

A Research Project

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**Digi
Mat**

EU-funded Project CreateMedia.NRW



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New Business Models on the Interface between Digital and Material Production – Synergies from the Collaboration between Enterprises from Creative Industries and Crafts (DigiMat)

The project DigiMat aims at developing new business models that enable small and medium-sized enterprises from creative industries and craft sector to use new technologies combining Digital with Material production for innovation and the entry into new markets.

Why Digital Business Models?

Digital technologies such as mobile devices, internet or email are all part of most people's everyday life. They strongly affect not only our private life but also the way we do business. The question rises how are digital technologies changing markets and known business processes?

The digitalisation of the economy goes along with innovative business models that result in profound shifts in the actor's constellations and value chains. Innovation competition on the market is stepping back successively, giving

way to innovation competition for the market. In many branches of the creative industries such as print media, music industry, television or book trading new business models are already completely reshaping the value chains. New foci such as 3D printing, Internet of Things or Industry 4.0 indicate that digital-based business models have also reached the world of material production.

The chance presented by new business models firstly lies in the possibility to fulfil the need for individualised consumer goods. Individualisation is especially visible in products, to which consumers often develop »emotional bonds« such as pieces of furniture, which are being individualised through a variety of special requests or products that are being adapted to the personal demands of the users as, for

example, in prosthetics. Using CAD-services, modern digitalisation and production techniques allow for layered production of complex components. Another advantage of new business models arises due to the creation of new actor network constellations between the craft sector and the creative industries. Resources can be shared; skills can multiply to drive the use of digital production technologies in an innovative way. The whole value chain, from ideation to production and distribution, can be adapted to the changing requirements fast and flexible. One example of such cooperative production plant are the ever popular FabLabs, where physical space, machines, tools, skills and knowledge successfully merge, in order to create new, individualised products.

At the Interface Between ...?

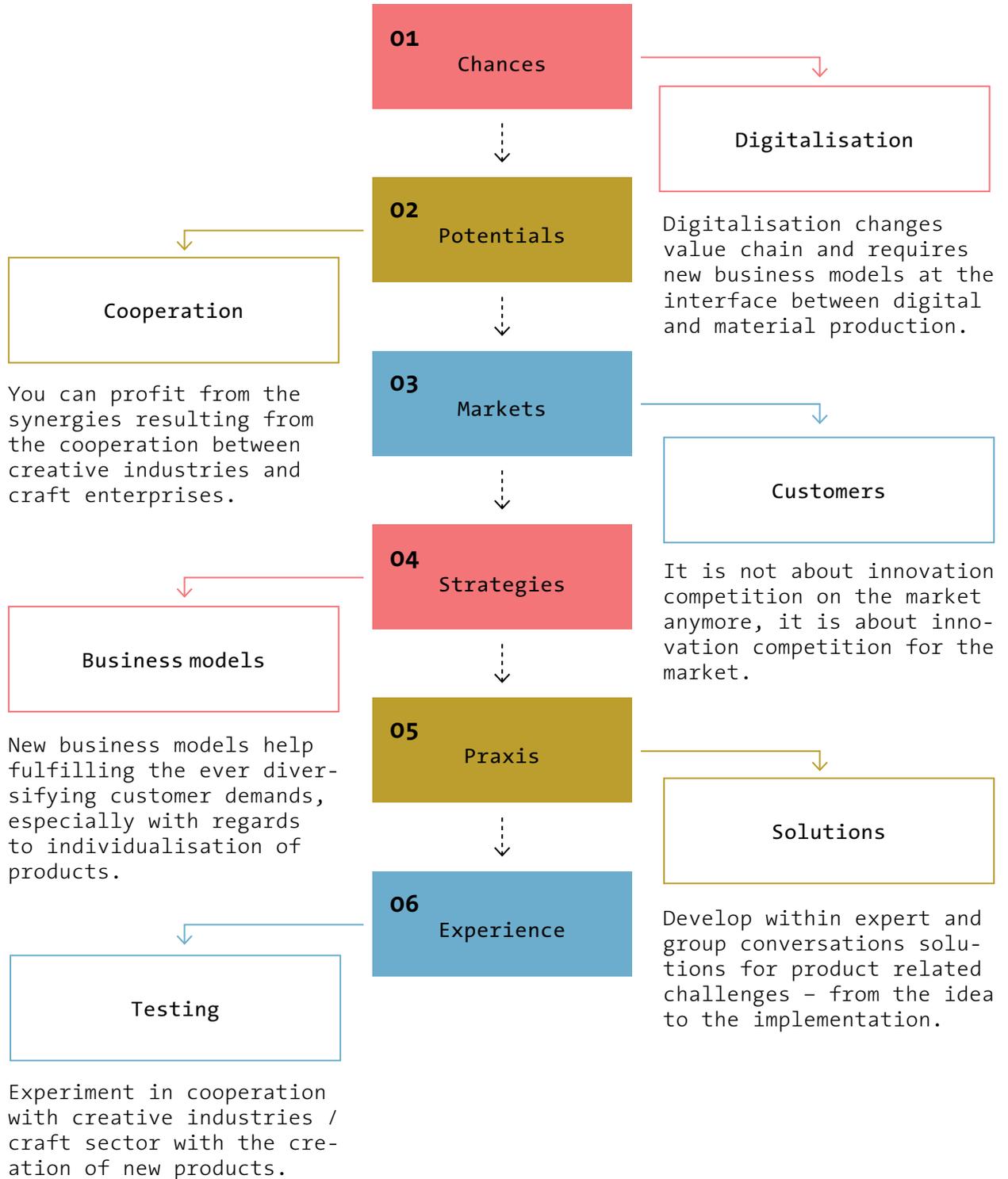
DigiMat studies the interface between creative industries and crafts. The focus is on how the potential of existing digital-based business models in the creative industries, can be further developed and mobilised in conjunction with the user market of the crafts. For this purpose, companies of these two sectors work together in various stages of ideation, design and testing of production in order to experiment with and experience new products tailored to individual customer requirements.

