



**North West Skills Strategy
for the Audio Visual Industries**

Final Version

**Presented to Skillset/ Media Training North West/ North West Vision/
North West Audio Visual Skills Panel**

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1. Introduction

As the Sector Skills Council (SSC), Skillset's job is to make sure that the UK audio visual industries have the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time, so that our industries remain competitive.

Skillset is one of four SSCs that have been selected as Pathfinders to develop Sector Skills Agreements (SSAs) by December 2004. The SSA will be an agreement between the audio visual industries, Skillset, government and the organisations that fund the development of skills which will influence the funding available for skills development in the audio visual industries for many years to come.

The success of the SSA will rely on a clear understanding of the skills needs of our industries. This includes current and anticipated needs. To achieve this, Skillset has been carrying out a range of research to help us to understand in detail the skills needs and priorities of employers, employees and freelancers and what is currently available and being done to meet these needs.

The SSA will be built up from detailed information on the skills issues facing individual audio visual industries and across each of the English regions. The information to produce this strategy has been drawn from nationally published data such as the National Employer Skills Survey (NESS), regional sources, the Skillset Workforce Survey and Census results and research with employers and education and training providers that has been carried out specifically for the SSA.

There is a wide range of data available on the audio visual industries from these sources. This range makes it difficult to collate, aggregate and compare the data, especially as the data is often produced for a specific purpose, using a variety of definitions, classifications and methodologies.

The North West Regional Skills Strategy

This strategy provides an initial overview of the size and shape of the audio visual industries in the region and identifies what we currently understand to be the main skills issues that they face at the moment.

The strategy focuses on the big and long term issues of ensuring that the workforce has the skills needed to respond to changing technologies and working practices throughout their careers. It reflects the need for employers and individuals to have a full understanding of the changes facing the industry that will impact on the skills they need and therefore the learning and training supply that will be essential if these skills are to be developed. The strategy also reflects the need for clear communication of the industries' skill needs to those involved in providing information, advice and guidance to those working in the industry or who are considering entering it.

Between June and December 2004, the key priorities for the audio visual industries in the region were identified, leading to the development of joint collaborative planning to support the future success of the industries. The end result will be an agreed action plan for the North West which outlines the key priority actions for the region, indicating key partnerships where appropriate.

The strategy has been developed following extensive research and consultation with employers from across the audio visual industries. It represents the voice of employers in the industries in the region. In taking the strategy forward, Skillset will continue to consult with industry to ensure that the work undertaken as a result of this strategy is pertinent to the needs of the employers.

The strategy has also been developed in partnership with Media Training North West, Skillset's Approved Regional Training Partner and North West Vision, the Regional Screen

Agency (RSA) for the North West. North West Vision works to stimulate and grow the media economies of England's Northwest by facilitating work and investment in film and moving image, archive, education, exhibition, production, development, audience development, inward investment, training and company development. North West Vision is the lead agency at the regional level for developing an integrated development strategy for the media industries to support a growing and sustainable sector.

Media Training North West works to ensure the long term viability and sustainability of the industry in the region by both facilitating and delivering training and development solutions for companies, professionals, freelancers and new entrants in the audio visual industries and seeks to ensure a workforce which reflects the diversity of the regions' cultures and communities. Media Training North West is the lead industry training agency which delivers a strategy for the region to help support and build the media workforce to compete.

Skillset, Media Training North West and North West Vision share an interest in the area of skills, talent and company development. All realise that they must work wholeheartedly in partnership if they are to be successful in achieving their objectives of supporting and growing the audio visual industries.

National Overview of the Audio Visual Industries – UK-Wide

The audio visual industries include:

- TV and radio broadcasting;
- independent production for TV and radio;
- film production and distribution;
- cinema exhibition;
- animation;
- commercials;
- corporate video production;
- facilities;
- interactive media and games;
- photography, photo processing and retailing¹;
- manufacture of photographic equipment and materials;
- picture libraries.

Across the UK as a whole, over 400,000 people are employed in the audio visual industries, in around 23,000 businesses, contributing up to 3% of Gross Value Added². Between 1997 and 2000, the industries grew more than three times faster than the UK economy as a whole and in 2000 generated £4.1 billion of exports. Based on these figures alone, it is clear that the audio visual industries are of significant importance to the UK economy. They are recognised as among the most dynamic audio visual industries in Europe and are set to enjoy continued economic growth. They are competitive and innovative and have a global reputation for excellence based on high level craft, technical and creative skills. It is essential that these skills continue to be developed if this position is to be maintained.

Between 1993 and 2003, there was impressive employment growth in film, radio and television, with an average annual increase in the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees of 5%, compared to 1% for the economy as a whole³. This employment growth is expected to slow over the next ten years, but it would still be expected to outstrip the growth in the economy as a whole.

In employment terms, interactive media is one of the most significant of the audio visual industries. Across the UK as a whole, Skillset's 2004 Census estimates around 32,700 people to be working in web design, 9,800 in developing offline multimedia products, and

¹ Note – Skillset's coverage has only recently been expanded to include the photo imaging sector. The needs and issues relating to photo imaging are not therefore included in this first iteration of the strategy.

² Source: Skillset Market Assessment for the audio visual industries, September 2003

³ ABI/Experian in Skillset Future Trends in AV Industry to 2010: Trends Paper, June 2004

9,700 in electronic games – a total of more than 50,000 people altogether. Given its youth, dynamism and the lack of available data, forecasting future employment in interactive media is difficult. Following a period of rapid and sometimes chaotic growth in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the interactive media sector has recently experienced a period of consolidation, with a number of mergers, growth of some larger business and increasing levels of in-company employment in many areas. There are now increasing signs of stability and maturation, with most forecasts pointing to steady and prolonged growth in the sector.

The audio visual industries are characterised by a small number of very large national and international companies and a very large number of small and medium-sized businesses, micro businesses, freelancers and sole traders, particularly in the creation, production and development of content.

The high numbers of freelancers means that the demand for self-managed learning and Continuing Professional Development (CPD), together with up-to-date careers Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) about career pathways, is widespread across the sector.

The audio visual industries' workforce is exceptionally young: Skillset's 2003 Workforce Survey found that 62% were aged under 35 compared with 39% of people across the whole economy. In film, over 40% of workers are in their twenties and in radio and television, 40% are in their thirties.⁴ Within the interactive media sectors, 69% of people in web design are aged under 35, rising to 76% of those in CD Rom/other multimedia, and 79% in computer games.

Demand for jobs in the audio visual industries is high, reflecting their general perception as 'cool' industries in which to work. This competition for jobs means that employers can be relatively selective in their recruitment and is reflected in the relatively high proportion of workers in the industries qualified to degree level (NVQ Level 4) or above. Compared to an average of 16% across the economy as a whole, two thirds of the audio visual workforce is qualified to at least graduate level⁵. The popularity of the sector should not be confused with an ability to attract the right candidates for the right employment opportunities, as the 'glamour factor' attracts too many unsuitable candidates seeking 'front of camera' jobs.

Employment in the audio visual industries is less ethnically diverse than the potential labour market from which it is drawn. Skillset's 2004 Census reveals that around 7% of the audio visual workforce are of ethnic minority origin, compared with 11% of the UK population of working age. However, it is also established that over half the workforce is based in London, where the 2003 Labour Force Survey estimated ethnic minorities to comprise over 38% of the population of working age.

The Whole SSA Picture

Sector Strategies

As part of the SSA process, sector skills strategies are being developed for film, television and interactive media. These provide clear frameworks to ensure that across the UK, these sectors are able to attract and retain people with the skills they need to increase productivity and ability to compete within the market place.

Film

The UK Film Skills Strategy, 'A Bigger Future', is set out in four key areas:

- Careers Information, Advice and Guidance;
- Further, Higher and Postgraduate Education;
- New Entrants, Professional and Company Development;

⁴ ONS Labour Force Survey (Autumn 2003)

⁵ Skillset Workforce Survey 2003

- Collecting and Analysing Information.

Across these four areas, 'A Bigger Future' stresses the three Golden Threads:

- the need to encourage and deliver a more culturally and socially diverse workforce, with all sectors more accessible to under-represented groups;
- the importance of strengthening the film industry across the UK nations and regions, through the work of the National and Regional Screen Agencies and Skillset's approved training partners;
- the need to take account of the accelerated pace of change resulting from new technologies.

The strategy will deliver:

- film-specific careers information, advice and guidance throughout the UK;
- further, higher and postgraduate skills provision meeting the demand and need for industry-specific skills;
- industry approved training and education provision;
- a network of recognised Screen Academies to provide an agreed mix of creative and commercial skills needed by the industry;
- coherent and complementary programmes to develop skills and talent among new entrants, those already working in the industry and in film companies.

Detailed and on-going research (including the joint Skillset/UK Film Council 2004 Feature Film Production Workforce Survey completed in 2004 and the Performers Survey to be undertaken in collaboration with Equity and the Creative and Cultural Industries Sector Skills Council in 2005) will provide accurate intelligence and forecasting so that the film industry can anticipate and respond to emerging skills gaps and shortages and plan on-going investment priorities more effectively.

More information on 'A Bigger Future' can be found at www.skillset.org/film

Interactive Media

The Interactive Media Skills Strategy reflects the rapidly changing nature of the industry as it adapts and adopts new technologies. The focus of the Interactive Media Skills Strategy is on the creators who produce interactive products for web and internet, interactive television, electronic media and off-line multi-media.

The strategy recognises that interactive media need both specialist and general skills and functional flexibility. The concept of 'T-skills'⁶ is important in identifying the skill sets needed by individuals and demanded by employers.

In order to maintain a competitive edge, interactive media must commit to and invest in developing its people at company level and across the workforce as a whole. Young people entering the workforce and entrants migrating from other industries need to be better prepared for entry into the interactive media industry.

The Interactive Media Skills Strategy therefore includes a series of solutions and recommendations across a range of areas, including:

- schools, further and higher education;
- company workforce development;
- careers advice;
- intelligence gathering.

⁶ T-skills are where an individual has a wide range of broad general skills, combined with a set of deep specialist skills.

The Interactive Media Skills Strategy can be found at www.skillset.org/interactive

Television

Across the television industry, much training and development is provided in-house and on-the-job by employers. However, approaches differ and it is not a consistent picture, reflecting the diversity of organisations in TV in terms of size, purpose and remit.

The TV Skills Strategy aims to increase the competitiveness of the UK's television industry through developing the skills and talents of its workforce⁷. The strategy sets out priorities for action in six key areas to address the critical skills issues faced by the TV industry:

- **Management and Leadership:** management skills are a significant area of weakness for the industry overall and the strategy proposes a two-pronged approach to addressing the problem: improving general management skills and specifically raising the level of HR management in the industry;
- **Entrepreneurship:** there is a need to foster and develop key entrepreneurs across the industry in order to improve understanding of the business among individuals across the entire value chain and to address the gaps in business skills that currently act as a barrier to productivity and competitiveness;
- **Diversity:** the strategy sets out approaches that will contribute to achieving diversity across the television industry, to make it more successful, creative and productive. There is a particular focus in developing more open routes into employment in the industry, including the provision of industry validated careers information, advice and guidance, and more equitable recruitment processes;
- **Creativity:** the strategy recognises the focus that has been placed on the development of individuals who are responsible for the conception of intellectual property, in particular researchers, writers, directors and producers. However, it also recognises the need to maintain and develop the skills of other occupations engaged in the creative business of programme making, in both production and craft roles.
- **Technology:** in addition to addressing existing skills shortages in technical areas and upskilling the existing workforce, there is also a need to become better at thinking and training ahead of the curve, making use of the enormous opportunities that new technology offers to develop flexible and innovative approaches to training and skills development;
- **Excellence:** if the overall aim of the strategy is to be achieved, a strong and relevant infrastructure of external vocational education must be in place, together with high quality approaches to training and development within companies. To this end, Skillset has already begun to explore and set up specific industry approval and accreditation systems.

More information on the Television Skills Strategy can be found at www.skillset.org/television

Links with the Regional Skills Strategy

The delivery of the skills strategies in Film, Interactive Media and Television will depend on a combination of UK-wide actions and more local and regional actions. We have established links between the processes to develop the sector skills strategies and those in the regions, to ensure that there is consistency in actions and that the actions underpinning the regional strategies make an effective contribution to meeting the needs of the audio visual industries as a whole at the national level.

⁷ Skillset TV Skills Strategy (consultation draft version 2), Skillset, 2004

Careers Information, Advice and Guidance

An over-supply of new entrants, a highly mobile freelance workforce and the unstructured nature of career progression within much of the audio visual industries makes improved, widely accessible careers advice and guidance a priority.

Better individual career choices will lead to more sustainable employment and will, over time, help to address industry skills gaps and shortages.

There is evidence⁸ that Skillset is uniquely placed to be the most effective means of industry communicating their skills needs to individuals to improve their career choices.

This can be done directly, through Skillset Careers advising individuals (see www.skillset.org/careers) or by Skillset communicating industry skills needs to careers advisors in the Connexions service, the LSC Information Advice and Guidance Provider Networks and jobcentreplus which they can, in turn, communicate to individuals using these services.

Qualifications Strategy

A QCA/Skillset Audio Visual Qualifications Forum (comprising awarding bodies and chaired by the BBC) has been established to drive the development of a Sector Qualifications Strategy with continuing consultation with industry through a number of mechanisms.

