



CREATIVE DIGITAL VIDZEME



mediatic



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www.vidzeme.lv



PHOTO: RIHARDS VIDZICKIS



PHOTO: ANITA ĀBOLIŅA

Vidzeme

Vidzeme is the northern region of Latvia. It impresses with the magnificent nature, the fresh air, extensive forests, beautiful cities and a unique cultural landscape.

Located between two major growth centers in the Baltic region - Riga and Tartu, it has developed a constantly high level of cultural and educational value in the society.

Latvia is one of the greenest countries in the world. And Vidzeme is the place where talent, creativity and knowledge can grow and develop in an outstanding natural and cultural environment. More than 202,000 inhabitants live here. The picturesque Gauja Valley, national

parks, natural reserves and biodiversity has formed and remained its value for thousands of years. Population of Vidzeme is the most active part of Latvia. It also has consistently higher turnout for parliamentary and local elections.

The creativity

The cultural environment, in harmony with yourself and your neighbours is the quality young families are looking for when searching for their home in Vidzeme opposed to the bustle of the city. Here you can get a positive dose of solitude and be together at the same time, fill personal space and enhance your ideas. Develop individual skills and change the society.

Well-established art and music school system serves the creativity development - 29 art schools provide professional art learning opportunities for thousands of children and adults to able to reach their potential. An outstanding professional theater, a

professional chamber orchestra and chamber ensemble are functioning in Vidzeme.

783 of amateur art collectives - choirs, dance groups, folk groups, studios work here. 62 out of every 1000 people, are members of a creative collective. 10 out of every 1000 - cultural professionals. 24 state and municipal museums and 158 libraries work here. They provide access to the world's digitized culture and the collections of libraries from anywhere in the world. The necessary books can also be found and ordered using the mobile application.



The accessibility of digital technology

2015 is the year of the Latvian Presidency of the European Union, where one of the priorities is digitization – strengthening of information in the society and the use of opportunities offered by it in the EU's future development. This year questions of developing the digital potential will be raised in a national and EU level, also discussions on common information technology standards in all EU Member States – e-services, e-government and e-business areas will be held.

An irreparable tool for the global integration of Vidzeme is a qualitative and fast internet connection. In Latvia it is two and a half times faster than the average speed of internet

connection in the European Union and one of the fastest in the world. In 2014 Latvia has the fourth fastest Internet connection in the world, just right behind such technology giants like Hong Kong, South Korea and Japan. Public libraries, recreation centers, schools and other places in Vidzeme already offer free high-speed internet connection. Investments in the technological development of the Internet continue to be planned. The national program "Growth and Employment " is planning to invest in broadband services in the expansion and development of high-speed networks and new technologies, also the introduction of digital network economy.

Smart specialization

The very rapid development of information society and the sector of information and communication technology (ICT) contribute to changes in other areas, including the audiovisual sector. New solutions in the ICT sector – virtual and augmented reality technology, mobile platforms and 3D technology provide opportunities to produce and distribute audiovisual solutions in diverse platforms and formats.

In the next 15 years in Vidzeme it is planned to develop research and innovation needs for information and communication technologies and creative industry sectors of local businesses. According to the Vidzeme planning region development planning documents for years 2014–2020, these are the areas in which Vidzeme has a smart specialization potential.

The development potential of information and communication technologies and creative industries shows a relatively high level of information and communication technologies, research potential, the opportunity to learn both programming skills and creative skills in different regions of higher and vocational education institutions. Vidzeme as a lot of successful ICT, audiovisual sector and IT companies an example that works with great success not only in the region but also in Latvia.

By 2030, the Vidzeme planning region intends to promote business development and cooperation between researchers, entrepreneurs and educational institutions specifically in these areas. Including the promotion of cross-sectoral developments, such as the development of audiovisual products and services linked closely to ICT, cultural and creative industries. This link allows, for example, to convert a traditional craft into a product with high quality and added value, whereas using electronic environmental benefits, local artisans and businesses have the potential to create successful creative industry companies, as well as conquer the international market.

Smart specialization is a strategic approach to the economic development of developing research and innovation in the needs of local business in order to foster innovation and productivity growth in areas where the region has a competitive advantage and innovation potential.



