

PRESS RELEASE  
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## INTERACTIVE NEWSPRINT HEADS TO SxSW FESTIVAL

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- Preston-based project to appear at world-famous South-by-South-West festival in Austin, Texas
- UCLan's Interactive Newsprint project connects touch-sensitive paper to the internet
- Research has produced 'interactive' prototypes with community and international publishers in the UK, and from Europe and South America
- Technology enables readers to listen to audio, vote and 'Like' content on the paper by simply touching it.
- Appearing at SxSW panel 'Pitchforks and Printed Electronics' on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 4pm GMT with international news website Worldcrunch.

[www.interactivenewsprint.org](http://www.interactivenewsprint.org)

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Imagine traditionally printed paper that can connect to the internet, play audio, offer live 'touch-voting' and link with social media. It might take the form of a poster or cereal packet that streams local radio right into your kitchen, or a newspaper that delivers your daily community news in audio form, or perhaps a map of world that provides the latest audio headlines from around the globe.

Over the last two years, 'Interactive Newsprint' – a research project led by the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) and involving the University of Dundee, University of Surrey and technology partner Novalia - has explored a radical new media future: one that's not based around touch screens and instead uses cutting-edge printed electronics to connect the web to standard, everyday paper.

Working with communities throughout Preston UK and internationally, the project has prototyped a host of different 'interactive paper' platforms that can detect human touch, play audio files, create voting points and upload and download information to the web. Interactive Newsprint and Paris-based news website Worldcrunch are now set to go international and present its latest prototype at the world-renowned technology, music and film festival, South-by-South-West (SxSW).

### **SxSW: Pitchforks and Printed Electronics**

UCLan's Paul Eggleston, the project lead investigator, Tom Metcalfe - designer and researcher at the University of Dundee - and Garrett Goodman of international news and information website Worldcrunch.com will be talking about the technology, its potential and how it might help communities to tell and receive content from around the globe.

Paul Eggleston, director of UCLan's Media Innovation Studio, said: "It's great to be at the world's biggest and best interactive festival. 'South by' is the perfect place to show Interactive Newsprint. It's always interesting turning up at digital festivals and surprising a few folk with what we're doing. We love screen based tech - mobiles and tablets - but it's not the only

potential future for displaying news and information, especially when you consider that communities will be able to create this stuff themselves from scratch."

The project's latest collaboration with the media start-up Worldcrunch has produced an interactive global map that lets users to touch regions around the world to hear content taken from around the web, and then edited and translated by the Worldcrunch editorial team.

Tom Metcalfe said: "There's the potential to create a beautiful harmony between the finality of print, and the transient nature of news. Connecting paper and print to the internet, can be incredibly powerful. We're looking forward to taking these conversations to SX, showing our latest demonstrators and challenging the idea that Print isn't yet dead!"

Jon Rogers, Interactive Newsprint lead researcher and director of the product research studio at the University of Dundee, adds: "We've been working closely with our community members in Preston, UK, and now we have a chance to put the ideas generated from this hyper-local community in front of the world's thinkers and generators of the biggest technology ideas.

"What we love is that we think there is a very good chance that the people of Preston might have come up with the very next thing. The biggest idea, and most original thinking and the most radical concept for the future of news might very well have come from a community centre in Preston; not a brainstorming session at a technology giant."

Worldcrunch's Garrett Goodman said: "At Worldcrunch we are platform agnostic and platform curious! ... And as such we were intrigued by the ways interactive print can highlight both the depth and breadth of our global content."

## **Background to the project**

News and information is changing rapidly with the advances in screen and mobile technology, but the Interactive Newsprint researchers are investigating at an alternative future. One where the internet is physical and stories can be heard in places that smartphones and tablets may not be able to reach.

A key element of the two-year project is pro-active collaboration between local communities, publishers and the research team. Since the project's inception in Autumn 2011, collaborators have shaped both the designs and research direction, and our prototypes are formed with our participants' input firmly engrained within them. Collaborators have included locally published Blog Preston, community radio station Preston FM, the Lancashire Evening Post and photojournalism. On an international scale, the project team has completed fieldwork in India and have collaborated with Brazilian publisher Grupo RBS.