Skillset has been working closely with QCA to look at current provision in terms of qualifications, mainly for pre-entry delivery by colleges. Gaps in provision include qualifications which prepare students for working in the industry and occupational qualifications for the workforce. There is a need to work with awarding bodies to align provision to sector needs in terms of design, content and coverage. There is seen to be an over-supply of pre-entry provision and qualifications, but gaps in film-related qualifications and a need for qualifications for interactive media based on emerging national occupational standards.

Consideration is being given to the needs for qualifications across the three initial priority sectors, to the most appropriate design and assessment methods and to possible approaches to make apprenticeships work for the audio visual industries.

⁸Bimrose, Dr J., 'SSC Role in IAG Development', Warwick Institute for Employment Research, September 2004

2. The Audio Visual Industries in the North West

Overview of the North West Region

The North West is home to around 6.8 million people⁹, with a total of 2.7 million employees and 320,000 self employed¹⁰. The region covers the conurbations of Greater Manchester and Merseyside and the counties of Cheshire, Cumbria and Lancashire. The North West is the fourth largest regional economy in the UK, with a total Gross Value Added (GVA) of £78 billion in 1999¹¹. GVA per head of population is around 87% of the UK average, with the North West ranked ninth out of the 12 UK regions. The North West has the largest media economy outside London and the South East.

The North West has one of the largest concentrations of universities in Europe, with over 50,000 graduates each year. The University of Manchester and UMIST recently merged, creating the largest university in the UK.

The North West is currently eligible for significant funds from the European Union. Merseyside has Objective One status, reflecting output of less than 75% of the EU average. Over 600 wards in the region are eligible for Objective Two support from the EU.

The region benefits from strong transport and communication links. Manchester International Airport is the UK's largest airport outside London, with flights to over 170 destinations¹², handling around 19.5 million passengers in 2003¹³. Rail links have benefited from improvements to the West Coast Mainline, with journey times between Manchester and London of less than two and a half hours. The region has the highest concentration of motorways in the UK, 71% above the national average.

Employment

The ABI estimates a total of 5,500 audio visual establishments in the North West of England, which together employ around 22,200 people¹⁴. These figures include all three sectors excluded from the Skillset Census estimate, but do not include freelancers.

Skillset's 2004 Census estimates a total of just over 7,100 people working in the North West on the day of the survey. This excludes film production, cinema exhibition, photo-imaging and freelancers not working on the day of the Census, estimated to be in the region of 1,150 people.

The balance between the Skillset and ABI figures is likely to be largely accounted for by employment in the photo-imaging sector. The region therefore accounts for around 8% of all audio visual employees in the UK, the largest audio visual concentration outside London and the South East.

As with the national picture, data from NESS suggests the industries in the North West are dominated by very small units, with 91% having a workforce of fewer than five and 98% employing fewer than 25. Only around 30 establishments in the region have more than 100 employees.

Table 1 shows a breakdown of employment across the audio visual industries from Skillset's 2004 Census. It shows that the North West has the largest concentration of people working in broadcasting outside London, with nearly 2,000 employed in terrestrial television, 1,300 in broadcast radio, and over 1,000 in independent production. The interactive media sectors are smaller than in some other regions but nonetheless significant, with electronic games providing employment for 950 (around 10% of the national workforce, the majority of whom

⁹ Office of National Statistics, mid-2002 population estimates

¹⁰ Labour Force Survey, Office of National Statistics

¹¹ North West Regional Economic Strategy 2003, NWDA

¹² www.englandsnorthwest.com

¹³ Aviation Cluster Mapping and Strategy Study, York Aviation for NWDA, March 2004

¹⁴ Annual Business Inquiry, 2003, Office of National Statistics

work in London and the South East), web and internet around 470, and offline multimedia 210. As in other regions, freelance working is most prevalent in independent production (57% of people on Census Day), commercials (56%) and broadcast TV (41%).

Table 1: Employment levels by sub-sector and employment status in the North West

	Employees	Freelancers	Total
Broadcast TV	1130	800	1930
Broadcast Radio	1010	270	1280
Animation	290	100	390
Cable & Satellite TV	10	20	30
Independent Production	470	630	1100
Post Production	160	40	200
Digital Special Effects	30	0	30
Facilities	140	110	250
Web and Internet	440	40	480
Electronic Games	820	140	960
Offline Multimedia	160	50	210
Commercials	60	80	140
Corporate Production	60	30	90
Other	60	30	90
TOTAL	4840	2340	7180

Source: Census, 2004

Recruitment

Recent research by Pye Tait on behalf of Skillset¹⁵ showed that between mid-2003 and mid-2004, audio visual employers in the North West were most likely to have recruited technical, creative and administrative staff. Around 90% of survey participants in the North West had recruited during the preceding year. Looking to the future, almost two thirds (60%) of respondents in the region anticipated an increase in their staff numbers over the next two years. Half of the employers interviewed expected their staff to increase by less than 25%, whilst 10% were expecting numbers to increase by more than this amount.

Education

The North West has 15 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The universities in the region have a combined annual turnover of £1.3 billion¹⁶, employing over 29,000 staff. There are 62 colleges of Further Education in the region¹⁷, who offer a wide range of A-Level, Higher National Diplomas, Foundation Degrees and other programmes, 27 of which offer specific audio visual courses. A further ten providers of audio visual training and learning have been identified in the region.

Annex A provides a snapshot of the audio visual courses currently available in the region.

Occupations

Data from NESS provides an overview of the employment structures of the audio visual industries, and highlights the concentration of high level occupations. Managers or senior officials account for almost one fifth (19%) of the workforce, 25% are classified as professionals and 16% as associate professionals. This is high – across England just over one third (35%) are employed in these three occupational groups.

¹⁵ Skillset Employer Survey, 2004, Pye Tait

¹⁶ North West Universities Association

¹⁷ NWDA Skills Team

Gender

Skillset's 2004 Census shows that over half (56%) of those working in the industries covered by the Census in the North West are female. This is higher than the national level of 50% because of the prevalence of broadcast sectors such as TV and radio which employ high proportions of women and relatively low concentration of the interactive media sectors which are more male-dominated.

Ethnicity

Ethnic minorities make up around 5% of the workforce of the North West audio visual industries according to the Census. This is a slightly lower proportion than for the UK audio visual industries, where 7% of the workforce is from ethnic minorities. However, this needs to be considered in a regional context: 5.5% of the regional population are ethnic minorities, almost certainly higher in the urban centres in which the audio visual communities are mainly concentrated.

Disability

Evidence from Skillset's 2004 Census indicates that only 1% of the region's audio visual workforce is thought to have a disability, compared with approximately 13% of the UK workforce.

Sub-Sectors – Brief Regional Overview

A number of studies have been carried out that have explored issues facing the audio visual industries in the North West. In many cases, these have covered the audio visual industries as part of a wider grouping, such as 'Cultural and Creative Industries' or 'Digital Industries'. This means that definitions do not always correspond to Skillset's footprint and in some cases there is overlapping coverage of some of the audio visual industries in parallel studies, which can make comparisons problematic.

Television

Television broadcasting is an important component of the audio visual industries in the regions and in the North West, Manchester is a large and established broadcasting centre and home of the leading regional TV centre outside London. The ITC's Nations and Regions report, published prior to the establishment of Ofcom, showed that Manchester produced 9% of the total hours produced, second only to London and it put Manchester second after London in terms of viewing hours.

BBC North West is based in Manchester with departments including News and Current Affairs, Radio and Music Factual, Religion and Ethics and Entertainment and Features, producing approximately 300 hours of regional television in the region annually¹⁸. Cumbria is served by BBC North East and Cumbria, based in Newcastle, in the North East of England. The BBC is working on substantial plans for the North West as part of its Out of London review with a proposed large number of jobs moving to the region from five departments by 2010 and plans to develop a Media Hub consisting of an Academy, Media Institute, Media Enterprise Zone and a Children and Family Learning Centre.

Granada, also based in Manchester, is the longest continuous independent television licence holder in the UK. It produces a significant amount of network and regional programming, including Britain's longest running soap Coronation Street.

Border TV, a subsidiary of Granada, is based in Carlisle and broadcasts to North Cumbria in the North West of England and Southern Scotland. The majority of Border's workforce is based in Carlisle, producing exclusively regional programmes.

¹⁸ BBC Press Office, 2003

Independent production is significant in the region. According to North West Vision, there are over 70 production companies in the region. Mersey TV is one of the largest independent production companies in the UK, currently producing Hollyoaks and Grange Hill. Mersey TV has also set up Conker Works, an interactive media company. Red Production Company was established in 1998 and productions have included *Queer as Folk*, *Linda Green* and *Clocking Off*. Other significant independents in the region include Turn On Television, specialising in factual entertainment, documentary, music and children's programming, Libra Television, specialising in children's and education broadcast TV and Multi Media Arts.

Independent production companies produce television (and radio) programmes for all the major networks. The demand for interactivity (through web, phone or enhanced television) and the growing market for low budget programming offer further opportunities and challenges.

Channel M gained the first Restricted Service Licence (RSL) in the North West, broadcasting throughout Greater Manchester since February 2000. Channel M was awarded a further four year licence from November 2003. In addition, there are seven cable and satellite companies in the region, including Channel One in Liverpool and MUTV (Manchester United's TV station).

Review of Public Service Broadcasting – Television in the Regions

Phase 1 of Ofcom's review of public service broadcasting identified programming for the nations and regions as an area that required further investigation. More detailed research is now being carried out as part of the Phase 2 review.

The model of regional television has come under pressure and there has been a criticism in the English regions that it is not sufficiently local.

Ofcom's analysis has suggested a four-strand strategy for the coming five to ten years, three of which relate directly to the English regions:

- using the period preceding digital switchover to explore and help develop different models of local provision;
- while local services are in their infancy, a robust service for the nations and regions should be maintained, retaining the strengths of the current model and enhancing plurality wherever possible;

securing a continuing role for ITV1 in the reflection of regional stories, characters, places and issues on its main network, with a high proportion of original production made outside London. The aim of this is to communicate the diversity of the UK to a UK-wide audience, whilst helping to sustain clusters of creative talent that will help support the further development of dedicated local and regional services.

Radio

The UK radio industry is dominated by the BBC's national and local stations and three large commercial radio owners: Capital/GWR, EMAP Performance and Chrysalis Radio – all of whom act as both producers and distributors.

GWR/Capital Radio Merger

The agreed merger will mean that the new group will reach 18 million listeners by pooling 55 local analogue radio stations, 93 digital ones and one national radio station. The deal brings Capital FM, Classic FM and Xfm together and creates one of the UK's biggest commercial radio groups. The advent of digital radio is seen as a driving force behind the deal, which should also lift advertising sales. Together, Capital and GWR will have 40% of the UK's

commercial radio advertising revenue - a market which is estimated at £660m annually - and reach 36% of the UK commercial radio audience.

Source. BBC News Online (29 September 2004)

There is a large radio sector in the North West, including four BBC local stations and approximately 30 broadcast commercial radio companies, a number of which are owned by the large radio groups. In addition to the public service and commercial radio stations, there are a number of short term RSLs around the region and two community radio stations developed by Radio Regen which was established in 1999 to offer radio training for the unemployed. The community radio stations have been run with long temporary licences. Radio Regen is currently working to establish a national centre of excellence for community radio.

The move towards digital radio broadcasting, and the proliferation of new stations as a result, is likely to fuel growth in this industry, but also fragment audience sizes, leading to reduced advertising revenues and production budgets. Digital radio has been adopted by both commercial radio and the BBC and there are local multiplexes springing up around the country. A number of digital multiplex licences have been awarded in the region. Digital radio production is also having a major impact on occupations and skills needs.

The Communications Bill will mean greater ownership and freedom, with the proposal that every area should have two (not three as initially proposed) commercial radio owners alongside the BBC. Analogue licence terms will be extended from eight years to twelve and the cross-media ownership rules have been clarified.

Some 50 new community radio licences are to be allocated in the coming months.

Film

The film industry is highly concentrated in London but there is a strong core of talented local directors and writers in the region. North West Vision's on-line database includes details of over 500 local crew and 500 location or production facilities. Merseyside markets itself as having the most significant film industry outside London.

North West Vision reported that 2003 was the busiest year to date for filming in the North West, during which they dealt with over 6,000 film enquiries. The Liverpool Film office (the first in the UK) has been established for over 14 years and reported over 612 days of filming in and around the region in 2003. The remake of 'Alfie', starring Jude Law, was shot on location in Liverpool and Manchester, generating over £1.5 million for the local economy¹⁹.

Cinema provision across the region is variable. Manchester has the second highest number of screens (80) behind Greater London, with Liverpool having 47 cinema screens and Bolton a further 27²⁰. In contrast, Cumbria has very little provision. There were a total of 416 cinema screens in the region in 2003 (only London and the Midlands had more screens), with 5.8 screens per 100,000 of population. There were a total of just over 18 million cinema admissions in 2003, with an average of almost 43,600 admissions per screen. This is a relatively low level of admissions per screen – only Wales and West, South West and Northern Ireland reported fewer. This is therefore reflected in the average of 2.5 admissions per person in the region in 2003, compared to four in London. Only the South West had fewer admissions per person than the North West (Border, the Midlands and East of England also recorded 2.5 admissions per person).

Commercial provision in the region is dominated by multiplexes. Cornerhouse in Manchester is one of the UK's largest regional film theatres and is the main centre for cultural provision. The Dukes in Lancaster is the only independent cinema in a large urban centre elsewhere in

¹⁹ www.northwestvision.co.uk/page/interesting-facts

²⁰ 'Statistical Yearbook 2003', UK Film Council

the region. The Brewery Arts Centre in Cumbria is a crucial centre for cultural film exhibition. Cinemas such as the Crosby Plaza, the Studio in Knutsford and the Plaza in Stockport are important centres for the community.