PHOTO: ARTŪRS LŪKINS



PHOTO: ARTŪRS LŪKINS

Professionalism and education

Vidzeme region has long standing tradition of creating TV content. Vidzeme Tv has been running in Valmiera for 20 years. A successful product that is also like by the audience is the Latvian regional cooperation television's channel Re: TV, which was based on the initiatives of Vidzeme TV and has acquired the status of a national channel, broadcasting materials of 14 regional televisions as well as actively working with independent producers. Based on RE: TV principle Vidzeme TV has developed it's business also in Estonia.

Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences (ViA) is a major provider of educational services in the audiovisual sector that contributes to the

development of the necessary professional training. Study programs for both the ICT and media and communication are constantly being developed, students are offered new courses related to business in the audiovisual sector in the broadest sense as well as visual and multimedia communication.

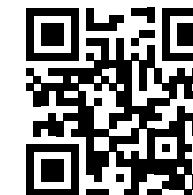
Electrical engineering, mechatronics, media, mobile technology, virtual reality technology, logistics information systems, RFID (radio frequency identification) and system simulation laboratories are arranged in Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences (ViA) Engineering complex, which was opened on September 1st, 2014, to improve the study process and the

development of new research directions.

ViA's Faculty of Engineering researchers are working towards the development of smart economy, e-learning tools, virtual reality technology, logistics information systems, RFID technology, simulation technology and robotics.

Labor market demands for skilled professionals in the audiovisual field has brought new courses of communication and media studies to Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, which focus on multimedia and visual communication. Students have the opportunity to learn about multimedia content

creation, data visualization, photography and film making. A new course where students can learn the principles of entrepreneurial creative industry sector will be offered in spring.





Support for business

Vidzeme region is an open and supportive environment for the creative economy to thrive, it is based on intangible resources: knowledge, creative ideas and innovations. Valmiera Business Incubator plays an important role in the development of the audiovisual sector, which is supported by companies largely represented by the ICT sector, creative industries and the service sector. In Vidzeme there are several examples of very successful audiovisual product creations.

For example, the company's "FunGenerationLab" invented game "Fearless Wheels" for iOS mobile devices has been on the best selling games list in France, UK, Italy and other parts of the world, but in the US it's one

of TOP 5 most downloaded games. Similarly, it has been the second most popular game in Australia and the fourth most popular in New Zealand. The company's co-owner and author of the idea is a former European champion and World junior champion in BMX *Artūrs Matisons*. In the smartphone application sales site "iTunes Store" the game appeared on March 12, 2013, quickly becoming one of the most popular applications in the world.

Ltd „Trejdeksnis“ offers a full service 3D film production and postproduction, specializing in 3D documentary cinema. The offered services are oriented towards large, international documentary and feature film projects, as well as smaller, local, private business or public

procurement industrial commercial films.

On the other hand *Ltd „Valmiera Film Studio“ („Valmieras kinostudija“)* aim is to create a competitive film / tv service package for domestic and international projects when filming in Vidzeme.

Open data for new applications

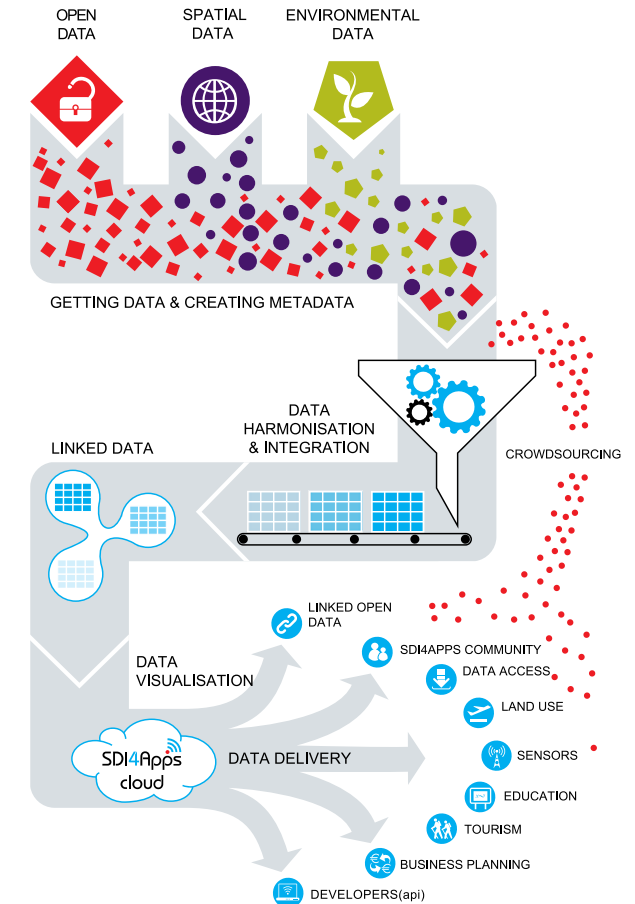
Various public institutions have a large amount of information of geographical data, the potential of which is not fully exploited. In order to promote the use of publicly available data, new product and services creation, Vidzeme has started working on the project "Open geographical information acquisition using data related to innovative services (SDI4Apps)". The support of ICT infrastructure will be developed within the project to facilitate the transfer of new data products and services. Creating a data cloud, which combines all fragmented data related to open geographic information, will make it easier to use the data by mobile application users. Geographical information specialists in local governments, businesses and simply locals will be able to use the generated applications in their work and everyday life.

