

The best of e-content & e-business technologies

e-Excellence in Belgium



A project sponsored by the Belgian Federal Government

Over the last 10 years the exponential growth in the use of the internet, especially in the fields of e-marketing and e-commerce, has created enormous demands for new technologies that can manage and exchange content quickly and efficiently.

Groundbreaking technologies are born, only to be replaced by more ingenious solutions. Often, a technology supplier's window of opportunity is less than two years, it is hard for business to obtain a firm hold on the market, especially as the market itself is for ever evolving into new forms and directions.

Through the e- excellence in Belgium project, the Belgian Federal Government wants to assess the 'state of the nation' with regard to Belgian hardware and software technology companies that are focused on supplying solutions to the e-content and e-business markets. Who are the key Belgian players and how do they support the e-content value chain? Which of them have managed to grow their businesses, based on innovation, dedicated product development, aggressive marketing and strong sales revenues? Who are the key institutions that support them? What are their strengths and weaknesses? And ultimately, how can Belgium improve its standing in this key industrial segment?

Twenty years ago the Governments of Europe set up the EUREKA program to support market-orientated R&D but it appears that many Belgian companies are not aware of the opportunities it offers. Last but not least, a significant part of the e-excellence in Belgium project is to try to identify those Belgian companies and organisations that can genuinely benefit from EUREKA funding in order to help them become ever more successful.

Robert Verbruggen
Belgian National Coordinator
EUREKA

1. Definition of e-content & e-business technologies

For the e-excellence in Belgium project, the classification of e-content & e-business technology companies includes Belgian-registered companies that develop technological solutions, be it hardware or software, supporting (or supplying) e-content or e-business applications across digital platforms.

The businesses domains are not restricted (e.g. from medical applications through to on-line entertainment) but the technology must contain a significant percentage of wholly owned intellectual property. For this reason businesses that solely distribute other companies' products are excluded, even if they have a small amount of home developed customization. The project is also not looking at content creators or aggregators but only at businesses that supply the technologies that power e-content and e-commerce solutions.

2. Project Goals

1. To identify all Belgian businesses that develop software and/or hardware technologies for e-content and e-business applications.
2. To filter out those businesses that excel in what they do.
3. To bring the skills and technologies of each selected business to the attention of the Belgian Federal Government
4. To lay the foundations to promote the selected businesses in a local and international framework facilitating their access to EUREKA funding
5. To create a database of all the businesses that:
 - a. Are actively looking for financial support/investment for their RTD activities
 - b. Want to expand their Pan European networking opportunities
 - c. Require specialist advice or services

Project Function: Member of the Excellence Panel

Function description

The members of the Excellence panel are to be recruited from various backgrounds to reflect the needs and aspirations of the identified companies in the 'e-excellence in Belgium' project which was founded by Robert Verbruggen of the Belgian Federal Science Policy office. Their primary role is to offer advice and support to the project on a voluntary basis.

Place in the Project

Advisory capacity to the Project Owner & the Belgian National Coordinator, EUREKA.

Responsibilities

- To help identify key businesses & organizations that should be scrutinised by the project and featured in the brochure of excellence.
- To be prepared to write a short article (< 250 words) on a specific aspect of 'excellence' for the project brochure.
- To attend the launch event in Brussels in June 2006 and to be prepared to take part as a member of the panel in a question and answer session during the event.
- To assist in the nomination and eventual recruitment of other members to the 'Excellence' panel.
- o help identify possible sponsors for the brochure and/or launch event.

Nomination characteristics

- To have an established reputation and standing in their particular field (ie investment, business leadership, marketing, law, design, specialist advice) etc.