The Digicult project

I would like to start with the description of the Portal. Today Digicult is a web portal, daily updated, which provides readers with lots of news from all over the world, calls for artists, events and projects highlights, links, reviews, videos and theoretical texts. With the Tag structure, it is now possible to search specific arguments/themes and find other articles related to them.

The website is also an integrate platform which allows you to closely follow all of Digicults' different activities and connects all the other sections of the project with 2.0 web instruments.

The second subproject is the monthly magazine "Digimag", which covers several topics such as: net art, hacking, video art, electronics, audio-video, design, artificial intelligence, New Media, software art, and performing art, confronting all of these topics with a journalistic and analytical approach. During the last few years Digimag has interviewed many major international artists and has published numerous articles and texts.

There are two fundamental reasons behind Digimag. On one hand the professional need to have an instrument that offers constant, up to date and useful information about the digital art world. On the other hand the will to create a magazine that connects the main national and international editorial entities with the main authors, journalists, critics and professionals, Italian and foreign, who are part of digital culture.

Digimag is self-produced and is based on the voluntary participation of all of its' authors. They each have a personal space on the website that they can use to publish and diffuse their research. This also, gives them the possibility of contacting and creating professional bonds with artists and other authors, institutions and different organizations. In the last few years the magazine has actually crossed the rigid and firm rules of publishing and has taken advantage of the potentiality of the web and of the fact that it's free, allowing Digimag to survive and diffuse all over the world.

In the last year the magazine was completely renewed, graphically restyled and reorganized in contents. Digicult has also recently obtained the status of scientific publication, becoming one of the first examples of independent magazine, dedicated to art and digital experimentation, with academic value.

The third subproject is the electronic music and audiovisual podcast DIGIPOD, created thanks to the close connection between Digicult and the main national and international electronic music net labels and artists.
The fourth sub-project is the newest one, Digimade. The first Italian creative producing agency focused on Audiovisual Art and Design. Digimade is working with Italian artists to develop and deliver their audiovisual projects across the world, with Live Media concerts, Live Cinema experiments, audiovisual environmental installations and videos.

Since its' creation, Digicult has also had the chance to collaborate with some national and international partners in the field of digital art and culture as media partners, editors and consultants. Thanks to its' wide range of contacts and collaborations, Digicult has decided to start a professional path in order to valorize Italian digital artists on an international level, in the field of audiovisual art, interaction and urban design, graphic animation, electronic music and experimental video art. With critical sense and curatorial attitude, Digimade basically acts as a cultural bridge between Italy and the rest of the world, given the lack of help and funding by Cultural Institutions.

Digimade's program is presented in collaboration with some of the major digital art, contemporary art, experimental cinema and music festivals across Italy and the globe, involved in exhibitions, concerts, films, public art works, publications and live performances. Productions and promotions are developed through close and often long term relationships with some of today's most interesting Italian artists. Digimade simplifies these productions through a wide range of technical, scientific and artistic collaborations. Our main task is to make a significant contribution to the development of new ways of making, presenting and experiencing Italian contemporary and digital art.

I think that it's interesting to explain how the Digicult structure works and speaking about the dynamics of the net, that characterizes it. Around a core of members, who are in charge not only of the editorial part but also of the conception, promotion and design, dinamically gravitate some international professionals from the digital art world. All of them are representative of different communities on the Internet, with whom we constantly share and exchange ideas, projects and contents production.

Digicult is a network. With this word it is possible to summarize both the structure of inside relationships, we can call it an organization chart, and the "method" through which Digicult inserts itself in different contexts. To summarize, I would call "internal" the dynamics of this network that have to do with the members, and "external" the ones that have to do with the relationships with different contexts and communities, with which Digicult comes in to contact and relates to. This is just a summary of what is behind the complex system of communication between "internal" and "external". It is a process of constant osmosis from which projects, collaborations and new ideas are usually initiated.

The network of members is based on the participation of over fifty professionals. All you have to do is scroll the Board section of the webportal, to find out how these professionals come from extremely different professions, backgrounds and countries. The variety of backgrounds and different interests of Digicult's members faithfully represent today's definition of "digital culture": a mix of creativity and social research, science, communication, innovation and art history of Arts. Over the years Digicult characterized itself as an open project , ready to welcome this cross-contamination typical of the digital era, turning confrontation and hybridation into its winning features.

This hybrid nature, does not only regard the different topics the network deals with, but it also has to do with the different contexts in which Digicult moves itself in, which go from the underground scene to electronic art festivals and contemporary art museums, galleries, academic institutions, international research centers and universities.

Every member comes from one, or more, of these contexts bringing in knowledge and experiences of every sort.

The communication between the different parts is coordinated by Marco Mancuso, who in a way is the core of the members network.

Another aspect of networking activated by the project is what I earlier called "external", that is the connection between Digicult and the different art and culture international contexts. Over the years, Digicult has established a series of connections with festivals, cultural operators, galleries and cultural centers. From these alliances numerous collaborations have started, like events organizations, exhibitions, video screenings and publications.

Thanks to these extended net of international contacts, Digicult also works as a communication agency and media partner for events and festivals, using both traditional strategies, such as a press office, and web 2.0 tools. Digicult is online with Internet 2.0 tools and accounts.

To conclude, I would like to underline again that Digicult is an independent project, with no funds from any institutions or companies, it is neither public nor private. Thanks to the potentiality of the net and networking, the project has been able to feed and power itself using the strong relationship between its members and all of the external realities surrounding this world.

Therefore we think that Digicult can represent a valid example of cultural production, in which its affinity, sharing of knowledge and recognition provided by a common project, have overcome traditional cultural production models based on institutional economic support or private funding. At the same time Digicult has been able to go beyond the limits that many other independent productions have been affected by, becoming, in this way, a professional reality of international importance.