To test and refine the data cloud, six pilot applications of tourism, education, ecosystems and land resource mapping will be established within the project.

SDI4Apps.eu

Uptake of Open Geographic Information Through Innovative Services Based on Linked Data

April 2014 – March 2017



Inspired by the poster created by Lulu Pinney (The Data Journalism Handbook, O'Reilly Media, 2012). The project has received funding from the Union's ICT Policy Support Programme as part of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme. Views expressed in this document are those of the individuals, partners or the consortium and do not represent the opinion of the Community.



PHOTO: SVETLANA SPRŪŽA

Information society development

Global organizations evaluate the innovation of Valmiera library. In February 2014, Valmiera library participated in the EIFL (*Electronic Information for Libraries*). Public Library Innovation Programme design competition for the information and communication technologies in order to introduce innovative services for children and young people. Valmiera library's project "Read and you will be followed" is one of the 10 lucky ones, that gained support.

The "Read and you will be followed" project is being implemented from May 2014, and aims to inspire and motivate young people to read.

To achieve this, Valmiera library collaborates with Valmiera Business Incubator's company "FASTR" that developed a social reading application "Fastr Books" specially for this project. It is an innovative product for expanding one's reading habits and experience in Latvia. Each project participant is given a tablet, where in the application it is possible to read a book. Readers themselves have chosen books they want to read. FASTR Books is an e-book e-book reading platform and an e-book store for iOS mobile devices.

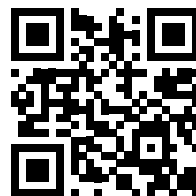


PHOTO: GULBENE MUNICIPALITY

Tools for public involvement

Information society has created new opportunities for public involvement. Now, as never before, people can influence their daily lives - digital TV allows one to watch TV channels of their choice, Internet access allows to create content that is interesting to a particular person. When publishing information on www.pilseta24.lv, every citizen, organization, public authority or municipality can create their own daily agenda to update on problems and issues and have the city residents and organizations help in finding a solution or simply to have a dialogue. A handy tool for adding information allows to publish information about their businesses, activities,

upcoming events etc adding a video or photos to the article.



PUBLICITY PHOTO



PHOTO: ARTŪRS LŪKINS

Interactive exhibitions

Nowadays, the traditional institutions lose their significance. An innovative way to offer a diverse inventory and current information outside museums and libraries, is a traveling exhibition stand of multifunctional use. Something like this has been created in Gulbene. Here you can read stories of members of The Popular Front of Latvia and watch a film made by young people, view presentations, photos and other digitized documents. It is a good alternative to traditional exhibitions. The information presentation format is appropriate for the development of modern technologies and binding to the people, especially young people.

Digital solutions in everyday life in Vidzeme

Public transport organizers have always found it challenging to provide transport in less populated areas. The population in Vidzeme Border and Mid-Vidzeme municipalities is small, and the current public transport trips to these regions are not enough. Vidzeme is already thinking of ways to provide public transport services to the public, regardless of their place of residence. Inspired by the project *"Rits-Net"*, partners have found a solution - constantly available public transportation - ride reserved with a controller or through a mobile application in a convenient time

and place for the customer. Vidzeme planning region actively cooperates with the state and local government institutions in order to find a solution to the mobility in less populated areas.