The region has a number of small to mid-scale film festivals. For example, North West Vision reports that the Kendal Mountain Film Festival had 8,000 attendees in 2003. Others include the Commonwealth Film Festival, Black Screen, VIVA and the Lancaster Film and New Media Festival. In addition the region has a number of film networks.

Corporate Communications (including Corporate Video Production)²¹

Corporate video production covers the broad categories of audio visual presentation equipment, video conferencing, corporate film and video production and business television. It is a sub-set of the corporate communications industry which provides a wide range of media services for business using traditional (linear) and new (interactive) media skills. The sector is represented by the International Visual Communications Association (IVCA). Corporate Communications includes:

- film and video production;
- live events;
- interactive media;
- web design, streaming etc;
- teleconferencing;
- hire and facility support services.

Altogether, it has been estimated that companies, communication agencies, and the associated hire and facility services, have a turnover of around £2.8 billion²². In recent years, the industry has contracted as a result of the general downturn in media and marketing spend. In addition, many of the established corporate production freelancers and SMEs are under threat from younger video producers, skilled in digital production and post-production, and willing to operate within much lower production budgets.

Much of the industry is based in London and the South East. There are workforces in corporate production and commercials in the North West, although this is an area where further information is required.

Facilities, Including Post Production

This sector supplies specialised technical equipment and services to every sector of the audio visual industries; almost every production will use at least one facilities company. These companies own and maintain high-value kit (cameras, cranes, lighting equipment etc) much of it leading edge technology. It is supplied on demand, a set-up which gives producers a good degree of flexibility. Facilities companies tend to be clustered near to the major centres of production and much of the workforce are freelance, many of whom got their start through a facilities company.

The facilities and post-production sector in the North West is seen as one of the strengths of the region. Based in Manchester, BBC Resources and Granada have joined together to establish 3sixtymedia, the largest facilities company outside of the BBC in London. Red Vision, based in Manchester pioneered the use of CGI in drama documentaries and event reconstruction.

²¹ Submission from IVCA – International Visual Communications Association

²² Figures provided by IVCA

Interactive Media

According to the Strategy for the Digital Industries in the North West of England²³, the 'digital industries', which include ICT and interactive media make a significant and growing contribution to the North West economy. The regional Creative Industries Strategy also emphasises the importance of the digital industries.

Computer games are recognised as a strength in the region. The North West, and in particular Merseyside, played a critical role in the development of the UK games industry and this is reflected in the pool of interactive software talent in and around Liverpool. Liverpool accounts for around three quarters of the games workforce in the region²⁴ and was described in the DCMS's Creative Industries Mapping in 2002 as one of the world's most important cities for computer games. However, the SWOT analysis of the Digital Industries in the North West suggested that the Liverpool cluster is threatened with being left behind by more dynamic and better supported clusters elsewhere in the UK. One of the key threats is that there is a lack of a recognized publisher in the cluster.

The M62 Games Network supports the PC/Video/Mobile game industry in the North, providing members with information about the industry, trade events and development services.

Media Training North West (MTNW) has commissioned research through its Game Plan initiative to explore the issues surrounding the very low levels of female employment in the games industry²⁵. The Game Plan runs skills development programmes to encourage young women to think about careers in games and to support them in getting there.

Animation

Skillset has described Manchester as an animation centre of excellence, with two of the four model studios in the UK based in the region – Cosgrove Hall whose core work is in children's animation, and HOT Animation, part of HIT Entertainment, which is one of Europe's leading model animation facilities and was responsible for the development of Bob the Builder and Rubbadubbers.

Recent Developments

The BBC recently announced plans to move significant production and commissioning out of London and into the regions²⁶. In particular, it has announced a new initiative that will make Manchester the UK's largest broadcasting centre outside London. A range of services are expected to move from London to Manchester in television, radio and online. In addition to the relocation of BBC services to Manchester, there is a commitment to building sustainable independent production across the region and developing broadcast talent and partnerships.

Manchester is one of only three UK cities to host an Internet Access Point (MaNAP). Other technological developments include the expansion of broadband, with significant investment by NWDA in improving the availability of broadband and enhancing take-up across the region.

The North West Development Agency (NWDA) has recently provided first stage funding of £1 million for North West Vision's Regional Attraction Fund to attract independent film and television makers to the region and support high growth audio visual businesses in the region.

The announcement that Liverpool will be European Capital of Culture in 2008 will ensure that there is a strong role for film and TV companies over the coming years.

²³ "A Strategy for the Digital Industries in the North West of England – SWOT Analysis, Strategic Framework and Action Plan", SQW Limited, October 2002

²⁴ 'Digital Industries SSPA Action Plan', e-skills UK, 2004

²⁵ 'Women and Girls in the Games Industry' and 'Why are there so few women in games?', Lizzie Haines Research, for Media Training North West, 2004

²⁶ 'Building public value – Renewing the BBC for a digital world', BBC, June 2004

3. Drivers of Change and Productivity

Seven factors have been identified²⁷ that are expected to influence both the shape of the audio visual industries and the skills that they need in future. These have been prioritised in terms of the degree of influence that they expected to have on the audio visual industries until 2010.

Based on what has happened recently and what we expect based on current trends, the seven drivers are:

- Demand;
- Technology;
- Regulation/Policy;
- Competition;
- Workforce Demographics;
- Education and Training;
- Globalisation.

Demand

Increasing consumer and commercial demand has driven strong growth in the audio visual industries over the past ten years. This demand is expected to continue to rise, although it will not affect all the industries in the same way.

The factors affecting this expected increasing demand relate to the performance of the economy generally and increasing disposable incomes. Also, the emergence of new storage formats such as DVD, new games platforms, the internet and the greater range of programming and channels made possible by digital TV have all served to unlock latent demand.

According to Screen Digest/ABN Amro²⁸, media dominates leisure time in the UK, accounting for 53 hours a week in 2000, close to half the average person's free time. Broadcasting dominates the time spent on media. Looking forward, it is forecast that all media usage will continue to rise, driven in particular by increasing use of interactive media, although TV viewing is expected to remain static.

The UK's audio visual industries have seen increasing success in exporting and international co-production in the past ten years. The change in rights ownership in the 2003 Communications Act provide a further spur to continued growth in TV exports.

Demographic changes will impact on future consumer demand, with the ageing population (the biggest consumers of TV and radio are aged over 65), increasing numbers of single person households and the population becoming more diverse in its ethnic make-up. These changes will impact on the nature as well as the scale of demand, but also on consumer tastes and values, with demands for increasingly targeted audio visual outputs and a greater degree of interactivity.

Changes in demand are not limited to consumer markets. There is expected to be continued strong demand for more sophisticated internet services and ICT and Interactive Media will become more central to the delivery of education and training.

²⁷ This Section is largely drawn from 'Overview of Anticipated Trends in the Future Use of Skills in the audio visual industries to 2010', BOP, Catalyst Media and Experian, for Skillset, September 2004

²⁸ Mediaphile 2010: A 25 year Analysis of UK Consumer Media, Communication and Entertainment Spend, Screen Digest/ABN Amro, 2002

Technology

The audio visual industries are being transformed by the introduction of new technologies. The period to 2010 will see continuing growth of digital television. By March 2004, digital television was reaching 53% of UK households (13 million). Four million homes have access to Freeview and take-up is growing at around 40,000 homes per week²⁹.

Members of the North West Audio Visual Skills Panel commented that the growth in the number of television channels leads to an increasing demand for content. However, this means that the price paid for production is falling, which is further driving the shift towards independent production and freelancing.

The UK is the leading interactive TV (iTV) market in Europe, with both enhanced TV services and standalone interactive channels. Five years ago, it had been expected that iTV would become a major growth area. Rather, there has been a gradual evolution. The BBC and Channel 4 have been instrumental in driving iTV in the UK and this commitment continues. The Charter Review process is likely to lead to increasing outsourcing of interactive content development to independent producers. With the continued spread of digital television, iTV is expected to continue to grow.

Ofcom has reported³⁰ that changes in technology and audience needs will create different and potentially better opportunities for serving audiences in the nations and regions. For example, there will be the potential to use new technologies to deliver news and information at the level that is most appropriate for viewers, capitalising on the interactive functions of digital television.

Film is likely to be the audio visual industry that will be most revolutionised by digital technologies. All of the technologies are in place to create an end-to-end digital film value chain. In post-production, digital non-linear editing has been in place since 1992. The introduction of digital technology means that, in production, Digital Video (DV) cameras have been quickly adopted for low budget films whilst high end (24P) digital cameras are already in use in mainstream motion picture production, although their use has been limited to date due to differences in quality between the images produced by digital cameras and 35mm film. As this quality gap is closed, the use of high end digital cameras will become increasingly common. There are currently concerns due to a lack of familiarity with the use of 24P among the UK's film technicians and cinematographers.

High resolution digital cinema exhibition (D-cinema) was launched in 1999, although its roll-out has been hampered by both technical and business barriers. Lower quality digital transmission of advertising, shorts and non-film content (E-cinema) is expected to have the greatest commercial impact on cinema advertising revenues with technology allowing greater flexibility and targeting by advertisers. Lower costs are expected to open the market to a wider range of advertisers.

DVD has been the fastest growing home entertainment format and is becoming increasingly more important to the economics of the industry due to their low replication costs. By 2010, DVD is expected to become the single most important income source, according to Screen Digest. DVD may ultimately be complemented, or overtaken, by film downloading from the internet.

Increasing computing capacity will extend the range, scope and performance of interactive media. With improved connectivity, interactive media will increasingly be accessed by portable devices, therefore increasingly permeating everyday life. Uptake of consumer broadband will continue to increase and is predicted to reach 60% of UK homes by 2010³¹.

²⁹ 'Freeview passes 4 million homes', on www.digitalspy.co.uk

³⁰ 'Reshaping television for the UK's nations, regions and localities', Ofcom 2004

³¹ 'The End Game: Winners and Losers in the Digital Decade', Spectrum Strategy, 2004

The coming together of computing, audio visual and communications technologies is becoming increasingly common and will continue to do so. Technological advances are leading to the convergence of functionality within single pieces of audio visual equipment, as demonstrated by mobile phones that are also Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), gaming consoles and cameras. Digital home entertainment equipment will increasingly combine functions.

The growth of opportunities for cross-platform distribution is being seen in the television and games industries already. In film, cinema exhibition is increasingly being used as a marketing approach, with revenues largely derived from television distribution, video and increasingly DVD rentals and sales. Digital technologies will provide the potential for broadband film clips and previews over PC and mobile platforms.

In computer and video games, the launch of a new generation of games consoles, which will be much more powerful than current machines, will enable innovations in gameplay and genres, including closer to photo-realistic graphics. This will mean, however, that the human and financial resources required to develop games for the new consoles will create a barrier and is expected to result in greater consolidation in games publishing.

New technological solutions are already being developed to bring down the time and costs of game development. The games industry is already becoming increasingly 'hits' driven, which limits the number of games that generate returns on the investment in their development.

There is expected to be convergence in handheld gaming devices. Also, after false starts, online gaming has begun to take off and improving the added value content and services available online is expected to be a key focus for the games industry. Other opportunities include wireless gaming, although the likely scale of this market is subject to widely differing estimates.

It is anticipated that the games industry, like music and film, will move towards domination by a small number of large, multi-national companies.

Regulation/Policy

The 2003 Communications Act has led to many changes in the regulatory landscape for broadcasting in the UK, including:

- the establishment of Ofcom, with responsibilities for licensing, mergers and competition;
- relaxation of ownership restrictions, leading to greater concentration of ownership, as seen with the consolidation of ITV into one company and the possibility for overseas ownership of terrestrial channels and cross-media ownership;
- a change in rights ownership, meaning that independent production companies will be able to hold on to programme rights;
- changes to the public service broadcasting obligations of commercial TV broadcasters, using an assessment based on the total output of all terrestrial broadcasters.

The BBC Charter Review in advance of Charter Renewal in 2006 may lead to changes in the way the BBC is funded and the licence fee used. In addition, the BBC recently announced plans to move significant production and commissioning out of London and into the regions³². In particular, it has announced a new initiative that will make Manchester the UK's largest broadcasting centre outside London, with a range of television, radio and on-line services expected to move to Manchester from the capital.

The Charter Review could also see a commitment by the BBC to exceed its statutory quota for independent production in television and its voluntary quota in radio. An impact of this move may be an increased freelance population, with a greater demand for business and entrepreneurial skills. However, in its review of production capacity, the BBC is committed to

³² 'Building public value – Renewing the BBC for a digital world', BBC, June 2004

ensure that reduced in-house capacity does not reduce network programme-making in the regions.

In 1999, the government announced its intention for analogue broadcasting to end by 2010. Whilst significant progress has been made in building take-up of digital TV, almost half of all households are still to move over to digital and it is therefore expected that 2014 is now a more likely date for the analogue switch-off³³.

The Treasury offers tax incentives for film production, with a new scheme offering 20% relief on the production and acquisition of British films due to replace the current schemes that will expire in 2005. Since the launch of the UK Film Council in 2000, policy has been shifting towards the role of film distribution in building a sustainable and successful industry.

The blurring of boundaries between broadcasting, telecommunications and interactive media will create issues for regulation in future.

