



INNOVATION: CREATING CONDITIONS FOR SERENDIPITY

Companies know that being innovative is essential for survival in today's 'VUCA' world* and that new technologies can help them with this. Although a growing number of companies are actively working on innovation, organizations often can't see the wood for the trees due to the abundance of technological possibilities available. We seek to clarify the added value of innovation for them and build a pragmatic bridge from the abstract to the concrete, adapted to their specific context. We do so in various ways, which we would like to share with you in this blog post.

(*) Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous.

Innovation Thursdays: inspire to innovate

We organize Innovation Thursdays at our FabLab in Ghent on the third Thursday of every month. During these half-day sessions, we zoom in on a specific topic from the broad spectrum of ICT innovations, such as AI, blockchain, Internet of Things, chatbots, MDM, computer vision and AR/VR. These are living communities in which our domain experts provide hands-on explanations and offer their expertise in round-table discussions with companies, focusing on their current projects, challenges and needs. We also take them on a journey through our FabLab (fabrication lab), a creative workplace, using functional use cases, devices and dashboards to gain a better understanding of the impact and potential applications of a specific technology. These sessions also provide an opportunity to network with peer entrepreneurs who are interested in the day's topic. We are convinced of the inspiring nature of this approach and believe it stimulates out-of-the-box thinking, which is what innovation is all about.

FabLab network: innovation is teamwork

The FabLab in Ghent is a way to facilitate a range of innovation activities, such as workshops and POCs. This makes Ghent part of the Gfi Group's FabLab Innovation Network, which shares initiatives and resources and exchanges ideas. The main benefit is that we are also able to use products that have been developed in other FabLabs, such as UMI3D (virtual and augmented reality), Bot Foundry (chatbots), Vision Learn (computer vision) and Firmin Suite (social robotics). All these FabLabs have one thing in common: they seek to create the right conditions for companies to gain the necessary inspiration to further shape their ideas, in co-creation with our experts. In short: creating conditions for serendipity.

Invitation to innovate, together

We want to inspire and help companies that talk about innovation to actually go for it. One way to do this is through co-creation. Cross-pollination of all sorts of ideas and knowledge often creates the inspiration for the best innovations. This also happens to be the aim of Horizon 2020, the largest EU funding program for research and innovation. Together with other partners from the academic and private sectors, we are actively collaborating on innovation projects in this program, such as the Electrific project that we presented

during the Innovation Thursday on artificial intelligence. The Electrific project aims to facilitate seamless e-mobility through smart integration of electric vehicles and the electricity grid. AI-based smart charging stations are one of the realizations. The preparations for Horizon Europe, the successor to Horizon 2020, are now in full swing. This could prove to be a lever for innovation for you as well.

Let us know, and we'll find out for you.