Remote work opportunities

Seven Vidzeme Region Governments are prepared to promote job opportunities in remote areas of their region, creating remote work centers. Municipalities of Cesis, Koceni, Pargauja, Mazsalaca, Rauna, Smiltene and Strenci will be able to work remotely. All that is required is a good internet connection, suitable space and a computer. Thanks to the project *"Grisi PLUS"* contribution - examples of good practice from the French *"Soho Solo"*, Vidzeme has the opportunity to learn how to implement remote work opportunities in the region.





PUBLICITY PHOTO



PHOTO: CESIS MUNICIPALITY

Digital content for the guests of Vidzeme

Everyone is invited to visit Cesis in a virtual walk to the city's most popular and most beautiful places in a 360-degree photo tour.

From a remote location via the Internet the virtual tour allows to visit one of the most popular tourist destinations in Latvia - Cesis. The tour is designed in Latvian and English and is available on the Cesis tourism website. Every picture is supplemented by a small inspiring description of the specific place.

The visual material works as a handy information tool for tourists, because even before visiting the city they can visually familiarize themselves

with the most popular attractions in the city. The tour also helps the event organizers, as it gives an insight of the infrastructure quality of city services and event places.

Nowadays museums are no longer exhibits hidden behind glass showcases, which are prohibited to touch. In order to generate

interest and provide in-depth information on the exposition, the Cesis History and Art Museum is using a variety of digital solutions.



The computer program in the interior exhibition room "Castle library" is a digital version of travel albums through Europe, that belonged to the count and owner of Cesis Castle Emanuel von Sievers (Sievers, 1817-1909). The exhibition's goal is to offer visitors a trip in 1841 in an attractive way, digitally flipping through almost 100 pages of the album. Twenty-four year old Emanuel von Sievers, went from Cesis to Germany, Switzerland and Italy. Contents of the album consist of separate count's drawings and descriptions, as well as during the trip purchased lithography with significant cultural and architectural monuments and art

images of European cities.

Some other similar exhibitions are available in the Cesis History and Art Museum, in which projection, audio recordings, computer programs, animation and documentaries are being used.



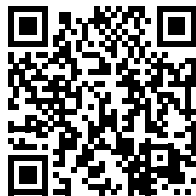
PHOTO: BURTNIEKU MUNICIPALITY



PHOTO: NORMUNDS KAŽOKS

Mobile application for anglers

Burtnieks is the fifth largest lake in Latvia, it is also a loved resting place for anglers and bird watchers. The lake is a home for 17 fish species. Because of its size and the autumn mist on the lake, anglers often get lost. Therefore, on May 2014 a mobile application *"Burtnieks"* was created for the mobile. It provides an opportunity to find out the depth of the lake and shows the location on the lake through the GPS system, as well as shows the distance to the surrounding boat bases.



This application is especially popular among anglers.

Geocaching of ancient cult sites

The project "Ancient religious sites - the shared identity of the Baltic Sea coast " recognizes the ancient natural sacred sites of the Vidzeme region. To encourage people to learn about our cultural heritage and become familiar with the beauty and mysticism, that occurs in nature in the ancient places of worship in Vidzeme, the project of geocaching was carried out. Caches are located in 50 interesting and remote sites, they are not easily reachable and are challenging to find even by the best of geocaching activists. The cache places are widely liked by geocaching enthusiasts, as it is

exciting as well as doing it you can learn more about the interesting tourist attractions. Each object is accompanied by a description, which is very well appreciated by the geocaching activists.



Vidzeme ancient religious sites that are also geocaching objects can be viewed here using the keyword *Ancientsites*.



PUBLICITY PHOTO



PUBLICITY PHOTO

Via Hanseatica trip planner and a mobile app for tourists and businessmen

Via Hanseatica is a 580 km long tourism route, that connects three countries - Latvia, Estonia and Russia for the first time. The route from Riga, Latvia winds through Estonia and ends in St. Petersburg, Russia and calls for tourists to get acquainted with the rich tourism offer outside the big cities.

Following the trends of modern tourism, an innovative trip planner <http://travel.viahanseatica.info> for tourists and tour operators that offers free of charge individual tourist routes in the Via Hanseatica territory was created.