Competition

Interactive Media is currently dominated by small and micro businesses and supports a large number of freelancers and sole traders. In the next few years, consolidation in the market is seen as highly likely, driven by mergers and acquisitions, in order to handle the increasing scale and complexity of interactive projects and greater integration in business processes. International competition may also become increasingly important for interactive media companies.

The business cycle of the games industry is linked to the creation of new hardware platforms, creating greater cyclical swings than are experienced in other audio visual industries. Software sales for the current consoles are expected to peak in 2004. However, many independent third party games development companies are struggling, especially as increasing complexity creates longer lead times and requires increased financial resources. Therefore, higher sales are needed to recoup costs, meaning that the games industry will increasingly be controlled by a small number of global super-publishers.

Demographics

The present composition of the existing audio visual workforce, combined with the changing nature of the labour market from which new entrants are going to come, has significant implications for future skills needs.

The industry workforce is skewed towards young, white, males in the context of an ageing, more ethnically diverse population in which growth in key occupations will be driven by women. The industries will need to redress these imbalances or risk suffering from a shrinking talent pool and a failure to capitalise on commercial opportunities associated with the changing population.

There are particular potential issues in some technical occupations in TV and facilities where a substantial proportion of the current workforce is over 50 and where there are already shortages of new recruits.

As the younger groups in the population experience little or no growth, or decline, the audio visual industries will be selecting the bulk of new entrants from a static or shrinking labour pool. The need for people to continue working until they are older will mean that there is an increasing need to re-skill existing workers³⁴.

³³ Market Assessment of the Audio-visual industries, Skillset, 2003

³⁴ 'Skills for Tomorrow's Media', Skillset/AVITG, 2001

Education and Training

Central government policy regarding post-16 education and training will be a major influence on the supply of new entrants to the industry. There will be a greater number of people entering the labour market qualified to degree level. This appears beneficial to the audio visual industries which rely heavily on recruiting graduates.

However, the increasing number of degree-qualified individuals will mean that there is a need for additional qualifications or experience, therefore raising the questions of what exactly is required and how these further needs are to be met.

Technological changes are leading to changes in the skills required in many occupations and there is an increasing shift towards multi-skilling (combining technical, creative and business skills) and the need for generic 'soft skills'. This therefore places an increasing emphasis on lifelong learning and continuing professional development. However, the need to assess how the audio visual industries will produce sufficient multi-skilled workers in what is already a very flexible workforce has already been identified as a key issue for the development of the sector³⁵.

Globalisation

Continuing global market liberalisation is expected to see the opening up of more service sectors in economies across the globe, providing potential markets for interactive media and better educated global consumers, with increasing literacy and numeracy leading to increasing media consumption.

However, increasing opportunities for the UK audio visual industries also create potential competitive threats through increasing access to the UK for foreign competitors and the potential for further outsourcing of services overseas. Lord Puttnam³⁶ has noted that, in connection with post-production, unless sufficient investment is made in talent, digital film work could be outsourced to territories with a lower cost base or better skills.

It has been suggested that this is perhaps even more significant in Interactive Media. The internet provides opportunities for foreign competitors to supply UK clients, whilst the outsourcing of development work to cheaper foreign locations is expected to increase. With this, they will develop increasing expertise, enabling them to compete higher up the value chain.

Skills Implications

The changes in the industries that are likely to result from the effects of these drivers in future will have significant potential impacts on the skills needed by the audio visual workforce and the way in which these needs are addressed.

Across all the audio visual industries, technological changes will impact on the skills needed in future. This will reflect both the opportunities presented by new technologies to offer new or extended products or services to consumers and new production and distribution processes enabled by technology.

It will be essential for those working in the audio visual industries to be aware of the changes that are occurring in their operating environment and to be able to address the skills implications if these changes are not to lead to gaps in the skills of the existing workforce or shortages of skills among potential entrants.

³⁵ 'Skills for Tomorrow's Media', Skillset/AVITG, 2001

³⁶ 'The Impact of Digital Technologies on the Film Industry: Opportunity or Threat?' speech to the CASS Business School, June 2004

The biggest skills changes anticipated over the period to 2010 are within the higher level occupations associated with business and creative strategy. This covers the range of occupations concerned with planning, funding, co-ordinating, versioning, aggregating and packaging and selling audio visual products and services.

The research into anticipated trends in the future use of skills identified seven priority skills areas for the audio visual industries that can be classified as 'company skills', which may be possessed by an individual or across the members of a team. In addition to these, five individual attributes have been identified as requirements in future.

Company Skills

Asset Exploitation and Management - the skills to manage and exploit the intellectual property resulting from creativity, flair and innovation. This is particularly significant for multi-platform content distribution, growing technological penetration and increasing regulation.

Risk Management – the risk management skills required will increase in importance, for example as games production budgets increase and multi-platform products are developed. The skills required include managing talent, concept research, spreading risk through co-production arrangements, quality control and insurance management.

Project Management – these skills are critical to achieve economies and remain competitive. This requires detailed operational understanding and a wider management brief. Increasing complexities from multi-channels and multi-platforms, and greater financial risks around computer games and interactive media production mean that sound project management skills are fundamental to future competitiveness.

Partnership Development – as new technologies emerge, a key requirement will be to combine them with existing channels such as broadcast, cinematic release and games publishing. A key aspect of this is the skills to seek out new partners through networking and tapping into industry intelligence.

Investor Relations – as a result of the creation of 'super indies' in television and radio and the increasing scale of projects in the games industry in particular, more audio visual businesses are having to engage with financial institutions. Both games developers and publishers have historically had difficulties in securing support from the financial community. If they are to exploit the opportunities available to them, they need to develop the skills to work with city investors.

Marketing and Promotion – effective product promotion is increasingly important in a multi-channel media-rich world, especially as competition is expected to increase.

Technical Expertise – it is expected that technological expertise will become increasingly important, with, for example, the move from TV transmission based on tape to a disk or solid-state based environment. In the games industry, there will be a need to expand expertise beyond games engines, animation software and rendering techniques to online software and mobile technologies.

Individual Skills Requirements

The following individual skills requirements have been identified as crucial in defining personal employability and in enabling companies to remain competitive in the marketplace:

Collaborative Skills – generic soft skills such as verbal/communication and planning, team-working, inter-personal and problem solving are expected to be increasingly important across all industries as they are central to competitive advantage.

Hybrid Skills – combining specialist and generalist capabilities (referred to as 'T-skills' in the Interactive Media Skills Strategy).

Multi-Skilling – the increasing need for a combination of skills that cut across traditional job roles and training classifications.

Self-directed learning – with increasing global competition, there will be a continuing need to invest in innovation and workforce skills. As the audio visual industries are dominated and rely on freelancers and small businesses, the responsibility for continued investment in skills rests with the individual to a significant degree.

Personal Attributes – in the audio visual industries, people need a combination of skills and attributes such as creativity and flair. For freelancers, self-promotion and self-management are critical qualities for individuals to compete.

The research into the future use of skills concluded that the audio visual industries are likely to experience significant changes, and significant increases, in the skills they need in the foreseeable future. The industries themselves need to respond to these changes, but so do those involved in supporting skills development – funders and providers of formal education, workplace learning and community learning.

Five questions have been posed for the audio visual industries as a result of the future skills research:

- Should the anticipated increase in skills be focused on those entering the industry, or on those already in it, or both, and how widely spread across the industry should it be?
- Can the skills be taught, or must they be acquired through experience and self-development?
- Can the skills be formally appraised, and accredited qualifications awarded?
- Who should fund the investment in skills?
- Who should receive the rewards from skills enhancement in the industry?

Productivity

Despite the difficulties in measurement, and the small scale of many of the individual employers in the audio visual industries, their economic importance should not be underestimated. In addition to their importance as employers, the audio visual industries excluding photo imaging are estimated to contribute £23bn (2.3%) to UK Gross Value Added (GVA)³⁷. Between 1997 and 2000, the industries grew by 11%, compared to economy-wide growth of just 2.8% over this period.

The UK audio visual industries develop significantly higher levels of value added per job than the average across the economy as a whole (see **Table 3**).

Table 3: GVA per Job - Audio visual and other industry comparators³⁸

Sector	GVA per Job £
Motion Picture and Video Production	55,400
Motion Picture and Video Distribution	195,200
Television and Radio	66,900
All Recreational, Cultural and Sporting Activities	27,900
All Service Sector	27,400
Production and Construction	40,200
All economy	31,300

The changes that take place in the audio visual industries clearly have the potential to influence the scale of the output produced and the efficiency with which this is produced. Increasing demand for audio visual outputs, especially with the development of new product and market areas mean that the potential total value that can be created by the audio visual industries in the UK could increase.

³⁷ DCMS “Creative Industries Factfile”, 2002

³⁸ Labour project measures from Annual Business Inquiry, ONS 2002

The introduction of new technologies in the industry provide the potential for the output produced per job to increase. However, much will depend on the extent to which new technologies are adopted and the skills required to maximise their use are developed.

4. Skills Needs in the North West Audio Visual Industries

The availability of appropriate skills is crucial to the success of the audio visual industries in the North West. It will impact on the ability of individuals and businesses to succeed in the context of significant change resulting from the drivers discussed above.

It is therefore essential to understand how well the industries are able to secure individuals with the skills they need today and in anticipation of future developments.

The recent Skills Intelligence Network (SIN) survey of employers in the North West of England provided views on recent and emerging issues for the audio visual industries in the region. The completed responses received in the region provide illustrative information on the issues faced by those businesses. The consultation processes to support the development of the regional skills strategy and action plan will be used to test the extent to which these responses represent the views of the industries as a whole and to identify areas that need to be explored further.

Recent Priority Areas for Training

Just over half of the respondents to the Skills Intelligence Network (SIN) survey in the North West had either delivered or funded training in the past year, covering both generic and sector or role-specific skills.

A wide range of role-specific training areas were highlighted, although none was mentioned by more than one respondent. These training activities should therefore be regarded as being illustrative rather than representative of the range of activities undertaken in the region.

Skills delivered through off-the-job training included:

- radio presentation;
- pre-production;
- technical drawing for television;
- photoshop;
- hairdressing/barbering;
- sewing/pattern cutting;
- model/stop frame animation;
- macromedia flash animation;
- 3D studio max animation, modelling and texturing;
- compositing discreet logic;
- sound recording.

On-the-job training delivered included:

- camera operation;
- sound;
- editing;
- PA continuity;
- make-up;
- production management;
- DVD authoring.

The generic skills training provided included management, employment law, first aid, risk assessment, fire safety and a range of IT-user skills.

One respondent working in studio and equipment hire specifically mentioned that they take on one apprentice every two years and make use of trainees from the local college on placements, with 12 students working across six departments.

Skills Shortages and Gaps

A skills 'shortage' is where there is a lack of adequately skilled individuals in the labour market. A skills 'gap' implies an area where individuals within the existing workforce have

lower skills levels than are necessary to meet business or industry objectives, or where new entrants lack some of the skills they need to perform effectively.

Skills Shortages

At the time of the 2003 NESS, it was estimated that 15% of audio visual establishments in the North West had vacancies. Around 6% of establishments indicated that they had hard to fill vacancies whilst a similar proportion specifically indicated that they had vacancies caused by skills shortages – a total of 405 vacancies.

On this basis, there is some evidence of the existence of skills shortages in the North West, although they only appear to be impacting on a small proportion of the audio visual industries. However, the evidence from the recent SIN survey and feedback from the North West Audio Visual Skills Panel suggest that this understates the true situation.

Two thirds of the businesses responding to the SIN survey in the region indicated that they had faced problems either recruiting staff or finding freelancers with the skills they required in a range of roles including:

- directors;
- executive producers;
- producers;
- production managers;
- production assistants;
- production runners;
- production electricians;
- make-up artists;
- wardrobe;
- design staff;
- location managers;
- stop frame and cartoon animators;
- projectionists;
- assistant dubbing mixers;
- accounts and accounts assistants;
- administration staff.

Skills Panel members reported that “there is a real dearth of writing talent in the North West” that could impact on both the quality and quantity of product generated. Panel members commented that producers need to understand how to develop writers and there is a need for support for writers. In taking the skills strategy forward, it will be important to explore how widespread such issues are.

Market conditions in the different audio visual industries are clearly having an impact on the reported skills shortages. For example, one animation business indicated in the SIN Survey that the number of stop frame productions taking place in London, Wales, Bristol and Manchester is contributing to increased competition for the most experienced individuals, whilst in cartoon animation it was suggested that declining demand in the UK in recent years has caused many cartoon animators to either seek work abroad or leave the industry altogether.

Members of the North West Audio Visual Skills Panel stressed the need for more companies of scale in the region in order to attract and retain talent, which would help to minimise the threat posed by a continued ‘brain drain’ to the South East³⁹. Whilst increasing production by the BBC in the region will help with this, Panel members suggested that it may actually create further skills shortages.

³⁹ ‘A strategy for the digital industries in the North West – SWOT Analysis, Strategic Framework and Action Plan’, SQW

In radio, two thirds of the SIN responses in the region indicated that they were experiencing no recruitment difficulties, one suggesting that a lack of demand from national public service broadcasters was the main difficulty they faced, rather than a shortage of skills. Again, in taking the skills strategy forward, it will be important to explore how widespread these illustrative issues are.

