshop participants who thought it was a good thing for the region.

Most (70%) agreed or strongly agreed that there should be more workshops. 65% thought there should be more practitioners’ commissions, 70% thought there should be more international practitioners and 28% thought the festival should be more about work made in the region. 53% wanted more big name guests and premieres. 60% thought the AV festival should give more technical advice/instruction, 43% wanted more digital art and 38% believed there should be more films. When asked what three things could improve the festival, respondents added that they would like: *“access to the content post festival”*; *“more screening spaces in Newcastle”* and, *“better internal communication.”*

Other suggestions for the future were based around developing a broader audience for workshops, in these cases by targeting a broader range of people for workshops and offering free workshops to get people interested.

“I think they need to look at things more strategically, the festival in particular, more strategically. And that is, how do you relate to your audience, who is your audience actually?”
James, 54, from South Shields, Final Cut Pro & Sound4Screen.

“Put more free events on really, cos for people who aren’t interested and you’re going to charge them then they’re definitely not going to be interested. ..If I’d just come straight off the street then it would have just gone straight over my head.” Lee, 27, Final Cut Pro.

To attract the same audience to another festival or subsequent workshops, the content would need to be different.

“Probably not the same workshop. This is something that should be going on all year long, not only one month or two weeks in November.” Liam, 27, Final Cut Pro, Sound4Screen, Vjing.

Impact on locality

The impact on the locality is hard to determine. The participants and audiences we surveyed were very positive about having the AV festival in the North East. It would be desirable to know if other people who didn't attend knew of the festival, or if they thought it would be a positive thing regardless of their personal tastes. However, another way of gauging this is to evaluate the degree of media coverage the event got. This section reports on the responses of those surveyed.

In general people thought that it enhanced the appeal of living in the region for practitioners and others. They also thought it raised the profile of local practitioners and that it gave people a sense of pride in their local community. Over four fifths of those responding thought the festival brought something new to the North East (84.1% workshop participants; 88% of festival attendees; 70% of shop window viewers; 90% of practitioners, funders and employees). People we spoke to commonly expressed the importance of making the North East a place where AV practitioners (and others) and people with an interest in the arts would want to live. Important to that was the building up of an international reputation for Digital Media. Obviously bringing in practitioners with international reputations will help this. However, also significant is the impact of the AV festival and Digital Media from within the region on a national and international audience.

The majority of those attending workshops felt that this growth of Digital Media within the region should continue, 89% thought that there should be more Digital Media produced in the region. Whilst developing a national reputation is important, people also thought it was important to involve local practitioners (82.4% workshop attendees; 93.5% of organisers, practitioners and funders; 100% shop window viewers). Some people mentioned that they thought the festival brought a sense of pride to the community.

“So many people who are in this business end up moving to London, it's unnecessary hardship for people who don't want to move. Keep it in the area

that you live. There's other areas doing similar types of things but Teesside's getting quite a reputation, internationally as well. You read about Teesside University and what it's doing in international trade magazines. So it's starting to get there." Ben, 34, Sound4Screen workshop.

Practitioners, funders and employees have a particular perspective on the AV festival, which comes from being a part of the festival and having a vested interest in the industry. However, they are also sometimes the harshest critics regarding the impact of an event. Therefore it is significant that 88% of practitioners, funders and employees (n = 40) agreed or strongly agreed that the festival has promoted new media in the region. Also, 90% agreed or strongly agreed that the festival had brought something new to the North East. People tended to feel that the shop window displays were an asset to the street indicating that these served their intended function of generating some interest in Digital Media.

"I think, as I mentioned earlier, I think it adds a different dimension to the area, it's different isn't it, it's something out of the ordinary, different."
Stephen, 43, student.

"It probably does yeah 'cos like I say, it reaches out to people who wouldn't normally look at that sort of thing or go out of their way to see something like that so it probably adds something. What, I don't know. Probably does add something somewhere." Karen, 21, student.

However, in this case a particularly negative response to the installation itself, and the positioning of it could lead to people concluding that the shop window displays were detrimental to an area.

Interviewer: Do you think the shop window display does anything to enhance the street or Middlesborough?
Margaret: "No. In fact, I think quite the reverse. I think it's almost patronising, almost insulting." (Margaret, 55, social worker).

However, as work around more permanent public art has concluded that if practitioners are required simply to please a range of stakeholders, it can compromise artistic integrity (Sandel, 2004).

