WEAR sustain: The Background

WEAR sustain is a new, €3m project, funded by the European Commission Horizon 2020 research and innovation initiative which will engage artists and designers to work more closely with technologists and engineers to shift the development of the wearables and e-textile landscape towards a more sustainable and ethical approach.   The project will run between January 2017 and December 2018.

In order to promote further collaboration between the arts and innovation activities, WEAR promotes cross-disciplinary/cross-sectoral collaboration and invites artist and design communities to engage the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) industries, through co-design and co-development of ethical, critical, and aesthetic wearable technologies and smart textiles. Consequently WEAR will engage stakeholders across Europe in the development of the EU wearable technology and smart textiles industries, drawing on the rich European landscape of wearable technology and smart textile developers.

To do so, WEAR will:

- **Develop a sustainable European network of stakeholders and hubs**, to connect and push the boundaries in the design and development of ethical wearables
- **Encourage cross-border and cross-sector collaboration** between artists and technologists to design and develop a new generation of ethical and sustainable wearable technologies and smart textiles;
- **Develop a framework within which future prototypes can be made** that will become the next generation of what ethical and aesthetic wearables could/should be;
- Lead the emergence of **innovative approaches to design, production, manufacturing and business** models for wearable technologies
- Make citizens, industry and other stakeholders more aware of the ethical, sustainable and aesthetic issues in designing, developing and use of wearable technologies.

WEAR ONLINE NETWORK (ECOSYSTEM)

Visualising, exploring, engaging stakeholders in EU wearables and e-textiles
|
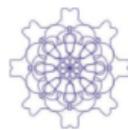Building a 40+ Network of Hubs & Advocacy Centres

SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

Art, Design & Tech Collaboration (Cross Border/Cross Sector)
|
Open Calls £2.4m Awards
|
Supports 48 Innovations to market
|
Best Practice Methods & Processes

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Events
|
Symposia
|
Local Meet-ups
|
Digital Platform
|
Shared Knowledge & Insights

ETHICS & SUSTAINABILITY

Critical-Aesthetic-Ethical
|
Personal (Data)
|
Environmental
|
Sustainable

SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY & TOOLKIT

Process Outcomes:

Sustainable & Disruptive Innovation
|
Next Generation Wearables
|
40+ EU Hubs & Advocacy Centres
|
Shared Knowledge
|
Ethics & Sustainability Guidelines

Sustainable Innovation: Open Calls

WEAR is organising two Europe-wide open calls in 2017 and 2018 looking for teams of creative individuals and technologists. Artists, designers, as well as other creative professionals and ICT/technology entrepreneurs and engineers are being invited to participate in the competition to develop compelling, innovative, ethical and sustainable solutions for wearable technology and e textiles development, across all possible application domains. Proposals will be submitted online and evaluated by a panel of expert reviewers.

Call theme headings:

- Environment
- Body/physiology/Somatics
- Emotional/mental health
- Social/cultural/economic

- Materials
- Energy
- Recycling
- Data collection / mining

Each proposal will be reviewed by at least 2 reviewers in an online process. Reviewers will have an extensive experience in one of the key areas: fine and performing arts, fashion, textiles design and other creative specialties, design, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), electronics development, engineering and programming, prototyping, ethics, environment and sustainability, data and data models, legal support, as well as business and venturing.

Each of the top 40 proposals will be invited for an online pitch in front of a Selection Committee and the 24 successful teams from each open call will then be awarded €50k towards developing their pioneering prototype over a 6-8 month period.

The overall result will be 48 amazing prototypes exemplifying the best in wearable technology and e-textiles which will be exhibited at the final showcase event in late 2018.

Knowledge Exchange:

Hubs: There will be a network of 40+ Hubs and Advocacy Centres which will host **events**, **networking** and **knowledge sharing** and **symposia**; as well as provide the tools the teams may need to help create their prototypes. Each awarded team will be connected to a relevant, local creative hub to facilitate the implementation of their project and will provide local support and access to local experts.

Ecosystem:

Throughout the 2 years of the WEAR project, DataScouts will be used as an Ecosystem Intelligence platform to:

1. Develop a European network of advocacy hubs by mapping existing hubs and monitor the evolution of the hubs over the project lifespan
2. Visualise the application domains of wearable technology by mapping all the projects that are interested to participate in WEAR, onboard the selected projects from the open call and monitor the evolution of the selected projects over the project lifespan
3. Monitor and visualise the vibrancy of the WEARables ecosystem by connecting and aggregating multiple data sources to provide a wide overview of what is happening in the ecosystem. Measure the vibrancy of different hubs over the project lifespan

Experts Mentors:

Each team will be assigned a main mentor (members of teams selected in the 1st Open Call could become mentors for teams selected in the 2nd Open Call). Mentors may be independent experts in their field or attached to a hub and / or its network. Mentor support will be individualised and mentors will develop individual support for each team, while WEAR partners will coordinate the support activities and support hubs that will host the teams.

Selected **Teams** will be provided with individualised support through a variety of methods.

Sustainability Toolkit:

WEAR will work with and collate feedback from hub leaders, teams, mentors and experts to gather insights, key issues and opportunities derived from events and networking as well as from mapping in the Ecosystem and use these insights to design the Sustainability Toolkit.

WEAR will then develop a strategy for long term sustainable collaboration opportunities across Europe for beyond the duration of the project. WEAR will also identify potential avenues for local and cross-border funding for project-based network and how to expand the prototyping work to commercial marketing.

Finally, based on the selected teams' experiences, WEAR will reflect on industry-specific methodologies, and processes used, identify and understand the successful elements of their integration, and the strategies that enable sustainability across the different industries.

How can you be involved?

As a WEAR Expert Reviewer, Mentor, Hub Leader or Associated Organisation you will participate in a network of creative innovators and industry practitioners helping to develop the next generation of wearables.

Your organisation will have the opportunity to be part of the Ecosystem Intelligence Platform which will develop a European Network of advocacy hubs and map and monitor all of the WEAR projects and teams.

By supporting WEAR you can also have a positive impact on your own organisation and the sector as a whole by generating new knowledge and insights.

WEAR will provide the following incentives for involvement:

- Access to the WEAR community including:
  - A listing on the WEAR calendar of events,
  - Access to the WEAR networked ecosystem of experts,
  - You/your organisation promoted as an expert/mentor/hub/host on all WEAR publicity material;
  - You/your organisation promoted as an expert/mentor/hub/host on the website
  - For experts and mentors - some nominal travel and related expenses, as well as other modest forms of remuneration through the WEAR voucher system via selected teams,
  - Ticket to the final showcase event.

The project is managed by a consortium of 7 organisations across 5 EU countries:
IMEC (Brussels, Belgium)
University for the Creative Arts (Epsom, UK)
Queen Mary University of London (UK)
Berlin University of the Arts, UdK (Berlin, Germany)
Blumine (Milan, Italy)
Digital Spaces Living Lab (Sofia, Bulgaria)
We Connect Data (Brussels, Belgium)

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