## **Paper Data**

In tandem with the physical designs, the team have also created paper-based analytics – otherwise known as 'Paper Data'. This feature allows publishers to track 'hit rates' and other analytic information from printed paper. For the first time ever, publishers could chart exactly when people are reading their stories and adverts.

Looking beyond the SxSW panel and the project, Paul Egglestone said: "This is the ultimate low tech/hi tech platform. Our joint aim has always to make the tech as cheap and accessible as possible so making sure we could print using standard off-set litho printing processes rather than investing in expensive digital printers was part of that thinking.

"We're only at the beginning of the evolution of this technology but what will really move the whole area on is getting it into the hands of communities, activists, entrepreneurs with start-

up ideas, as well as artists, designers, journalists, coders.....you name it. They'll be the people with the vision for this stuff and the passion to develop new ways of using it. They'll come up with new forms of communication and they'll develop new collaborative enterprises as they move from being the audience or readers, to the back of it."

## **CONTACTS:**

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## **Notes to Editors**

- The UK is leading in the technology of printed electronics. The market is predicted to be \$120bn by 2020 (BIS Report 2009).
- The UK government has identified plastic electronics as a key area for development.
- The UK Plastics Electronics Strategy launched in 2009 was supported by an £8m investment administered by the UK's Technology Strategy Board.

## **Resources:**

For information on Interactive Newsprint in the news, click [here](#):

To access our open image gallery, click [here](#) (or check out Flickr [here](#)).

## **How does it work?**

Our prototypes, which move away from screen-based media and into the realm of the 'Internet of Things' allow readers – via a wireless pair of headphones or embedded speaker – to hear dynamic audio content, vote in polls or 'like' stories by simply touching certain areas of a static printed page. Audio material on each printed sheet can be updated by simply emailing audio to the paper itself.

The technology uses the same chip as was in an apple ii and is now found in greeting cards to add iPad like capacitive touch to paper, add to that a Bluetooth 4 chip and your paper is now on the Internet.

Our technology partner Novalia is leading the printing of conductive inks using standardised litho printing methods – which makes the potential for reaching mass markets that much more closer and we're excited about what this gives a research project that is demonstrating the potential to the world.

## **The School of Journalism and Digital Communication at UCLan**

The School of Journalism Media and Communication at UCLan is home of the oldest university journalism programme established in 1962. A world class leader in converged media the department's primary purpose is to develop and nurture new talent, whilst equipping existing journalists with the skills to deliver quality factual content in a complex multi-channel multi-media world. The department consistently delivers great people who've gone on to win BAFTA'S, edit national newspapers, run online news sites and present network television and radio news. [www.ukjournalism.org](http://www.ukjournalism.org)

**The Research Councils UK Digital Economy Theme** is supporting research to rapidly realise the transformational impact of digital technologies on aspects of community life, cultural experiences, future society, and the economy. To achieve this we bring together a unique community of researchers (from diverse disciplines including social science, engineering, computer science, the arts and medical research) and users (people, business, government) to study, understand and find solutions to real problems. Since its inception in 2008 the RCUK Digital Economy Theme has invested £120m (2008-11).

EPSRC leads the RCUK Digital Economy Theme on behalf of all seven Research Councils. The Research Councils collectively invest around £3bn each year in research spanning all academic disciplines and are non-departmental public bodies funded by the UK Government through the Department for Universities, Innovation and Skills.

#### **About Novalia**

[www.novalia.co.uk](http://www.novalia.co.uk)

Founded in Cambridge in 2004, Novalia have developed a versatile technology platform that combines touch sensitive ink technology with low cost silicon micro-controllers. The team use print processes that are widely employed across the print & packaging industry. The technology offers two-way interactivity into everyday printed items; that seamlessly connects the physical and digital worlds.

Novalia's small experienced team come from a diverse range of backgrounds which means that from initial concept design through to full manufacture they are able to deliver working, production ready solutions.

Novalia's clients are adding value to their products or brands across packaging, books, aerospace, automotive, advertising, brand protection and point of purchase displays.