Aims Revisited

In this section we more explicitly evaluate the festival in relation to the aims that this research was specifically designed to evaluate and bring out its major strengths and weaknesses in this respect.

1. *Create the region's first truly region-wide arts festival, with activity simultaneous in the three major population centres of the East Coast.* This aim was achieved to a certain extent through the regional spread of the events and workshops as judged by total audience figures in Table 1 and the profile of participants from our research. However, nearly three quarters of the total festival audience were in Newcastle, suggesting that in the future more attention needs to be played to balancing out the events across the three spaces if there is to be parity of involvement and esteem across the region. The Christmas Shop Windows at Eleven, Sunderland; Psyche, Middlesbrough; and, Strand, Newcastle; ran for the entire festival and did give the festival a city or town centre presence for the duration of the festival. However, our evaluation of these suggested that people did not know they were part of the festival and these could provide an excellent opportunity to publicise the festival in the future.

2. *Introduce new audiences to new work, ideas, technology, and new creative talent, thereby stimulating the future market and laying the foundations for future commercial success.* Certainly audiences were engaged with new work, ideas, technology and new creative talent. Three quarters of participants thought the event they attended was original. The question remains as to what extent these were new audiences. Overall, just under half (42%) of those attending events were new to the venue and 93.8% of those attending workshops. This shows that overall the AV festival was successful in attracting people to events who were not 'regulars' at the different venues, but were more successful with workshops.

Where the evaluation questionnaire was used the profile of their leisure activities suggests they were people who usually attended arts events. It might be that the festival's success in terms of broadening the appeal of Digital Media was in terms of raising its profile across existing arts audiences who were less familiar with this medium. This is obviously important but given the relationship between many of the events and more popular forms of arts culture (e.g. clubbing, watching films), it would

make sense to target a broader audience. This issue might be addressed in future festivals by targeting a variety of potential audiences through the programming of events that would appeal to particular groups. Hence, building on these years successful strategies with older and younger people, and women. In addition more appropriate forms of advertising that explain to those who are unfamiliar with Digital Media, what the events are about and what Digital Media are, should help to broaden appeal. Also the evaluation suggests that brochures and programmes more accessible to different audiences would be appropriate. The success of the virtual reality tours in bringing in new audiences was based on tapping into existing groups this might be one way of broadening awareness of Digital Media an attendance.

3. Provide a platform for practitioners and entrepreneurs, both established and newly emergent, to showcase new work, ideas and concepts. A large number of practitioners were involved in the festival either through the presentation of their work or by showing their films, running workshops etc. Overall there were 131 events and workshops all with different numbers of practitioners involved. The consensus among those surveyed was the high level of originality and newness of the festival's events and workshops supporting this aim. The blending of local emergent practitioners, local more established practitioners and those of national renown was typified by Chimera which was extremely successful in this respect, especially as the film made got regional TV coverage.

4. Promote the North East as a significant UK leader in media convergence and creative content development. This was evaluated by targeting the Convergence and Calling Card events at DMC, Sunderland on the 18th November. However, the festival drew upon a wide range of resources. The Chimera got regional coverage for the event; however, it is difficult to evaluate in terms of image recognition outside of the AV festival. However in terms of the range of events, their attendance and the practitioners involved and the media coverage, the festival can be judged as successful in promoting the region in this regard.

5. Broaden the skill base of festival participants. This was evaluated by targeting all the workshops held during the festival. The workshops were very positively evaluated and new skills were gained. 90% of participants enjoyed the workshops and 72.2% of the

questionnaire respondents agreed that they had gained new skills and 87% agreed that they would like to attend more workshops. As most of the events were targeted as those with existing skills in Digital Media, in the future it might be worth considering putting on workshops for people with less or no Digital Media skills. This would meet the longer-term aims of developing interest, awareness and skills in the area.

Future Directions

A number of lessons can be learned from this year's event. The evaluation demonstrated that the major strength of the event was in the quality of content. The events and the workshops were extremely positively evaluated. This is obviously very important and there is every reason to argue that the 2006 festival could build on and develop the success of the 2004 one. There was a positive response to a repeat of the festival with 92% of the event sample wanting it to happen again.

Participants acknowledged that the festival both drew upon and enhanced a growing pool of skill, expertise and interest in Digital Media within the North East. People also felt that the festival brought something positive and new to the area, although as evaluators we felt that future festivals should be more evenly spread through the three sites to be truly regional.