Therefore DigiMat concentrates in twofold manners: on the development of innovative business areas for the creative industries and on the benefits of digital business models for the craft sector.

What is DigiMat Approach?

DigiMat aims at the testing new business models to shed a light on the possibilities digital technologies offer, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises ideally significantly lowering the barriers for market entry, which these technologies often entail. DigiMat strives for informed decision making and problem-solving. To achieve the project's complex and challenging goals cooperation between research and business is required. Expert interviews and focused group conversations with actors from both sectors serve as means to further develop and implement solutions answering specific product related challenges. Reciprocal knowledge exchange throughout the working process is expected to result in interactive learning.

DigiMat



Who Are We?

DigiMat is a co-operation project between the Institute for Work and Technology (IAT) of the Westphalian University and the Folkwang University of the Arts.

IAT

A new understanding of innovation lies at the core of the scientific work of the research department «Innovation, Space & Culture» at IAT. The focus is the contribution of innovation in coping with the pressing challenges facing societies worldwide. It is about the interplay of the technological, economic, social and political aspects of innovation; the development of supporting instruments and political strategies for promoting innovation; as well as researching the sectoral and regional change resulting from innovation. The research department's work is therefore concentrated in three theme blocks: «Innovation Ecosystems», «Value Supply Chains & Lead Markets» as well as «Actors & Knowledge Dynamics».

Folkwang Uni

The Folkwang University of the Arts is one of the oldest art academies in North Rhine-Westphalia, seated in the Ruhr area. The „Design & Innovation“ working group perceives industrial design as a process which induces a cross-disciplinary creation of innovations. In this connection industrial design means to embed technologies through design into user-centered, social and cultural contexts in a meaningful and reasonable way. Here, as design and technical problems' transcend the boundaries of specialists towards a human, a fellow human, a product and the environment, the transdisciplinary character of design is essential.

DigiMat Contact

Maria Rabadjeiva
rabadjeiva@iat.eu

Judith Schanz
judith.schanz@folkwang-uni.de

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