DEBRECENI EGYETEM

CREATIVE INDUSTRY HACKATHON – ASPECTS OF PITCH
methodological guideline

The aim of this guideline is to provide a common framework, as well as a transparent set of expectations and evaluation criteria, for the students participating in the hackathon. It summarizes the most important aspects of presenting an idea at the creative industry hackathon, including toolkits that can or should be used during the preparation and the criteria on which the ideas will be evaluted.

A creative industry hackathon idea presentation is built around narrative, user experience and storytelling:
- the focus of the idea should not purely be technological, it should also present a strong cultural, design-oriented, or user experience-based solution
- the messages the idea-owners wants to convey and the way it is presented are equally important.

Aspects of creative industry idea presentation
The most important aspects of a creative industry pitch are the following:
- strong visual elements
- short and clear narrative
- cultural relevance and clearly articulated impact
- a clear focus ont he target audience and community
- monetization and scalability potential
- immersive, experience-driven presentation

When presenting the idea, it is essential to demonstrate not only that the concept is functional or feasible, but also that it generates an emotional impact on users, creates cultural value and can thus scale within its local context.

In many cases, the concept is based on personal storytelling, which becomes an integral part of the concept and its presentation. The experience-driven narrative runs consistently throughout the entire pitch. Unlike pitches in other fields (e.g., startup environments), the creative industry presentation are expected to be more performative.

The aesthetic dimension becomes a core value of the pitch: the elements of pitch design should speak for themselves. Visuality is not an added benefit in the creative industry context, but a fundamental requirement.

Highlights of the 3-minute creative industry pitch

three minutes, it is essential to ensure a well-structured, coherent, and engaging presentation with clearly focused messages.

As the pitch is limited to 3 minutes, it is essential to ensure that it is well-structures, coherent, enjoyable, as well as engaging with clearly focused messages.

(i) **Visual elements** that maybe incorporated into the pitch**:**
- visual concept: A coherent visual framework that defines the aesthetic direction of the project.
- video: Short audiovisual element(s) that demonstrates the concept, mood, or potential user experience
- installation or physical model: it helps the audience better understand the spatial or experiential dimensions of the idea.
- brand/logo
- visual user journey experience plan: A clear and structured representation of the user experience from first contact to engagement.
- interactive demo: a demonstration that actively involves the audience in experiencing the concept.

(ii) **Storytelling**

In the context of a pitch, storytelling is a strategic narrative framework that communicates the core idea through emotion, experience, and meaning rather than through facts alone. It structures the presentation in a way that connects the concept to human experience, making it more persuasive, memorable and easier to relate to.

Key characteristics of effective storytelling are the foloowing:
- emotional: evoking feelings that help the audience connect personally to the idea
- visual: it translates the concepts into vivid sensory impressions
- surprising, including unexpected elements that capture attention and sustain interest
- theatrical: may incorporate performative elements to enhance impact
- culturally and socially relevant: reflecting broader cultural contexts and addressing meaningful social topics
- Visually captivating: integrating strong aesthetic components that reinforce the narrative and elevate the overall experience.

(iii) **Feasibility:** Creative industry hackathons idea owners often risk presenting an artistic vision that is way too ambitious, excessively complex, which may be hindered by a number of limitations, including architectural, legal or financial ones. Participants should therefore strive to demonstrate that the idea is not only a „beautiful dream", but also technically viable and commercially feasible.

(iv) **User Journey:** The ideas developed in creative and urban hackathons are specific to an urban community, subculture or social group. Thus, it is crucial to demonstrate how, to what extent and how frequently the target audience is expected to engage with the given solution. During the pitch, it is worth presenting the user's experience both before and after engaging with the solution, as the ideas born at a creative industry hackathon are often prototypes of an "experience" rather than merely as products or services.

(v) **A value proposition:** A solution presented in a creative industry pitch usually offers more than a functional utility: it delivers an experience, shapes identity, builds community, and generates cultural value. In the creative industries, symbolic value is often as important as functionality and financial aspects. As a result, greater emphasis is given on the audience and community. Projects in the creative industries tipically tend to present their values through the following:

- community building: strengthening connections among individuals through shared interests, spaces, or experiences.
- creative ecosystem:supporting collaboration, knowledge exchange, and long-term development within the local or thematic creative sector
- cultural impact**:** influencing cultural narratives, practices in meaningful ways.
- user experience: emotionally resonant interactions rather than purely functional solutions.
- co-creation: active participation of users or communities in shaping the product, service, or experience.