Publicity/Audiences

While the festival succeeded in drawing in considerable numbers of people across the region, these were not largely new arts audiences, but built on existing audiences. There is clearly scope for attracting both larger and more diverse audiences to future festivals through programme development greater publicity and clearer information.

"I think that you should be interested in advertising in the creative magazines, you know, the music magazines, you'd get all different people wouldn't you? Because we're all interested in the same thing, everybody's interested in music." James, 54, Final Cut Pro, Sound4Screen.

The festival audience, although regionally spread is not representative of all socio-economic groups, excluding C2DE groups (defined by Myerscough, 1996 as skilled manual workers, semi and unskilled workers, state pensioners or widows and long term

unemployed.) This is common among all art forms but recent policy initiatives had been seeking to increase attendance among these group (DCMS, 1999: PAT 10). Events this year were especially designed to encourage broader involvement in the festival for example, the games day was highly successful and Richard Fenwick bought a group of school children to the festival. The festival organisers should also be congratulated for their successes in attracting women to usually male dominated digital media events. If organisers build upon and develop the successful strategies adopted this year there is the potential to increase audiences.

Potential for Growth and Inclusion

Most critical comments from people surveyed related to marketing, organisation, publicity and information concerning the festival. Simplifying the content of publicity material, using opportunities like the shop windows to publicise the event, using advertising that would inform people without prior knowledge what events and workshops are about and targeting existing groups, would likely increase the diversity and size of the audience. Some events in the festival were especially designed to bring encourage broader involvement in Digital Media for example, a session entitled “Boys Toys? Opportunities for Women in new Media” was aimed at encouraging women to get involved in the creative new media industries, and some screening were especially targeted at raising the profile of women practitioners (Girls on Film and Happiness Machine), there were screenings targeted at children. This adheres to what many see as good practice within the cultural sector. For example, Slater and Hayes (2003) suggest that:

“Organisations who are committee to achieving access goals recognised that future success will be dependent on delivering responsive programmes and a range of targeted activities which reflect the needs, interests and experiences of priority groups.” (p.87)

However, these principles and practices of inclusion could feature more heavily throughout future festivals. Hayes and Slater (2003) suggest that the government lack the clear policy objectives and strategies in relation to cultural inclusion that is to be found in other policy arenas. They contrast it with Higher Education where there is a clear target (50% inclusion) and a set of strategies that aim to achieve this (e.g. Aim Higher). The AV team did well in setting their own targets for women but in a context where they lack a government driven framework for other groups they may need to

think through targets for other currently excluded groups. However, it must be recognised that the festival is working towards inclusion at several different levels. In particular by attempting to develop an international profile in Digital Media the event is trying to stimulate business developments within the region that are inclusion strategies of a different order that it will only be possible to evaluate in the long term.

The AV Festival organisers already have a clear strategy in place for next year festival that does involve their focusing on programme development in relation to different groups, greater attention to regional equality, reviewing the media strategy, ensuring sufficient finances are dedicated to appropriate publicity and information and appointing a full-time member of staff to ensure organisation is tighter and that goals in relation to expansion are met.

In conclusion, this evaluation has demonstrated that the AV festival was extremely successful. It advocates drawing upon and building existing strengths and suggests that the festival has a great future ahead of it, with greater attention to organisation and communication with a view to social inclusion. It combines the local and the international effectively and is a valuable and exciting asset to the North East.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

DIARY

Diary venue key:

TC Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle FOS Former Odeon Cinema Site, Newcastle NCL

Newcastle Central Library, Newcastle

SC Side Cinema, Newcastle

K Kino, Middlesbrough TE The Empire, Middlesbrough TFT Ten Feet Tall, Middlesbrough UT University Of Teesside

UTSU University of Teesside Student Union VR Virtual Reality Centre, University of Teesside

DMC Digital Media Centre, Sunderland QX Quayside Exchange, Sunderland WG Museum and Winter Garden, Sunderland

tbc Venue to be Confirmed.