Responding to Skills Shortages

Due to small sample sizes in the NESS, it is not possible to identify the specific responses by North West employers to skills gaps and shortages. Nationally, the most common responses to skills shortages have been to re-define jobs (45%), increase training either for the existing workforce (43%) or to new trainees (19%). External responses are less common, but include expanding recruitment channels (34%), increase advertising and recruitment spend (33%) or increase salaries (29%).

Skills Gaps

The 2003 National Employer Skills Survey (NESS) revealed that an estimated 13% of audio visual employers in the North West experience skills gaps, with around 11% of the workforce (2,500 people) who are not perceived by their employers to be proficient in their current job. Across the economy as a whole, almost a quarter of establishments reported skills gaps, affecting 11% of the workforce. Therefore, fewer North West audio visual employers are reporting that they have skills gaps in their workforce, but they affect the same overall proportion of the workforce.

Nationally NESS has shown that larger employers are more likely to report skills gaps than smaller employers. However, the proportion of jobs affected by skills gaps does not increase as establishment size increases.

Skillset's 2004 Employer Survey asked smaller businesses about any gaps in non-specialist skills areas. The most frequently reported non-specialist skills gaps were in marketing and sales, both of which were reported by 40% of employers. A significant minority of employers (between 20% and 30%) reported gaps in a range of skills including general management, finance, book-keeping, personnel and legal affairs, all of which can have significant implications for business performance.

The main occupations affected by skills gaps identified through NESS in the audio visual industries in the North West are set out in **Table 4**. Over a third (35%) of the individuals identified as needing additional skills to do their current job work in administrative occupations, affecting 18% of employees in these roles. Professional and associate professional roles are each identified as accounting for just under one fifth of all audio visual skills gaps in the North West. Around 17% of the audio visual workforce working in skilled trades are identified as needing to improve their current skills.

The most frequently identified gaps in the skills of the North West audio visual workforce relate to what are often described as 'soft' skills such as problem solving (affecting 83% of the workforce of establishments with skills gaps), customer handling (78%) and communication (77%). North West Audio Visual Skills Panel members in the region reported that people often have poor 'soft' skills, which then impact on their ability to apply their technical capabilities. Just over one third (36%) of NESS respondents with skills gaps indicated that these gaps related to specific technical skills.

It is significant to note that three quarters of employers identified gaps in IT professional skills, whilst over two thirds (68%) reported needs in more general IT use – word processing, spreadsheets etc.

Table 4: Incidence of skills gaps by occupation in the North West

	N	%	As % of employment
Managers and senior officials	100	4	2
Professionals	490	19	8
Associate professionals	474	19	12
Administrative staff	892	35	18
Skilled trades	269	11	17
Personal service staff	0	0	0
Sales and customer service staff	243	10	9
Machine operatives	41	2	7
Elementary staff	24	1	9
Total	2,533	100	10
Weighted base	1,529	1,529	1,529
Unweighted base	45	45	45

Source: National Employer Skills Survey, 2003

The SIN survey in the North West has provided more details of a number of skills gaps, providing an illustration of some of the types of problems that are faced. For example, SIN participants in television have identified needs in relation to technical drawing, CAD, Photoshop, prosthetics, special effects and hairdressing. One respondent in radio indicated that few radio broadcasters have the skills needed to facilitate volunteer broadcasters in disadvantaged areas, which is particularly important in the context of growing community radio, which can potentially play an important role in increasing diversity in the sector's workforce.

In addition to these sample technical or industry-specific skills gaps, more general skills in relation to management and IT were also noted by respondents to the SIN survey, as were health and safety and key skills (literacy and numeracy). Skills Panel members highlighted the need for understanding of audiences and markets to underpin the range of other skills needed in the business. NMP⁴⁰ have highlighted the need for film businesses in particular to improve their marketing and sales skills.

SQW's report on the Digital Industries in the region⁴¹ noted that the industries are typically characterised by inexperienced business management, owing to their young nature.

The vast majority (95%) of employers participating in NESS in the North West reporting skills gaps indicated that these were impacting on their business. The impacts identified include:

- difficulties meeting customer service objective (66%);
- increased operating costs (61%);
- delays in developing new products or services (57%);
- difficulties introducing new working practices (54%);
- loss of business to competitors (47%);
- difficulties meeting required quality standards (28%).

⁴⁰ *ibid*

⁴¹ 'A Strategy for the Digital Industries in the North West of England – SWOT Analysis, Strategic Framework and Action Plan', SQW Limited, 2002

These are clearly potentially significant issues for the businesses concerned and any growth in the extent of such skills gaps could have significant implications for the industries as a whole.

Causes of Skills Gaps

The causes of these skills gaps are primarily due to staff being recently recruited or having a lack of experience (81%). Just over half (54%) of employers attributed skills gaps to a failure to train and develop their staff, which is clearly a significant need if employers are identifying significant skill needs among new entrants and inexperienced staff. Skills Panel members questioned whether employers are actually willing to pay for the right skills or if they have unrealistic expectations of what new entrants can carry out.

The pace of change in technology and practices in the audio visual industries is significant. This is clearly identified as leading to skills gaps in the workforce, with 42% of the employers reporting skills gaps indicating that an inability of the workforce to keep up with the pace of change was a contributory factor.

The opportunities for production companies to retain rights ownership will have significant implications for the range of skills they need if they are to capitalise on them. In particular, the North West Audio Visual Skills Panel suggested that this will create a need for companies to improve their marketing and negotiating skills, or the development of agencies to carry out this role on their behalf.

As technological changes lead to increasing convergence and cross-platform working, it is expected that there will be a need for people to develop the skills needed to work more flexibly. One of the key challenges facing businesses will be how to capitalise on the opportunities generated in this way.⁴²

Responding to Skills Gaps

According to NESS, the most common responses to skills gaps have been internal, particularly to provide further training (92%) and to expand trainee programmes (63%). Just over one fifth (21%) of employers indicated that they try to recruit staff to cover the skills gaps.

Impacts on Business Activity and Performance

Although the effect of skills gaps and shortages on employers' reported performance is important, the overall impact of skills issues on the industries is more complex. Many industries rely to a significant extent on freelance talent, whose skills development needs have been found to have been consistently less comprehensively addressed than those of employees. Therefore:

- some employers may not report recruitment difficulties as they very rarely recruit permanent staff, but experience skills gaps in the freelancers whose services they contract;
- others may not report any skills gaps at all among the freelancers they use, but equally take no responsibility for meeting the skills development needs of those individuals. Reliance on the 'market to take care of itself' and for those freelancers to continue identifying, meeting and funding their own development needs is a risky strategy.

NESS sample sizes do not enable analysis of the impact of recruitment difficulties at a regional level. From a national perspective, data for the whole Skillset SSC area indicates that hard-to-fill vacancies have an impact upon the business in almost all cases, primarily by:

⁴² 'Skills in the Creative Industries in the North West of England', Research Report prepared for SSPA, NMP, March 2004

- increasing workload levels for other staff (85%);
- creating difficulties in meeting customer service objectives (68%);
- causing a loss of orders (55%);
- causing delays in developing new products and services (39%).

Where employers reported skills gaps, the vast majority (95%) indicated that they are having an impact on the operation of their business. In particular, gaps in the skills of the current workforce are creating difficulties in meeting customer service objectives (66%); increased operating costs (61%) and delays in developing new products and services (57%).

Priority Areas for Skills Development

NESS data for the region revealed that the major areas of skills that need to be improved within the workforce are problem solving skills (83% of employers reporting skills gaps), customer handling skills (78%), communication skills (77%), IT professional (75%) and IT user skills (68%). In contrast to these more generic skills needs, only just over one third (36%) of NESS respondents identified particular needs in relation to technical or practical skills.

It is important that any response to these areas identified as priorities for skills development reflect the preferred mechanism to meet training needs. It is likely that highly structured, long-term training schemes will not meet the needs of small businesses in the way that they might larger organisations, and therefore focus should be placed on flexibility and accessibility of provision. Small businesses in the North West participating in Skillset's 2004 Employers Survey were most likely to identify short courses of half to one day as the most convenient way of delivering up-to-date skills and knowledge. They were least likely to regard paper-based training packages as convenient. Even so, a quarter of small employers indicated that such packages would be convenient. It is therefore important not only that provision is available in the areas where priority needs are identified, but also that there is choice, where possible, in the approaches to meeting these needs.

On this basis, there is a need for a clearer understanding of the specific occupations and roles which should be the priority for skills development from this point forward, taking into account the research and knowledge of regional organisations including Media Training North West, North West Vision, North West Development Agency, local Learning and Skills Councils, Business Links etc.

5. Meeting the Need

The identified and emerging skills needs can be met through a number of routes, including:

- pre-entry education and training, including formal education and training courses, community learning and access courses;
- on-the-job training or skill acquisition;
- formal training and development, possibly leading to vocational qualifications.

It is essential that the approaches adopted are appropriate to generate the skills required and that responses are planned and managed effectively. It is difficult to measure accurately the level of investment in training and development in the audio visual industries, especially as there is a heavy reliance on on-the-job training of varying degrees of formality.

Training Activity

The 2003 NESS has shown that almost two thirds (64%) of audio visual employers in the North West had funded or arranged training opportunities for staff over the previous year. This varies by employer characteristics. The smaller the employer, the less likely it is that they will have invested in training. The proportion of North West employers supporting training was slightly higher than for the industries across England (60%). NESS also showed that there is a clear connection between the existence of business and training plans and the likelihood that the employer will provide training for their staff.

Overall, it is estimated that 62% of industry employees in the region received training in the year leading up to the 2003 NESS, compared to the national average for the industry of 54%.

Table 5 shows the types of training provided in the North West audio visual and photo imaging industries during the 12 months prior to the 2003 NESS.

Table 5: Types of training provided over the last 12 months: the North West’s audio visual and photo-imaging sector

	%
Training in new technology	90
Job specific	85
Health and safety	61
Induction	41
Management	21
Supervisory	16
Training in foreign languages	2
Other	3
Weighted base	3,519
Unweighted base	124

Source: National Employer Skills Survey, 2003

The main type of training provided was in new technology (90%), followed by job-specific training (85%). Of those establishments in the region providing training in the past year, almost half (49%) stated that the training was intended to lead to a qualification. This means that just less than one third (31%) of audio visual establishments in the region had provided training leading to qualifications in the year preceding the 2003 NESS.

Frequency of Training

The Skillset 2004 Employer Survey⁴³ asked about the frequency of training provided to employees in the North West. Just less than one third (29%) of employers in the North West indicated that training tends to be provided on an ad hoc basis, whenever it is seen to be needed. The same proportion of employers stated that their employees receive training on a daily basis (although no specific information was available from the survey on the nature of this training).

Just less than a quarter (23%) of North West employers reported that their employees receive training on a weekly or monthly basis. Only 6% of employers indicated that training is provided to employees only every year or less frequently.

Smaller employers in the 2004 Skillset Employer Survey were asked about participation in training courses. It is significant to note that almost half of these employers (45%) stated that they or others in their business only go on training courses very rarely. A further 17% indicated that training was only infrequent. However, it should be noted that one fifth of survey participants from smaller businesses stated that they or others attend training courses very frequently, which is one of the highest percentages across all UK regions.

Freelancer Training

Around one tenth of employers in the region include freelancers in their company training. Areas covered include technical skills, health and safety and company-related skills such as sales or IT. The reasons given for including freelancers in company training included the view that freelancers can lack certain skills and need the training, although others commented that freelancers are included as the training is taking place anyway.

Training Delivery

By far the most common mode of training identified by North West participants in Skillset's 2004 Employer Survey was mentoring on the job by another senior member of staff, which was mentioned by two thirds of these employers. Forty per cent of North West survey participants send staff on external training courses, whilst slightly fewer (37%) identified separate in-house training sessions conducted by another member of staff as a common means of training provision.

Just over half (53%) of survey participants stated that mentoring on the job is also the ideal training mode, compared to 27% who saw sending staff on an external course as the ideal. Forty per cent of employers in the North West considered separate in-house training sessions to be an ideal means of delivery. In the Employer Survey, delivery of training in-house, either through on-the-job mentoring or internal delivery of training sessions by staff, were identified as much easier to find and arrange than external provision.

In-house training is most frequently used by employers in the North West to deliver technical or job-specific skills, which were mentioned by 79% of Employer Survey participants. Just less than half (46%) of employers stated that they use in-house training to deliver advanced IT skills training. Between one fifth and one third of employers stated that they use internal training to meet general skills needs, such as basic IT skills, administration, sales or marketing.

The survey response appears to indicate that the type of training used by audio visual employers in the North West is influenced by the ease with which they can be found and arranged. Internal provision (namely on-the-job mentoring and delivery by in-house staff) was considered to be significantly easier to source than external provision. On a ten point scale, where 1 denotes hard and 10 denotes very easy, the average scores were:

⁴³ ibid

- mentoring on the job – 6.67;
- in-house by own staff – 6.37;
- in-house by external contractor – 4.9;
- external courses/seminars – 4.4.

The skills needs most commonly met through external training are also technical or job-specific, mentioned by 44% of survey participants. Slightly fewer employers (39%) stated that they use external training to meet management skills needs.

Sources of Awareness

Skillset's 2004 Employer Survey found that a range of sources are used by North West audio visual employers to find out about training provision. The most frequently used sources of information are informal. Just over one third (35%) of employers used the internet to find out about training, whilst slightly fewer (31%) find out about training through recommendations from colleagues in the business. The effectiveness of the use of such sources depends to a great extent on the ability to make informed searches and on the knowledge and experience of the colleagues consulted about the range of training provision available. There is a significant risk, therefore, that it leads to sub-optimal information which may then limit the benefits and effectiveness of the training undertaken as a result.

