

## **The EC initiative STARTS**

Innovation at the nexus of Science Technology and the ARTS

*'In the digital age, art and engineering are no longer contradictory modes of thinking.'*  
**G.H. Oettinger, Commissioner in charge of the digital single Market**

Digital transformation is profoundly changing industry, science and technology. In this process, digitization is naturally uniting science and engineering with design and artistic approaches. In the digital world, the boundaries between art and engineering are removed and creativity becomes a crucial factor in engineering and in innovation in general. In this context, the Arts are gaining prominence as catalysts for an efficient conversion of S&T knowledge into novel products, services, and processes.

At a meeting at the Victoria&Albert museum on "*Creative engineering triggered by the Arts*", Commissioner Oettinger pointed to digital transformation of industry, culture and society as a driver for innovation-focused cross-sectorial exchange. He underlined that "*linking technology and artistic practice is a win-win exchange between European innovation policies and the art world*". It will address concrete application areas of technology where art –technology synergies could pave the way for more holistic approaches to innovation. For radical market driven innovation, industry has to think in a more holistic way in terms of services and in terms of technologies.

Europe has historically focused its attention in engineering on R&D and standardization. Today, however, an increasing number of high tech companies, world-wide, assert that, in addition to knowledge, creativity is central to companies' and society's ability to innovate. For innovation to happen and to be of value for society, the critical skills needed – in addition to scientific and technological skills – are skills such as creativity, and capacity to involve all of society in the process of innovation.

<p><i>"The reason that Apple is able to create products like iPad is because we try to be at the intersection of technology and liberal arts, to be able to get the best of both.</i></p> <p><b>Steve Jobs, CEO, Apple</b></p>	
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The *iPhone* is a case in point. While it builds on the highest technology, its competitive edge lies in a design that enhances intuitive human-centered use and seamless integration of technology, interfaces, and various services. To achieve this, Apple has integrated artists in its engineering teams. Similarly, German car

manufacturing companies like Mercedes are relying on links with artist in order to create scenarios for the 'future of transport'.

Recognizing the importance of cross-sectorial exchange in H2020, the European Commission has launched [STARTS prize](#) to give visibility to innovation rooted in links of technology with the Arts. It will be handed out the first time in 2016 during the Ars Electronica Festival.

In 2016, EC has launched the [STARTS initiative](#) - Innovation at the nexus of **Science**, **Technology**, and the **ARTS**. Its objective is to provide seed funding for enhancing the interaction of H2020 projects with the art world and to promote inclusion of artists in innovation projects funded in H2020. The initiative should provide case studies, that is, concrete projects where the Arts catalyze novel application of technology in fields like Internet of things, urban issues, new media and more. For instance, the IOT (Internet of things) programme has taken up the ideas of STARTS and has called for including artists in the large scale pilots targeting concrete application.