Saturday 08 November

Photoshop Workshop 10.00am NCL
Final Cut Pro Workshop 10.00am UT
Meet XPT 1.00pm TC
Fantasia 1.30pm TC
Meet Cinematic Orchestra 3.00pm TC
onedotzero_ne: wow+flutter 03 5.45pm TC
Interstella 5555 7.30pm TC
Man With A Movie Camera 8.00pm FOS
Russian Ark 9.00pm TC

Sunday 09 November

Web Writers Workshop 12.00pm TC
Miss Julie 1.50pm TC
Interstella 5555 4.00pm TC
Tulse Luper: The Moab Story 5.45pm TC
Brain Hoey/Daniel Warner 6.30pm TC
Web Writers Performance 7.00pm TC
Tulse Luper: Antwerp 8.20pm TC

Monday 10 November

Sound For Screen 10.00am UT
Blue Screen: Refridgerator AV
12.00pm/1.00pm TC
Blue Screen 2.00pm TC
Russian Ark 2.30pm TC
PDP Presentation 5.30pm TC
Celluloid Synaesthetics 7.30pm K
onedotzero_ne: finisterre 7.30pm TC
Interstella 5555 9.00pm TC

Wednesday 12 November

Blue Screen 12.00pm TC
Russian Ark 3.00pm TC
onedotzero_ne: wavelength 03
5.15pm/7.00pm TC
Interstella 5555 plus
onedotzero_ne: wow+flutter 03
6.45pm K
PVA Media Lab 7.00pm TC
onedotzero_ne: Shynola 8.45pm TC
Micro Music 9.00pm tbc

Thursday 13 November

Blue Screen 12.00pm TC
Interstella 5555 2.15pm/5.30pm TC
Blue Screen: Spooky Media
3.00pm/4.00pm TC
Flamenco Women 4.00pm/7.15pm TC
After Effects Workshop 5.00pm NCC
onedotzero_ne: finisterre
6.30pm/8.00pm TC
Russian Ark plus
onedotzero_ne: wavelength 03
6.45pm K
All Tomorrow's Parties 8.45pm TC

Friday 14 November

VJ Workshop 10.00am UT
Blue Screen 12.00pm TC
Blue Screen: Heritage Media
3.00pm/4.00pm TC
onedotzero_ne: wow+flutter 03
3.15pm TC
Human Nature 5.00pm/9.00pm TC
onedotzero_ne: gondry 7.15pm TC
deft.com live 9.00pm QX

Saturday 15 November

Russian Ark 10.00am/12.00pm WG
CarJack Games Day 11.00am TC
onedotzero_ne: lens flare 03 11.00am

Tuesday 11 November

Blue Screen: Ether 12.00pm/1.00pm TC
 Blue Screen 2.00pm TC
 Russian Ark 3.00pm TC
 onedotzero_ne: j-star 03 5.30pm TC
 Hotel 6.00pm/8.30pm TC
 Interstellar 5555 7.30pm TC
 Celuloid Synaesthetics 8.00pm SC
 About Pleasure and Hysteria 8.45pm TC

Sunday 16 November

Blue Screen: Happiness Machine
 12.00pm TC
 Boys Toys Panel 2.00pm TC
 onedotzero_ne: girls on film 4.30pm TC
 This is not a Love Song 6.20pm TC
 Tina Frank Screening 6.30pm TC
 Calling Card 8.00pm TC
 Tina Frank Live 8.30pm TC

Monday 17 November

RND# Retro 12.00pm TC
 onedotzero_ne: extended play
 4.00pm/6.00pm TC
 Flash Animation 5.00pm NCL
 Ten* 6.00pm DMC
 This Is Not A Love Song 6.45pm K
 Meet Richard Fenwick* 8.00pm TC
 Richard Fenwick Premier 8.30pm TC

Tuesday 18 November

Blue Screen: 12.00pm TC
 Light Space_Red Studio 1.00pm TC
 Blue Screen 2.00pm TC
 onedotzero_ne: finisterre 3.30pm TC
 onedotzero_ne: gondry 5.00pm TC
 Convergence Night* 6.00pm DMC
 Cremaster Cycle 4 & 1 7.00pm/9.00pm
 TC
 Calling Card Prize-giving* 7.30pm DMC

Wednesday 19 November

Blue Screen 12.00pm TC

TC

DV Workshop 12.00pm/2.00pm WG
 Virtual Reality Centre Tour
 12.00pm/1.00pm VR
 Games Animation Demo
 1.00pm/3.00pm TC
 Sound For Screen 1.00pm NCL
 Calling Card 2.00pm UTSU
 Meet Eutechnyx 4.00pm TC
 onedotzero_ne: tim hope live 6.00pm
 TC
 On Liberty 6.30pm/8.15pm TC
 Film on the Edge of Technology
 8.00pm SC
 onedotzero_ne: finisterre 8.30pm TC
 Chimera Premiere 9.00pm TE
 Chimera Party 10.30pm TE
Wednesday 19 November