Business Links were the formal source of information most frequently identified (mentioned by 21% of survey participants). Other formal sources of training information were mentioned only infrequently by North West employers.

Smaller businesses in the survey were found to use specialist magazines (58%) and relevant internet sites (55%) to keep up to date with regard to specialist skills. Just over a quarter (29%) of small employers use professional associations to keep up to date on specialist skills. When faced with a business problem, these smaller businesses are most likely to turn to another company in the same field of business (40% mentioned this). One third of these businesses would turn to their accountant in this situation, whilst 20% would approach their local Business Link.

In general, few employers in the survey were aware of whether external agencies offer a training needs analysis service. One fifth of employers knew of private training providers offering training needs analysis, such as Media Training North West. Around 17% of employers knew of Business Links offering such a service, but less than 10% of employers knew whether all other types of agency carried out training needs analysis.

Barriers to Training - Employers

The vast majority of audio visual employers have identified barriers to training. All but 2% of employers with skills gaps reported barriers whilst only 17% of employers without skills gaps indicated that there were no barriers to training. The 2003 NESS identified the following barriers to training:

- lack of time (83% of employers with skills gaps, 54% of those without);
- lack of funding for training (73% with, 38% without);
- lack of suitable courses in the area (71% with, 25% without);
- lack of suitable courses generally (69% with, 23% without);
- lack of appropriate staff cover (63% with, 39% without).

Responses from employers to the SIN survey in the North West provide further information on the nature of a sample of the barriers to training faced. Cost was most frequently identified as a barrier. However, this was not limited solely to course costs. One employer noted that a lack of specialist providers in the region meant that employees were required to travel long distances to participate in training. Travel and accommodation costs were therefore increasing the costs of training to employers significantly. The SIN survey provided an illustration of some other barriers faced by participating businesses, such as:

- inflexibility around course dates;
- difficulties in finding management training relevant to the audio visual industry;
- lack of reasonably priced out of hours training in high-end video graphics and DVD authoring.

Skills Panel members in the region suggested that smaller businesses need financial support to cover the costs of people attending training. This was also reflected in the responses to Skillset's 2004 Employer Survey, which asked smaller businesses about the factors preventing them from undertaking training more often. Around a quarter (26%) stated that training is both too costly and there is not enough time. One fifth of employers reported that training is too costly, with the same proportion reporting that there is insufficient time for training. It is significant to note, however, that just over one third (36%) of smaller survey participants stated that they have absolutely no need for additional training.

Barriers to Training – Employees and Freelancers

The Skillset Workforce Survey identified that barriers to training are extremely common from the perspective of employees and freelancers, around 90% of respondents having experienced difficulties when they had tried to obtain training or training materials. The key difficulties identified by employees and freelancers were:

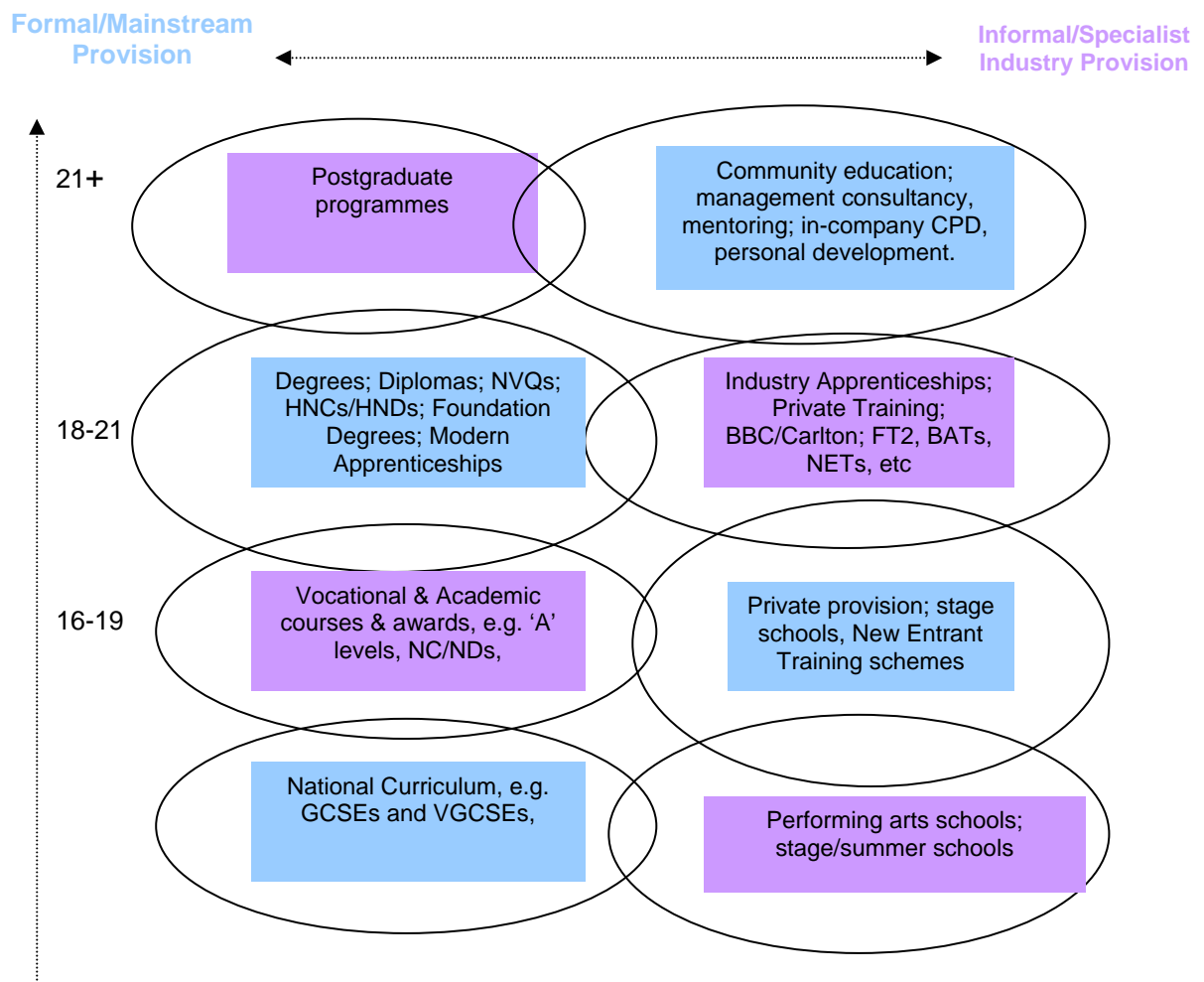
- fees being too high (39%);
- difficulties in taking time off work (38%);
- lack of suitable training (35%);
- employers not willing to pay for training (29%);
- difficulty in assessing the quality of courses (28%).

It is significant that freelancers are more likely to identify barriers to training than employees. This has significant implications when considering the most appropriate supply-side responses to meeting the training needs of the audio visual industries in the region, especially where responsibility for training lies with the individual. Collaborative approaches to skills development are seen as essential if workers in the freelance and independent sectors are to maintain and update their skills. A failure to support the development of the freelance sector could create structural weaknesses in the industry.

Range and Nature of Provision

There are a number of routes through which learning and training needs relevant to the audio visual industries can be met. This starts before people leave school and continues as they progress through further formal education, such as in colleges or university and into employment, as illustrated in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Types of Learning Provision



Further Education (FE) colleges offer post-16 learning leading to academic, professional or vocational qualifications. A large proportion of students in FE colleges are over 19, many studying on a part-time basis. FE colleges are increasingly developing links with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs – universities), providing opportunities to work towards higher qualifications such as HNCs, HNDs and increasingly Foundation Degrees that lead directly into traditional degree courses.

The majority of college funding is from public bodies, such as the Learning and Skills Council, but also through European funds and targeted government funding.

Broadcasters and independent production companies are involved in structured training for new entrants, leading to Skillset Professional Qualifications. Other schemes are available for freelancers. In addition to these structured programmes, as reported earlier, there is considerable reliance on on-the-job training, although this can be both time consuming and resource intensive.

Many public and private training providers offer tailored, informal or specialist training for professionals already in the industry; this increasingly includes universities offering training for Continuing Professional Development.

The 2004 Employer Survey found that audio visual employers in the North West are aware of a relatively large number of suppliers of relevant provision. Almost one third (31%) of survey participants were aware of ten or more suppliers offering relevant provision, with almost half of respondents aware of at least five providers.

Appendix A provides a snapshot of the audio visual courses currently available in the region. This shows that there are 27 colleges in the region offering courses leading to 'A' levels, Certificates and Diplomas. In some cases, colleges offer courses leading to undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications. Ten Universities and Higher Education Institutions offer audio visual courses from HND through to PhD level. A further ten providers are listed in the region, with provision ranging from short courses to postgraduate qualifications.

Perceptions of Current Provision

Education and Qualifications

The Employer Survey sought views on the importance of different types of training provision. Post-entry specific technical training was most often identified as important, with over one third (38%) of North West employers in the survey stating that such training is very important to them.

Just over half (54%) of employers in the survey reported that they regard pre-entry Further Education as of some importance. A significant minority of employers reported pre-entry degree level (45%) and pre-entry post-graduate (45%) provision as of some importance to them. Pre-entry community learning was less significant - only a quarter of employers rated it as being at least quite important. Smaller businesses in the survey rated short courses of half a day or a day as the most convenient way to deliver up-to-date skills and knowledge to them.

Skills Panel members in the region expressed the view that opportunities for non-graduate entry may be increasingly important and that relevant Foundation Degrees could also be a useful way of meeting the needs of the industries in the region.

Respondents to the SIN survey in the North West indicate that the media training provided by FE colleges and HEIs is sometimes too generic and there is evidence of a lack of satisfaction with the quality of Higher and Further Education. For example, one employer commented that recruits from Further Education who have been trained for a broadcast environment tend to lack both the commercial and interpersonal skills to work in a service-related business. Concern was also expressed that college provision focused specifically on the tutor's particular area of expertise and suggested that the introduction of guest lecturers would help to broaden course coverage (this was also reflected in the views of Skills Panel members).

As noted earlier, employers have found inflexibility around the dates of the available training and a lack of training to meet specific requirements.

The SWOT analysis produced by SQW in the Strategy for the Digital Industries in the North West identified a number of areas of strength in university and college provision for the digital industries in the region. Of specific relevance to the audio visual industries, these include:

- Liverpool John Moores University's Masters Degree in Computing Gaming Design, which was the first of its kind;
- the International Centre for Digital Content, also at Liverpool John Moores University. This delivers courses around digital content and multimedia production and is one of the region's most active R&D and production units for digital content;
- Lancaster University, which has been identified as one of the top three universities for research in multimedia.

PACEC's review⁴⁴ of skills provision to the Creative Industries in the region identified that the local LSCs in the North West are funding a large number of qualifications that are relevant to the creative industries (note that this scope is wider than the audio visual industries), although the majority have small numbers of enrolments, which may impact on their sustainability. The

⁴⁴ 'North West Strategic Review of Skills Provision: Creative Industries Sector Report', PACEC,

LSC funds two general media qualifications and design qualifications, including multimedia design, although geographic coverage of such provision is limited. PACEC found significant gaps in information on provision in relation to a range of important audio visual areas, including broadcast engineering, interactive media, radio production and sound operations.

In their review of skills in the creative industries in the North West⁴⁵, NMP state “there is often a tension between the demands of employers for specialised provision to meet perceived existing and future needs and the desirability for individuals to have recognised qualifications that are portable, nationally recognisable and improve long-term employability”. NMP go on to suggest the need for three different types of support to meet the needs of different businesses:

- large employers need bundled support and a wide range of technical, managerial and other skills. Typically, they have the expertise and spending power to dictate the services they require;
- SMEs tend to be run holistically, and do not see skills and recruitment in isolation from the rest of the business;
- Freelancers require delivery that is more flexible than is currently available. There is a need to develop closer relationships with this community, reflecting their critical contribution to the success of the industry.

In the context of the development of the Qualifications Strategy, views on the perceived importance of qualifications to employers and employees in the industry are significant. Just over one third (34%) of North West employers participating in the 2004 Employer Survey perceived qualifications to be ‘very important’ or ‘extremely important’. In contrast, 48% of employers surveyed perceived qualifications to be ‘not terribly important’ or ‘not important at all’.

Just over half of employers (57%) perceived that qualifications were important to employees. Almost one third (30%) of employers expressed the view that employees perceived qualifications to be ‘extremely important’, compared to 10% who perceived that employees saw them as ‘not important at all’.

Just over one third (38%) of employers participating in the 2004 Employer Survey in the North West viewed the offer of qualifications through training as of some importance in attracting new staff.

Employers were asked how far different qualifications add to or underpin job skills. Whilst a significant proportion of employers in the region indicated that post-graduate and first degrees are at least quite good, it should be noted that around half of employers (49%) stated that post-graduate qualifications add little or nothing to job skills and 32% said this about undergraduate degrees. Half of employers indicated that Foundation Degrees are at least quite good in adding to or underpinning job skills.

Employers in the North West were most likely to rate undergraduate degrees and specialist and specific diplomas as adding to job skills. NVQs were the qualifications that employers in the North West were least likely to rate as adding to or underpinning job skills.