Core content-dimensions of a 3-minute creative industry hackathon pitch
The following elements represent key thematic dimensions that should be addressed in the pitch. They do not need to appear as separate slides or in the order listed below. Participants are free to cover these aspects through their chosen creative format, narrative structure, and visual language.

Problem
Beyond functionality, the problem statement should reflect the broader social and cultural context (with local relevance, if possible). This may include:

- specific local shortage or unmet need
- lack of experience
- issues related to a specific social group
- challenges faced by creative communities

The problem should be framed not only as a technical gap, but as a culturally or socially embedded issue.

The solution (creative concept)

The pitch should clearly communicate the essence and originality of the idea:

- What is the core concept of the idea?
- What makes it unique?
- What is the underlying creator insight?
- What kind of experience does it offer toprimary users, secondary target audience, city leaders?
- Has the issue been addressed before and if so, how does this proposal differ and bulid on the lessons learnt?

The solution should be presented as an experience-based and culturally meaningful concept, not merely as a functional response.

Target group and their experience

Beyond demographic characteristics, the pitch may illsutrate life situation, cultural environment and motivations of the target group (either through personal storytelling or analytical insights). It is worth demonstrating:

- why the solution resonates with them
- how and how often it will be used
- what are the expected changes in the user's experience before and after engagement

Business model

In the cultural and creative industries, monetization and business scalability are often less explicit and do not not constitute the primary focus. The business model may be presented in a concise, indirect manner.

Rather than going in details of the revenue logic it is worth highlighting the following values:

- strategic partnerships
- short- and long—term cultural value creation (including e.g., volunteering)

In the creative industry, typical revenue models may include:

- Freemium + Premium Subscription Model
- Ticket sales revenue
- License
- Merchandise making, sales
- crowdfunding
- Grant support
- involvement of municipal or state funds

The key objective is to demonstrate viability and sustainability without reducing the project to purely financial metrics.

Team
Briefly introduce your team and clarify why its members are capable of realizing the project. The team should also identify any missing competencies required for the successful implementation of the project and indicate how these gaps could be addressed.

Strong Closing (Call To Action) - an emotional conclusion to the story
The pitch should conclude with a clear and emotionally resonant closing statement that reinforces the core message and leaves a lasting impression.

The jury's evaluation criteria for the Creative Industry Hackathon:
For a creative industry hackathon pitch competition, the evaluation criteria assess innovative thinking, feasibility and, last but not least, creative added value.

Originality of the idea: this criterion examines the novelty of the idea, taking into account the specific characteristics of the given location.
- Does the solution include technological, business model or creative innovation?
- Are there any precedents or is it an original concept?
- If similar concepts or precedents exist, what new, distinctive value does the solution offer?
- How does it differentiate itself from the competing solutions?

Relevance of the problem or challenge: this criterion evaluates how clearly and convincingly the project responds to a real and well-defined problem.
- Is the problem well defined?
- Is it based on real demand or identifiable need?
- Does the proposed solution meaningfully address the stated problem?

Concept coherence: this criterion assesses the internal logical and consistency of the project-
- are the problem statement, solution, target group, business model, visual identity and the narrative aligned?
- do the various elements reinforce each other conceptually and strategically?

Cultural fit: this criterion examines how well the idea resonates with the values, identity, usage habits and cultural context of the target community. Teams are encouraged to support this dimension with research-based insights.
This may include:
- reference to specific local characteristics
- connection to the cultural layers of the urban or university environment
- historical or functional precedents and expected social impact.

Team: This criterion evaluates team competence and collaboration.
-   is there a clear distribution of roles and responsibilities?
-   does the team demonstrate complementary skills?
-   have missing competencies been identified and addressed?
-   is there visible cohesion, commitment and in the presentation?

Quality of the presentation and experience: Beyond to the conceptual clarity, this criterion assesses the quality of the pitch:
-   verbal communication: clear, confident, and compelling?
-   does the presentation generate emotional impact on the audience?
-   are the the visual materials (e.g. the colors, images, videos, diagrams, font used) coherent?
-   is the narrative easy to follow and enjoyable for the audience?
-   is it visually and narratively coherent, and makes the presented vision of the future relatable?
-   is there is a specific actor (persona, city dweller, investor, community, etc.)?
-   is the concept presented as a "journey", not as a slide list.
-   is there a strong opening (hook) and a memorable closing?