Blue Screen 12.00pm TC
 Blue Screen:
 Hallowed Be Thy Warehouse
 12.00pm/1.00pm TC
 onedotzero_ne: girls on film 3.45pm
 TC
 Cremaster Cycle 5 & 2
 5.45pm/8.30pm TC
 Animatrix plus
 onedotzero_ne: j-star 03* 6.00pm
 DMC
 Pages of Madness 6.00pm TC
 Human Nature plus
 onedotzero_ne: gondry 7.30pm K

Thursday 20 November

Blue Screen 12.00pm TC
 World Without Metaphor 2.30pm TC
 Cremaster Cycle 3 4.00pm/7.30pm TC
 Final Cut Express 5.00pm NCC
 Convergence Night* 5.30pm TFT
 This is not a Love Song* 6.00pm DMC
 Animatrix plus
 onedotzero_ne: j-star 03 6.45pm K

Friday 21 November

Blue Screen: A Century of Stone
 1.00pm/2.00pm TC
 Blue Screen 3.00pm TC
 Animatrix 3.00pm TC
 Convergence Night* 5.30pm TC
 World Without Metaphor 7.30pm TC
 Cold Creek Manor 8.00pm TC
 2020 8.00pm tbc

Saturday 22 November

Toy Story Double Bill 10.00am TC

Blue Screen:
Hallowed Be Thy Warehouse
12.00pm/1.00pm TC
onedotzero_ne: girls on film 3.45pm TC
Cremaster Cycle 5 & 2 5.45pm/8.30pm
TC
Animatrix plus
onedotzero_ne: j-star 03* 6.00pm DMC
Pages of Madness 6.00pm TC
Human Nature plus
onedotzero_ne: gondry 7.30pm K

3D Animation 10.00am NCL
Digital Media Centre Tours (by
arrangement) DMC
onedotzero_ne: wavelength 03
11.00am DMC
Introduction To Editing 12.00pm WG
VJ - Dekam & Kent 12.00pm TC
Richard Fenwick RND# 1.00pm DMC
Ninja Tune 2.00pm TC
onedotzero_ne: girls on film 3.00pm
DMC
Animatrix 3.00pm TC
World Without Metaphor 5.00pm TC
Timecode 8.00pm TC
AV:EON 10.00pm FOS

Appendix 2

Media Excerpts

(Material originally supplied by Cool Blue)

Music – The Sage Gateshead – October 2003

Drawing attention to The Cinematic Orchestra and the film *Man with a Movie Camera*, which opens the festival. Talks more about the film than the AV festival – only mentions AV twice – focus more on the orchestra and film;

“We have no doubt that the one-off Newcastle date will be one of those ‘not to be missed’ occasions marking the start of a fascinating fortnight”.

The Journal – Friday 10th October

Essentially about 76 year old Annie Angus, grandmother to Richard Fenwick, who was a ‘have-a-go’ DJ for the day to launch the festival. Promotes the inclusion side of the festival. Also contains quotes from Richard Fenwick.

Sunderland Echo – 10th October 2003

Again about a ‘granny’ having a go at DJ-ing. Promotes Sunderland events as well as info about the festival and quote from Mark Dobson as to why the festival began.

The Northern Echo – 10th October 2003

Cellist Imogen Busby, who is partaking in the Chimera project, helping launch the festival. Promotes Teesside Uni. – Quote from Carol Cooke; *“This is very, very positive and we are all working together to make a special festival. It’s never been done before and we think it’s going to be a real winner.”*

The Northern Echo – 11th October 2003

As above *“A Teesside musician is helping to write the soundtrack to an innovative documentary about Middlesbrough.”* Also talks about the Light Surgeons. AV festival mentioned at the end – i.e.; the Chimera project is part of the AV festival.

Evening Gazette – 11th October 2003

“A Teesside granny proved age is no barrier when she took to the decks to spin some discs.” Advertising the Teesside events as well as sentence about the festival – mentions VJ-ing workshop in particular.

The Northern Echo – 11th October 2003

As above but including quote from Carol Cooke and also mentions the Christmas window displays.