Industry/Education Communication

When asked in the 2004 Employer Survey about the priority given to different types of external agency in discussing training issues, over half (54%) of participants responded that they regard private training providers as a priority. Given the importance of pre-entry FE and HE provision reported earlier, it is significant that only 14% identified either local colleges or universities as priority agencies with which to discuss training issues. Over a quarter (29%) of North West employers reported that they never use external agencies for advice on training issues.

⁴⁵ *ibid*

Feedback from the North West Audio Visual Skills Panel reported that information, advice and guidance is currently too vague and unstructured, with the suggestion of the need to work towards the development of a common standard. The lack of a clear standard means that the picture of what is available is confused.

The 2004 Employer Survey sought the views of employers in the North West on the extent to which external agencies understand their skills and training needs. Employers were most likely to report that private training providers understand their needs. Forty two per cent of North West employers reported that private training providers understand their needs very well. Only 18% of employers reported that universities understand their needs very well; 12% stated that the local college understand their needs very well. Almost half of all employers stated that colleges (46%) and universities (44%) didn't understand their needs at all.

Across all types of provider, at least 70% of employers in the survey who expressed a view attached some importance to improving their contacts with providers. In terms of the proposed approaches to improve these contacts, employers in the survey suggested visiting for general discussions (43%), corresponding with letters or newsletters (36%), providing detailed industry information (36%), sending staff as guest speakers (29%) and invitations to visit the company (36%).

The need to improve contacts with providers is demonstrated by the view from Skills Panel members that graduates are unprepared by the courses they take and have unrealistic expectations of the industry. Providing universities, colleges and other providers with a better understanding of industry needs could play an important part in managing these expectations. The SQW SWOT analysis of the Digital Industries in the region⁴⁶ identified a lack of bridge building between regional universities and small businesses as a threat to capitalising on the strengths that exist in the region.

Bespoke Training

Skillset's 2004 Employer Survey explored the willingness of different types of providers to tailor services to meet their needs. Around one third of employers reported that local colleges (30%) and local universities (34%) are willing to tailor their services or courses to their needs, compared to 60% who reported that private training providers would tailor their provision at least sometimes. One fifth of employers reported that local colleges would never tailor their provision, compared to 10% who stated this for private training providers.

The apparent lack of willingness by colleges to tailor their provision to employer needs is linked to the way in which they are funded. NMP commented⁴⁷ that "current LSC funding regimes restrict providers from delivering customised solutions. This will have to change if we are to improve providers' responses to employers' needs".

In addition to comments specifically in relation to training provision, one SIN respondent in the region highlighted the need for appropriate development support for new and small businesses. They indicated that the need was not necessarily for training, but rather for mentoring support from somebody who knows their industry and would be willing to share the benefit of their knowledge and experience. This view was also expressed by members of the Skills Panel.

⁴⁶ 'A Strategy for the Digital Industries in the North West of England – SWOT Analysis, Strategic Framework and Action Plan', SQW Limited, 2002

⁴⁷ 'Skills in the Creative Industries in the North West of England', Research Report prepared for SSPA, NMP, March 2004

Regional Support for the Audio Visual Industries in the North West

A range of support is available for the audio visual industries in the North West. Various elements of this support are described in brief below.

ACME - Merseyside ACME exists to support and develop the Creative Industries Sector on Merseyside. Managed by a Board of Directors consisting of industry leaders, partner agencies and local authorities, ACME was established in 1997. ACME provides information services directly to the sector and to its partner agencies and is responsible for the implementation of the Merseyside Creative Industries Sector Development Plan. ACME also provides and supports a range of help for businesses and works closely with partner agencies on the development and delivery of appropriate services.

Association of Studio and Production Equipment Companies (ASPEC) - Consisting of a number of leading Film, Television and Broadcasting facilities companies, ASPEC exists to provide a collective voice within the industry. Part of ASPEC's aim is to: maintain and enhance technical standards within the industry; ensure thorough standards of health and safety are adhered to; maintain professional working practices; develop and support new technologies; collectively promote the industry within the UK and around the world; establish relationships with other industry associations and unions; and act as a forum for positive, creative discussion.

BECTU (Broadcasting Entertainment Cinematograph and Theatre Union) is the independent union for those working in broadcasting, film, theatre, entertainment, leisure, interactive media and allied areas who are primarily based in the United Kingdom. The union represents permanently employed, contract and freelance workers within these sectors. BECTU offers a wide range of services to its more than 25,000 members, including:

- negotiating pay, conditions, safety and contracts with employers for individual BECTU members;
- personal advice and representation of individual members with employers;
- publishing *Stage, Screen and Radio* magazine ten times a year.

Business Links - Business Skills Northwest (see below) has direct responsibility for Business Link services in the region, co-ordinating the delivery of business support services with learning and skills support. There are five Business Links in the region – Cheshire and Warrington, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Greater Merseyside and Lancashire. The NWDA works with the Business Links and the Small Business Service (SBS) to align their plans with regional priorities.

Business Skills Northwest – Business Skills Northwest, formerly known as the Alliance for Skills and Productivity, was established in 2003 and is the Regional Skills Partnership for the North West. Business Skills Northwest brings together the key public sector bodies with an interest in skills in the region and is the primary link with government on skills issues. Business Skills Northwest's vision is "to raise productivity and economic competitiveness in the Northwest by stimulating enterprise, skills development, innovation and opportunity for all". It has five aims:

- to stimulate an enterprising economy;
- to raise awareness and demand for business support and skills solutions;
- to develop strong leadership and management in the workplace;
- to develop responsive, quality solutions to address skills and business support issues;
- to promote an inclusive economy.

The LSC in the region, NWDA, Business Skills Northwest and Jobcentre Plus have jointly published an Annual Statement of Learning and Skills Priorities⁴⁸. This sets out ten priorities:

⁴⁸ North West Annual Statement of Learning and Skills Priorities, December 2004

- tackling low skills and basic skills gaps to improve employability;
- providing entry routes for job seekers and the economically inactive to target employment areas;
- addressing the demographic challenge;
- ensuring the skills and employability needs of disadvantaged groups are addressed;
- providing the skills to meet sectoral challenges;
- tackling cross-sectoral leadership and management skills;
- developing enterprise skills;
- supporting and ensuring access to key employment growth hotspots;
- providing high quality, responsive support to meet the needs of both employers and individuals;
- stimulating the demand for further investment in skills.

This annual statement covers the whole skills and learning agenda, at all skills and qualification levels and across all provision for skills development, with a particular focus on publicly funded provision (especially the LSC, Jobcentre Plus, NWDA and HE). It does not cover non-skills related business development and so does not cover the full remit of Business Skills Northwest.

CIDS - The Creative Industries Development Service (CIDS) works to help new and established creative businesses in Manchester, Salford, Trafford and Tameside, whilst also taking a strategic overview of the sector, developing new projects in response to industry needs. Services include a free Information Service for creative business to help them find out what support is available to them, which can be accessed either through their website, factsheets, phone, or by email; publishing 'Creative News', a tri-annual magazine with an accompanying monthly email update. Strategic work has involved establishing and supporting networks including for computer games developers, developing trade opportunities, and providing networking events such as The Loop. CIDS is a non-profit making limited company funded by the European Regional Development Fund, the Northwest Development Agency, Manchester City Council and other regional partners.

Culture North West is the Cultural Consortium for the region, established in 1999 by the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport. Culture North West is involved in driving the Regional Cultural Strategy through:

- research;
- conferences;
- network development;
- fostering partnerships;
- signposting partners;
- influencing government policy;
- active public relations and advocacy.

Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs). The LSC's goal is to improve the skills of young people and adults to ensure that England's workforce is of world class standards. The LSC is responsible for planning and funding vocational education and skills provision throughout England. The LSC is therefore responsible for all FE and sixth form colleges, adult and community learning, work-based learning for young people and adults, such as Apprenticeships, and business and employee improvement services, including Investors in People.

The LSC's national priorities for 2005/06 and beyond are to:

- make learning demand-led;
- ensure high quality and relevant learning opportunities for 14-19 year olds;
- reform FE to attract more business investment;
- strengthen the role of the LSC in economic development, in particular in terms of supporting skills and retraining to help people access jobs;

- improve the skills of public service workers;
- strengthen the LSC capacity to work regionally.

There are five local LSCs in the North West – Cheshire and Warrington, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Greater Merseyside and Lancashire. The regional statement of priorities (see above) is intended to complement the LSC's national statement of priorities. The local LSCs develop their own priorities in the context of the national and regional priorities.

Government Office for the North West (GONW) represents central government in the region, particularly the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; the Departments for Education and Skills; Trade and Industry; Culture Media and Sport; Environment Food and Rural Affairs; the Home Office. GONW works with key partners in the region to increase its overall prosperity, promote sustainable development and tackle social exclusion.

The purpose of Government Offices is to manage regional programmes on behalf of participating Departments, to support and facilitate effective linkages between partners and programmes and to inform the development of Departments' policies from a regional perspective.

M62 Games Network supports the PC/ video/ mobile game industry in the North, providing up-to-date information about trade events, development services and access to associated agencies and talent pools. M62 Games Network produces a directory of games companies based in the North of England and provides members with business links, contacts, research and networking events.

Manchester Digital works to actively promote Manchester's digital business sector, to attract business and inward investment from the UK and worldwide by promulgating the excellence and diversity of the sector's leading edge services, products and expertise; communicating members' views to all audiences; encouraging communication and co-operation between members; acting as an information and knowledge source for members; representing members' interests to policy makers and opinion formers and promoting Manchester as the best 'can do' centre for interactive solutions.

Media Training North West (MTNW) aims to ensure that the media industry in the North West has the best talent and skills, identifying, nurturing and supporting the talent in the region to succeed in an increasingly competitive market. MTNW deliver new and innovative solutions in response to skills shortages and training needs identified through contact with production companies, freelancers and industry groups. MTNW is Skillset's approved regional training partner for the North West and is funded by Skillset, NWDA, UK Film Council, LSC, Europe and receives financial support from the BBC, Granada and EMAP Performance.

MITER – The Manchester Institute of Telematics and Employment Research (MITER) is a research institute at Manchester Metropolitan University. Its aim is to help make sense of ICTs and to maximise their potential for competitive, innovative business. The Institute has integrated business development programmes aimed at developing the region's digital media industries' suppliers and customers.

North West Development Agency (NWDA) is the **Regional Development Agency (RDA)** responsible for the sustainable economic development and regeneration of the North West. Its five key priorities are:

- business development;
- regeneration;
- skills and employment;
- infrastructure;
- image.

NWDA is involved in supporting the development of key industry or sector clusters in the region that can contribute to the success of the regional economy. The Creative Industries,

including audio visual, are identified as one of these clusters. The RDA is committed to supporting the development of the Creative Industries and the Digital Industries and has developed regional strategies to provide a framework to support their development, in the context of the SSPAs (see below).

NWDA is responsible for the administration of European funding in the region, including ESF co-financing resources specifically targeted at sector support, which will be focused on the SSPA sectors.

North West Sector Skills Forum – the regional role of the Skills for Business network is supported by the work of a Sector Skills Forum. This comprises the regional staff of each SSC and the SSDA Partnership Manager and provides a focal point for contact between regional partners and the SSCs in the region. The Forum provides opportunities for regular contributions and interaction between the network as a collective and partners in the region.

North West Vision is the **Regional Screen Agency** for the North West whose main areas of activity are:

- working with regional, national and international partners and funders to increase inward investment in TV and film production in the region;
- to develop the region's talent and support the development of product by investing in creative people and products that are diverse, distinctive and dynamic and originate from a broad range of cultures and backgrounds;
- to enhance the competitiveness, profitability and growth of media-related SMEs;
- raising the profile of the film and TV industry in the North West, increasing inward investment in the region.

In 2003, North West Vision secured £6 million of European Objective 1 funding to strengthen and develop the industries in Merseyside, with the aim of providing 200 jobs and supporting 75 businesses over a three year period. In 2003, North West Vision also distributed nearly £500,000 of Lottery funding. North West Vision opened its Regional Attraction Fund in late 2004, to support high growth television companies based in the region and independent companies seeking to move production to the region. It has already secured £1 million of funding from NWDA for this and is working to secure the next tranche.

Producers Alliance for Cinema and TV (PACT) is the UK trade association that represents and promotes the commercial interests of independent feature film, television, animation and interactive media companies.

Production Guild is the leading industry association representing the interests of over 600 individual members involved in the senior producing and production accounting grades of major film features and high-end television drama in the United Kingdom and abroad.

Sector Skills and Productivity Alliances (SSPAs) - have been established by NWDA to drive forwards the alignment of mainstream funding and provision and employer demand at a regional level in key sectors in the region. The audio visual industries are part of two SSPAs – Digital and Creative.

TIGA is the trade association representing the business and commercial interests of independent games development studios. TIGA's overall objective is to keep independent developers in the UK and Europe at the heart of the global Games industry, which means ensuring that the business environment in the games industry is favorable to independent development studios because there are a lot of them in the UK and Europe and because they underpin the industry.

UK Film Council is the Government-backed strategic agency for film in the UK. Its main aim is to stimulate a competitive, successful and vibrant UK film industry and culture, and to promote the widest possible enjoyment and understanding of cinema throughout the nations and regions of the UK.

APPENDIX A

A Snapshot of Skills “Supply” in the North West

Skillset has commissioned research into the supply side to evaluate the “fitness for purpose” of such provision for the audio-visual sector.

