



INITIATIVE FOR MEDIA INNOVATION

Lausanne, 19 July 2018

Press Release

A new initiative to support and develop innovation in the media sector

Academic, public and private partners are teaming up to foster media innovation. The first projects will be launched this year.

EPFL, SRG, Ringier and Triangle Azur—a cooperation network between the Universities of Geneva, Lausanne and Neuchâtel—are joining forces to create the Initiative for Media Innovation (IMI), a consortium of public and private partners. This alliance aims to foster innovation in the media and IT sector. The Federal Office of Communications (OFCOM) will also support projects under this initiative. The IMI is open to all private and public organizations, in Switzerland or abroad, who wish to join and are active in the relevant fields.

Switzerland has a very dense print, audiovisual and digital media sector, as well as a network of top-level universities. The IMI's founding members wish to create an interface between these two worlds in order to support and develop media innovation. The partners have made a financial commitment by creating an innovation support fund with an annual budget of CHF 650,000. This will allow research projects to be funded, in particular by drawing on the skills of researchers and students from partner universities. The first calls for proposals will be published this fall.

Topics could cover fake news, data journalism, content discoverability and personalization, artificial intelligence, IoT, immersive experiences, and also new business models, monetization or even the cultural and social aspects of media. The partners' goal behind this initiative is to build a bridge between creativity and technology, between the world of media and that of academic research, on the basis that an interdisciplinary approach is one of the keys to innovation.

This initiative will implement projects under the governance of the various partners. Mounir Krichane has been in charge of the Media Centre—the operational arm of the Initiative—since March. EPFL is hosting this centre within the EPFL Innovation Park. Mounir Krichane is an engineer who graduated from EPFL and has worked for several years in the media industry. He is a member of various Swiss and European innovation communities.

About the director of the Initiative

Born in 1979, Mounir Krichane received his Master of Science from École polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) in 2005. He then went on to work as a scientific collaborator in the National Centres of Competence in Research of the Swiss National Science Foundation, where he was granted a seed funding to develop a start-up in 2008 under the NCCR MICS (Mobile Information and Communication Systems) program. Following his experience as an entrepreneur, Mounir Krichane joined Radio Télévision Suisse (RTS) in 2009, where he participated in the merger of the rsr.ch and tsr.ch websites and in the development of the maRTS community offering. In 2014, he took part in the inception of the Digital Lab at RTS, where he managed a wide range of innovative projects involving technology and content. Proficient in project management, he collaborated with internal and external partners, agencies, start-ups and labs, bringing them together in order to push his ideas forward.

Press contact

mounir@media-initiative.ch

+41 76 532 34 68

Quotes

Yves Flückiger, rector of the University of Geneva and chairman of the IMI Board as the Triangle Azur representative

“Disseminating knowledge is at the heart of the University’s missions. To reach our audience, we must rely on strong media outlets that fully keep pace with the latest technological and societal developments. To participate in the development and the implementation of new solutions is an exciting challenge for the academic community.”

Ralph Büchi, COO of Ringier Group, CEO of Ringier Axel Springer Schweiz AG and member of the IMI Board

“Through this initiative, we combine cutting-edge scientific research with hands-on experience in digital media. This not only helps to create synergies, but also to build a bridge between leading research institutes and large media companies such as Ringier. Both parties benefit from this new kind of know-how transfer.”

Gilles Marchand, director general of SRG

“As a public service, SRG serves society and Switzerland. This is why we are firmly committed to working alongside the private media and the universities in order to develop media innovation together – a field in which Switzerland clearly has a key role to play thanks to its academic and journalistic centres of excellence.”

Martin Vetterli, president of EPFL

“This approach embodies everything that we must and wish to do: to promote the quality of our research and to make it accessible to society, for the greater benefit of all. Media outlets and their excellence are of particular interest because of their role in our democracy. We are very excited to be able to contribute to their ability to innovate and to learn with them.”