



network of creative & cultural industries

Hello. My name is Neil Cocker, and I'm the founder of Nocci, the network of creative and cultural industries. I'm a creative industries consultant, with clients such as the Welsh Assembly Government. I'm also a creative business mentor, and a creative entrepreneur with a history of successful ventures.



Approx 200 people listen to creative speakers in the lobby of the WMC

The creative industries contribute 8 percent of the UK GDP. And as a sector it is growing twice as fast as the rest of the economy. No wonder the two main political parties are falling over themselves to be seen as supporting it. Just this weekend Gordon Brown opened a huge conference on creative industries and business. And it's great to have increasing government support for the creative industries.

However, as we all know, the most powerful networks are those that are self supporting, and self sustaining. And that's where we come in.

Nocci is a network for designers, architects, artists, dancers, creatives, film-makers, doers and thinkers. As well as being an online forum for discussion and collaboration, and a place to show off your work, it's a news, information and resources portal, and it encourages its members to run their own networking events in their local towns and cities, wherever in the world they happen to be.



A Nocci event in Middlesbrough

I founded Nocci in Cardiff in 2007 on realising that most business networking events, for a variety of reasons, just aren't appealing for many people in the creative industries. Creatives often shy away from the business card swapping, target-driven culture of those events. And then there's the small matter of feeling like an outsider if you're wearing jeans!

Our events here regularly attract over 100 people from all parts of Cardiff's creative industries, and we know that 10s of thousands of pounds have swapped hands, companies have been formed, and jobs have been created, all directly as a

result of our events.

However, Nocci is much bigger than just Cardiff. We allow our members to run events wherever they happen to be. And as a result we have events running across the UK, from Aberystwyth to Middlesbrough, and we are currently speaking to people who are keen to run events in America, Australia and Europe.

With many members from across the globe signed up to our website, from across every sub-sector of the creative industries, Nocci is a truly global network with potential for events in every major location across the world. And in achieving this it would be the first port of call for any “creative” in the world and therefore attract a huge amount of financial support, sponsorship and advertising. An example of the potential value of such a social network is that Treehugger.com, an “eco” blog, portal and network, was sold two years ago for \$10 million. And a report published just yesterday demonstrated that half the advertising clicks online were generated by online networks.

However there is currently no *de facto* network for the creative industries. Those networks that do exist are either:

- very regionally specific
- very sector specific (e.g. just television or design)
- purely online networks



The inaugural event, Cardiff

Nocci addresses all three. It is not geographically constrained or sector specific. But it also thrives from encouraging communities to come together locally. This is of huge benefit in a sector that is largely comprised of freelancers and micro-businesses that often need that interaction.

I've invested several thousand pounds into the network, and have received approximately £800 of support from Creative Business Wales (part of WAG that I have very strong relationship with) and a few private sponsors. Our events around the UK have also attracted private sponsorship to help with the running of their events.

However, to push the network into becoming a truly worldwide phenomenon that will facilitate collaboration and networking on a global scale, I will need support in administrating the regional groups, moderating the forum, and a budget to update the website and engage in marketing activities to increase awareness. I personally don't intend to take a wage or any kind of payment until the organisation is generating a healthy profit. I want to make it a lean, low-cost, financially-viable network that fulfills its objectives while giving its investors a healthy return.

Now is the time to become the *de facto* network for the creative industries. And as well as being a viable business, it would be incredibly positive for Cardiff and Wales to have such a thing based here. If you'd like to discuss this more, you can see the website at www.noccinet.com, or contact me on neil@noccinet.com.