Consultants, Pye Tait Limited, carried out two main activities –

- 1) research and analysis of factual information derived directly from providers of training and vocational education, this research will help to identify the needs of suppliers to improve vocationally relevant industry training;
- 2) capture employer perceptions on the efficacy of training and vocational education provision in meeting their skills and training needs. Our regional Skills Panel discussions will contribute to this work and to the overall picture of skills supply in the region.

The following list provides a current snapshot of learning and training institutions in the region. It is drawn from the Skillset/BFI course database and regional knowledge.

Type	Institution	Type of Provision
	North West Vision Media Training North West	Regional Screen Agency Skillset approved Regional Training Provider. Approved Regional Training Partners are organisations throughout the UK that have undergone a rigorous assessment process to be recognised as meeting the high quality standards required by the audio visual industries

Further Education Colleges (FECs) & Adult Education

*Accrington and Rossendale College	5 courses listed – A levels through to BA Hons
*Blackburn College	7 courses listed – mix of Short Courses, Undergraduate and Diploma
*Blackpool and The Fylde College	14 courses – A levels through to MA
*Bolton College	2 courses listed – A level and Access
*Burnley College	5 courses listed – A levels, National Diploma and Open College
*Bury College	1 course listed – A Level
*City College Manchester	8 courses listed – mix of A levels, Foundation, GNVQ, HND and National Diploma
*Halton College	1 course listed – National Diploma
*Lakes College West Cumbria	1 course listed – A level
*Lancaster and Morecambe College	1 course listed – National Diploma
*Liverpool Community College	11 courses listed – mix of City and Guilds, HNC, HND, National Diploma and Pre Degree Foundation
*Manchester College of Arts and Technology	23 courses listed – mix of Short Courses, BTEC, HNC, HND
*Mid-Cheshire College	3 courses listed – Foundation Degree, HND and New Horizon New Media
*Ridge Danyers College	1 course listed – A level
*South Cheshire College	3 courses listed – AS/A2 level, GNVQ and National Diploma
*South Trafford College	3 courses listed – AS/A2 level, BTEC and National Diploma

*Southport College	1 course listed – National Diploma
*St Helens College	24 courses listed – mix of AS level through to BA Hons
*St Mary's College	2 courses listed – AS/A level
*Tameside College	9 courses listed – GSCE through to National Diploma
*The Oldham College	5 courses listed – BTEC through to HND
*Warrington Collegiate Institute	1 course listed - HND
*West Cheshire College	4 courses listed – BTEC and National Diploma
*Wigan and Leigh College	1 course listed – National Diploma
*Wirral Metropolitan College	6 courses listed – mix of Short Courses through to BA Hons
*Stockport College of Further and Higher Education	8 courses listed – mix of short course through to BA Hons

Universities/ Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

*Bolton Institute of Higher Education	22 courses listed – BA Hons and Combined
*Chester College of Higher Education	8 courses listed – BA Hons and MA
*Edge Hill College of Higher Education	3 courses listed – BA Hons
*Lancaster University	6 courses listed – BA Hons, BSc, MA and MPhil and PhD
*Liverpool John Moores University	11 courses listed – BA Hons and MA and PgDip
*Manchester Metropolitan University	7 courses listed – BA Hons, BSc and MA
*University of Central Lancashire	10 courses listed – BA Hons through to MA and PgDip
*University of Liverpool	5 courses listed – BA Joint Hons and MA
*University of Manchester	5 courses listed – BA Hons, Diploma, MA, Med and MPhil and PhD
*University of Salford	17 courses listed – mix of HND through to MA and PgDip

Other Providers

*Hulme Adult Education Centre	5 courses listed – mix of Short Courses, Scriptwriting, Diploma and Video Production
*Digital Cut	10 courses listed – mix of Short Courses
*MITES	22 courses listed – mix of Short Courses
*WFA Media and Cultural Centre	27 courses listed – mix of Short Courses and 1 City & Guilds
*First Take	1 Short Course listed
*Cornerhouse	1 Short Course listed
*Cumbria Institute of the Arts	3 courses listed – BA Hons and National Diploma
*The Ariel Trust Ltd	2 Short Courses listed
*Women's Independent Cinema House	7 courses listed – mix of Short Courses and Media Placement Programme + BE@Witch

* Course details listed on the Skillset/BFI database – – <http://www.bfi.org.uk/education/courses/mediacourses/> - listing over 4,000 film, tv, video, radio and web authoring courses listed

Appendix B

Glossary of terms

CPD - Continuous Professional Development - Typically for individuals already working in the industry.

CoVEs - Centres of Vocational Excellence in Further Education. Recognised and awarded by the Learning and Skills Council in England.

DCMS - Department for Culture, Media and Sport - responsible for Government policy on the arts, sport, the National Lottery, tourism, libraries, museums and galleries, broadcasting, film, the music industry, press freedom and regulation, licensing, gambling and the historic environment.

DfES - Department for Education and Skills - responsible for Government policy on education and skills in the UK.

DTI - Department for Trade and Industry – has the clear aim of generating wealth for everyone in the UK by helping people and businesses to become more productive and successful. It provides a regulatory framework to ensure that consumers and employees receive a fair deal, sets the policies, promotes best practice and delivers practical solutions to achieve long term prosperity for all.

ESF – European Social Fund - designed to strengthen economic and social cohesion in the European Union, it will provide about £4.5 billion in Great Britain (£3.5 billion in England) from 2000 – 2006. The ESF aims to: help unemployed and inactive people enter work; provide opportunities for people at a disadvantage in the labour market; promote lifelong learning; develop the skills of employed people; improve women’s participation in the labour market.

ETP – Employer Training Pilots (LSC).

EU – European Union.

FE – Further Education.

FRESA - Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action - sets out how a regions’ key funding and planning organisations will work together to ensure that the region can maintain and improve on its position as a leading global economic one.

Film Skills Fund - a £10 million a year fund over the next five years to support The UK Film Skills Strategy – *The Bigger Future*. Made up of National Lottery funds delegated to Skillset from the UK Film Council, contributions from the industry to the Skills Investment Fund, as well as Skillset, industry, public and European funds.

FTF – Freelance Training Fund - makes grants to organisations and individuals to deliver or attend training and development activities that will benefit the UK broadcast industry. The fund is supported by the major employers in broadcast and independent production for television: the BBC, Channel 4, ITV and the Independent Production Training Fund (administered by PACT, the producers Alliance for Cinema & Television).

HE - Higher Education.

HEFCE - Higher Education Funding Council for England - Distributes public money for teaching and research to universities and colleges.

HEI – Higher Education Institution.

Learndirect - A network of online learning and information services. Learndirect is a government-sponsored initiative in flexible learning, intended to make possible the vision of a 'learning society' where everyone can learn and upgrade their skills throughout life.

LMI – Labour Market Intelligence.

LSC - Learning and Skills Councils - The Learning and Skills Council is responsible for funding and planning education and training for over 16-year-olds in England. With a budget of over £8 billion (2003-04) the Council operates through 47 local offices and a national office in Coventry.

MA - Modern Apprenticeships - A 16+ government funded vocational qualification for those in work or unemployed which leads to achievement of a NVQ.

Masterclasses - Intensive definitive sessions with highly experienced professionals.

National Skills Strategy - The Government's flagship strategy for skills development in England. Details how employers, education organisations, individuals and public agencies across all sectors should work together to improve skills levels.

NOS - National Occupational Standards – Statements of performance which describe what competent people in particular occupations are expected to be able to know and do.

NVQ – National Vocational Qualification.

RDA – Regional Development Agency.

QCA – Qualification and Curriculum Authority – maintains and develops the national curriculum and associated assessments, tests and examinations; and accredits and monitors qualifications in colleges and at work. In Scotland SQA (Scottish Qualifications Authority); in Wales ACCAC (Qualifications, Curriculum & Assessment Authority); and in Northern Ireland CCEA (Council for Curriculum, examinations & Assessment).

RDA - Regional Development Agencies - primary role is to strategically drive regional economic development. Established under the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998, they are non departmental bodies funded by Government through the Department of Trade and Industry.

RSA - Regional Screen Agency – development agencies charged with building vibrant and sustainable media sectors within the English Regions and encouraging public access to film culture. A screen agencies goal is to develop, strengthen and promote their region's film culture and industry by maximising potential for talent and crews, for audiences, for education, for production and distribution, and for resources in the film and media sector.

RSL - Restricted Service Licence, awarded to local television stations with a four year licence to broadcast to a restricted area.

RSP – Regional Skills Partnership (RDA/LSC).

SBS – Small Business Service (RDA).

SIC – Standard Industrial Classification.

SIF - Skills Investment Fund - Levy collected and administered by Skillset and made up of contributions from all productions due for theatrical release that are based in the UK or are in receipt of UK public funding.

Skillset - The Sector Skills Council for the audio visual industries which include Broadcast, Film, Video, Interactive media and Photo Imaging.

Skillset Approved Training Partner - An organisation which has demonstrated that the training it offers meets the standards needed by the audio visual industries.

Skills for Business Network - A UK wide network of Sector Skills Councils that has been charged to lead the skills and productivity drive in industry or business sectors recognised by employers.

Skills gap - A gap within the knowledge, experience or expertise of an individual.

Skills shortage - A shortage of a specifically skilled individual within the workforce a sector.

SME - Small and Medium Enterprises – businesses employing up to 199 employees (LSC definition).

SOC – Standard Occupational Classification.

SSA - Sector Skills Agreements - UK wide agreements between employers and training providers brokered by Sector Skills Councils. SSAs give employers more say in determining the skills their business needs to increase productivity and profitability and will make sure the public education and training system delivers these needs. SSAs are being piloted by four SSCs: Skillset; e-skills UK; CITB and Skillsfast UK.

SSC - Sector Skills Councils – Independent, industry lead, UK wide organisations developed by groups of influential employers in industry or business sectors of economic or strategic significance and licenced by the Sectors Skills Development Agency (SSDA) SSCs are not public agencies but are in receipt of limited public funds. However, they have a key role in influencing where public investment in training and education for the sector is made.

SSDA - Sector Skills Development Agency - A non-departmental government body with a UK-wide remit formed on 1 April 2002. The SSDA's primary function is to improve the productivity of UK plc by tackling skills gaps and deficiencies through the development and funding of a network of employer-led Sector Skills Councils (SSCs).

Structured training - Training built around a framework designed to achieve a specific level of expertise or qualification.

Vocational - Structured programs of practical learning designed to develop occupation skills. Sometimes described as practice based.

WBL – Work Based Learning (LSC).

WfD – Workforce Development (LSC).

Appendix C**North West Regional Skills Panel**

Paul Atkinson	BECTU
Ian Bent	BBC
Andrew Critchley	Red Productions
Brendan Dawes	Magnetic North
Angela Edge	EMAP
Mike Hally	Pennine Productions
Lee Hardman	Mersey TV
Paul Holmes	Wire FM
Bob Horsefield	Web Lighting
Phil Korbell	Radio Regen
Gareth Langlely	Stardotstar
Julie Lau	LA Productions
Chris Lunt	Red Vision
Lynne McCadden	Media Training North West
Margaret McClelland	BBC (Chair)
Colin McKeown	LA Productions
Alice Morrison	North West Vision
Dave Moutrey	Cornerhouse
Eamonn O'Neal	Granada
Phil Reevell	City Broadcasting Ltd
Holly Rowan	Skillset
Margaret Scott	PACT
Dave Spinks	Granada
Ben Turner	Cosgrove Hall
Lawrence Van Reiss	BECTU
John Wood	

Appendix D**Acknowledgements**

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NWDA	Jean Llewellyn (Skills Policy) Andy Lovatt (Creative Industries Lead)
LSC	David Brennan (Creative Industries Lead)
Creative SSPA	NWDA, Business Skills Northwest, LSC, Business Link, NW RIU, CIDS
Digital SSPA	Via Ray Snowden, E-skills (Chair)
NWUA	Celia Brigg
MTNW	Lynne McCadden
North West Vision	Alice Morrison

Appendix E

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Appendix F

Collaborative Working with other Sector Skills Councils

Management and Leadership

- Melanie Shee is looking at the cross sector standards;
- Kate O'Connor is on the cross sector board.

IT User Skills

- Skillset is represented on the Cross Sector Board, led by e-skills UK, by Paula Moses. This Board identifies and develops key projects to enable employers and individuals to understand and exploit IT to improve their productivity and effectiveness;
- Ian Lube acts as an IT User Skills Champion to take forward this work.

National Occupational Standards

- Working with Construction Skills on their revision of Accessing and Rigging Standards which apply to our riggers.
- Working with Lantra on Animal Care. We have created a new pathway in the Level 3 NVQ for Animal Care and are working with Lantra on higher level standards;
- Worked with SEMTA to contextualize the Engineering Competence Statements to create Standards for Broadcast Engineers.

Qualifications

- Working with other SSCs (e.g. e-skills UK & Skillsmart) to discuss SfB network views on accreditation or endorsement of Foundation Degrees against our Sector Foundation Degree Frameworks.

Job profiles

- Working with Creative & Cultural Skills SSC on job profiles for Performers.

Apprenticeships

- Liaising with Creative & Cultural Skills SSC on their development of Creative Apprenticeships.

Information, Advice and Guidance

- Skillset are leading on a major project, supported by the SSDA, to establish, on behalf of the whole Skills for Business Network, our role in careers IAG;
- Working with other SSCs and public agencies, the project is one of several under the 'Employability' strand of SSDA cross-sector skills initiatives, where the Skills for Business Network is seeking to collectively address skills issues that apply across our respective industry sectors.