Using the portal, one can get an idea of what the Via Hanseatica regions offer relatively quickly. Site visitors are offered a variety of options: to use on of the previously prepared thematic routes as a basis for their next holiday or to plan a trip according to their individual needs and interests.

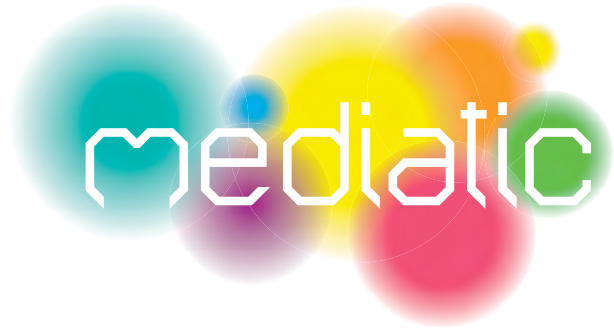
To draw up an individual itinerary, the travelers need to know how many days will be devoted to the trip, as well as a place where it will begin and end. According to the choice made by the tourists, the trip planner will immediately draw

up a route while informing tourists for the total length of the route and whether or not the selected tourist attractions can be viewed in the available time.

After creating the route, it can be printed, saved for reuse or sent by e-mail. Maintaining the route, a special code is generated, when re-administered, it can show the pre-compiled trip again. With the help of this code, drawn up beforehand the route can also be accessed through a cell phone, through the Via Hanseatica mobile application. It is designed

for both Android and iOS phones and works well online and offline.

Use the opportunity and be one of the Via Hanseatica!



For the Vidzeme planning region the Medi@TIC project has made it possible to evaluate the digital audiovisual sector and the economic area of specialization, it has allowed to believe the scope for growth and to outline the future work that needs to be done. The regional experience of the partners has been explored in the project, the region's stakeholders have been brought together, the development potential has been assessed and the policy recommendations for the development of the sector have been jointly developed. The policy settings are implemented in concrete actions: the development of the digital audiovisual sector is included in the Vidzeme Planning Region's Development Programme for 2014- 2020 and changes were made to Vidzeme University's of Applied Sciences Communication and Media Studies program's courses - a new course "Media" has been added in mainstream schools.

The project "Regional Policies for Information Society & ICT development in the audiovisual sector" (Medi @ TIC)

Information society has noticeably changed people's habits when accessing audiovisual products (on-line resources, 3D, Internet, mobile technologies). The digital era has led to a significant technology gap in the traditional audio visual industry in Europe, which adapts very slowly to the technological changes.

The idea of Medi@TIC is to cover a number of partners from European regions with different interests and challenges for the creative industries in the audiovisual sector. Several partners have already participated in the Interreg IVC program projects and others have experience in audio visual industry, for example in San Sebastian Development Agency.

Medi@TIC's main task is to promote the importance of international cooperation and exchange of experiences between the project partners in regional businesses and universities to find solutions to more rapid development of the audiovisual sector in Europe.

Project activities:

- The project intended to inform and influence regional policy, highlighting the cooperation between the media and the digital sector workers to generate useful content for the information society, and to promote cooperation and networking media content creation and distribution using ICT.
- In addition to new policy implementation and development, the partners of the project created a European online observatory, which is an internet platform for displaying information associated with the project homepage. Here are some examples of good practices in the audiovisual sector, scopes of the supporting documents and other documents related to the project partners. The Observatory aims to promote best practices, new policies and instruments to transfer and dissemination among stakeholders.
- Seminars, workshops, good practices, familiarization visits and workshop organization and participation in them.

The project partners

San Sebastian Development Agency (Spain)
www.fomentosansebastian.org

Cork Institute of Technology (Ireland)
www.cit.ie

Vidzeme planning region (Latvia)
www.vidzeme.lv

Local Councils' Association of Malta (Malta)
www.lca.org.mt

Regional Development Agency Bielsko – Biala (Poland) www.arrsa.pl

Genoa Municipality – Heriatage Research Center and University (Italy)
www.comune.genova.it

ERNACT EEIG (Ireland)
www.ernact.net

Kristiansand Municipality (Norway)
www.kristiansand.kommune.no

Derry City Council (Great Britain)
www.derrycity.gov.uk

www.vidzeme.lv