Living North – Winter 2003

Short paragraph promoting the festival *“...the biggest and most exciting new media festival the North East has ever seen.”*

Elle Deco – November 2003

In diary section of magazine – ‘what’s on’.

Essential Newcastle Gateshead – November 2003

In ‘film’ section. AV described as an ‘extravaganza celebration’; *“...the inaugural AV festival spreads its wings from Tyneside to Teesside for a fortnight of screenings, presentations, workshops and live events.”*

“Much of the action centres around the cultural hub of the Tyneside Cinema, and the films programmed especially for the event throw up many of the festival’s highlights.”

Includes screenings to look out for. Very positive promotion – making it sound exciting.

The Crack – November 2003

Picture from ‘The Cremaster Cycle’ on the front cover and inside page promoting AV.

Accent Magazine – November 2003

‘AVing a revolution’ - only mentions Newcastle events.

International IDJ – November 2003

Good all round publicity mentioning particular events to watch out for.

DN Magazine – Sunderland University Publication – November 2003

Advertising pre-fest – films, events and workshops but only in Sunderland.

Culture – Teesside Evening Gazette – November 2003

“Sam Wonfor previews a wealth of new age creativity which will be given a digital airing across the region this month”

Culture – The Journal – November 2003

As above

Evening Chronicle – November 4th 2003

Front page coverage – giving away free access all areas passes for 2 people

Evening Chronicle – November 3rd 2003

Mike Figgis – Hollywood director

Evening Chronicle – 7th November 2003

Picture of Dave Allinson and Michelle Tripp outside Psyche – 25!!!! pairs of 3d glasses

The Independent – The Information

The Guardian – The Guide

Sunday Sun

BBC Tyne Music – 11th November

“Productions of this size and quality speak for themselves, and this shouted loud and proud that we’re showing our mettle with class and ambition” – about the cinematic orchestra

www.touchNewcastle.com

After the Festival

Pulp – Newcastle University Publication – December 2003 issue

Front cover – “AV Festival...the cutting edge of new wave films comes to Newcastle.”

Then inside under ‘film’ section – 2 pages – “Pulp went to see if ‘ours eyes really wouldn’t believe what they’d hear’.”

Cinematic Orchestra – “Billed as a fusion of jazz and club culture, it went down a storm with the jam-packed mainly muso-audience, but for us mere flick fans who were there to focus more on the screen, it wasn’t what we expected, and as an opening gala for such a key event, it was a bit of a let down.”

“Things did improve though...kids were kept happy from the start...being fans of Disney, we were hoping the magic of childhood wouldn’t be tainted through our jaded ‘adult’ eyes. Despite being surrounded by rugrat brats, we were suitably impressed.”

Goes on to critique films individually – more about films than festival.

“All in all, the festival was a mixed bag of local and international talent, with some turkeys, and some treats. It offered a greater variety to the alternative and art house cinema that already features on Tyneside, and we welcome the return of AV in 2005.”

Evening Chronicle – 19th November 2003

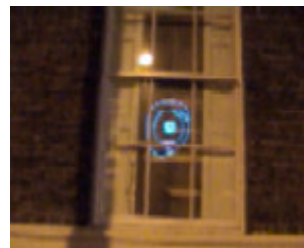
Highlighting Man With a Movie Camera, Finisterre, Interstella 5555, All Tomorrow's Parties, Richard Fenwick, Games Day, Toy Story, Fantasia, Cold Creek Manor and the closing night. Did not mention Middlesbrough once.

“The second and final week of the festival promises to offer up even more digital delights...”

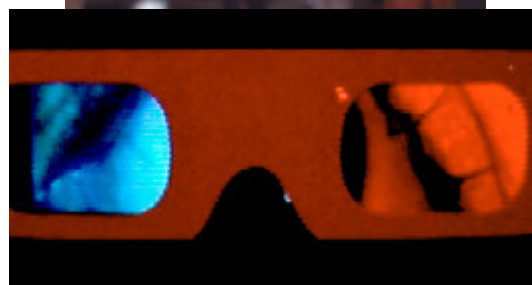
Appendix 3: Christmas Shop Window displays as photographed by the practitioners⁷



Newcastle Shop Window, Strand.



Sunderland Shop Window, Eleven



Middlesbrough Shop Window, Psyche

⁷ The displays were not always presented in this form when the researchers went to view them.