



Strategic Research project launched to support the digital cinema industry in Europe

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EDCINE is a new European Commission-funded research project. In July 2005, the Digital Cinema Initiative, launched by a group of American studios, published its 'DCI specifications' document as a basis for standardising the digital cinema industry. The European industry wants to be sure that the new standards will also be usable in the European context, which is far more complex with its cultural, economic and linguistic diversity.

The EDCine project is focussing on the optimisation, enhancement and interoperability issues of Digital Cinema. EDCine will optimise and improve the DCI specifications with regard to quality, robustness to transmission errors, content security, stereoscopic imaging, live events and transcoding for digital archiving and interactive access on various devices. All optimisations will be validated through subjective evaluations with real users in real theatres.

EDCine will push the limits of the future specifications by including quality optimisation, robustness to transmission errors, content security tools, stereoscopic imaging, interactive access, forensic marking and metadata for indexing and retrieval. The project will also supply interoperability with equipment using transcoding to/from other formats and ensure end-to-end security from production to projection and to the other content distribution markets (e.g. television, mobile devices, Internet). Networked access to cinema archives gives users optimised access to video data for retrieval and downloading.

EDCine will demonstrate that interoperable solutions between the DCI requirements and European digital cinema needs can be found. EDCine in particular will demonstrate the possible convergence between DCI model and Europe's need for networked audio-visual systems while keeping the high level of perceived quality as much as possible and ensuring security of content along the distribution chain. EDCine developments will be proposed to the appropriate standardisation bodies and actively championed.

The EDCine project will do more than put Europe at the forefront of the race to standardise the world's digital cinema. It will also push the whole European D-Cinema industry to the front line with solutions that meet Europe's needs.

The 16 EDCINE partners come from academia and industry, with the following breakdown: four universities and research labs, seven SMEs and six large companies. They include Thomson, TDF, Deutsche Telekom and XDC, the largest digital cinema distribution in Europe. The project's co-ordinator is Louvain Catholic University's Telecommunications Lab (UCL-TELE), headed by Professor Benoît Macq, in Belgium. The project's progress can be monitored on its Internet site: www.edcine.org.

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