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# Digital-Cultural Ecology and the Medium-Sized City

2016

01-03 April

## Abstract Submission Form

**1. Paper / Proposal Title:** Cultural Reboot: Tech in Europe

**2. Format:** *Written paper*

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**5. University or Company Affiliation:** University of Cincinnati

**6. Abstract (300 words):**

The integration of technology in culture and art in Europe is transformational. Technology is changing the social fabric of cities in Central Europe, like the existential movements of the past have done. Cities like Vienna, Prague, Linz, and Berlin, are experiencing a socio-cultural renaissance, because of technology.

In Prague, the philosophy of Franz Kafka, a native of Prague who is one of the most notable authors of this past century, is having significant impact on society in the digital age. Kafka's existentialism is as relevant today as it was 100 years ago. Kafka said, "The decisive moment in human evolution is perpetual." If Kafka were alive today, he would encourage us to think about new technologies every moment, in the moment, and continually assess the impact they have in our lives professionally, academically, artistically, and spiritually. Kafka's existentialism is relevant, from the perspective of social anthropology, to understanding digital media's transformative effect on the culture of Prague today.

In Vienna, the Viennese aim to create things that are different, weird, and strange, and they integrate them into the lives of the people and the culture of the city. They did this when Baroque was *different* in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when Beaux Arts was *weird* in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and when Modernism was *strange* in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. And they are doing it with digital media in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Vienna is currently a hotbed of innovative

applications of digital media in art. In Vienna there is a new kind of modernism, a *digital modernism*.

In Berlin, though the scars from cold war division remain today, there is remarkable resiliency in the city, zeal to move forward, and viable plans to do so. Germany's scheme for a twenty-first century Berlin is focused in large part on the reinvention of the city's economy into one that is tech-based. A tech-based economy could make Berlin a leader in digital media in Europe, and perhaps around the world. In 2013 Berlin was viewed as *the* startup ecosystem in Europe. That year it raised more investment capital for startups than London, which up to that point had been viewed as the hub for EU tech startups. In 2015 the situation in Berlin is even stronger: One out of eight new jobs in the city is now generated in the digital economy. Digital media is many things in Berlin. It is technology, art, commerce, education, and lifestyle. Digital media is bringing together high society and bohemianism, in an effort to create a new economy.

German existentialist Friedrich Nietzsche advocated for cultural rebirth in Europe. He advocated for "the resurrection and fuller release of Dionysian artistic energies." Europe is doing this with digital media: creating artistic and social cultures that are wildly interesting and progressive and have technology integrated into them.

## **7. Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

**Prof. Peter DePietro** is the author of the book *Transforming Education with New Media*, published by Peter Lang International Academic Publishers in the series Counterpoints, which, as described by Peter Lang, "publishes the most compelling and imaginative books being written in education today."

Prof. DePietro is Associate Professor of New Media with tenure at the University of Cincinnati, where he teaches a wide range of courses focused on digital media. He previously taught and created curriculum at New York University, Quinnipiac University, New School University's Parsons School of Design, Pratt Institute, and internationally at Ludwig Maximilians Universität in Munich, Germany. In 2015, while on leave from the University of Cincinnati, he will be a Visiting Scholar at New York University.

On topics related to new media and emerging technologies Prof. DePietro has been published internationally. He is the author of numerous peer-reviewed articles and international panel presentations, including "Education on the Move: Mobile Technologies and Pedagogy," "Interactive Content and Online Agenda," "Experiential Learning with Games and Social Media," "Technology and Design," and "New Eyes on the Virtual World."

Prof. DePietro is Associate Editor of the International Journal of Technology, Knowledge and Society, and he wrote a series of Screen Studies articles/reviews on new media, published by Wiley-Blackwell in volumes of *The Art Book*. The following world-class

periodicals have interviewed him: BusinessWeek, Billboard Publications, Hearst Publishing, Crain's New York Business, and the Fox Television Network.

Prof. DePietro served President Bill Clinton as the first Director of Digital and New Media of the William J. Clinton Foundation in New York City, where he implemented digital technologies to communicate the missions of both the Clinton Foundation in New York City and the Clinton Presidential Center in Little Rock, and integrated emerging technologies and social media platforms to serve outreach objectives. His team's work for President Clinton won an international award.

Peter is the Executive Director of Digital Innovation Lab (dot net), a new media and technology incubator. Other global leadership positions include Director of Interactive Media and Online for Omnicom, and Digital Projects Director at Chances for Children, a charity founded by Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York, with offices in New York City and London. Experience in Silicon Alley (NYC) as digital strategist, interactive developer and creative director has given him the opportunity to create digital projects with international exposure for a roster of Fortune 500 companies.



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