1. INTRODUCTION

Digital Media U (DM-U) is a European Union assisted project, run by MITER\textsuperscript{26} at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU). It responds to the demand for skills development in Digital Media, a sector considered vital to the economy of the North West\textsuperscript{27} of England. Project partners include IBM, FD Learning, and Macromedia.

The first conceptual challenge is related to the discrete nature of the industry, which would seem to preclude setting up a corporate university. Conversely, there is no professional association to represent the numerous micro enterprises and to organize training and qualifications.

DM-U is predicated on a ‘cluster’ view of digital media in the region, as applied by the North West Development Agency (NWDA) Regional Strategy 2003, and our knowledge of the sector and the relationships among its members induced us to see it in terms of a supply chain, leading to the idea of a ‘sectoral university.’ DM-U’s development is influenced by examples of:

\textsuperscript{26} Manchester Institute of Telematics and Employment Research
\textsuperscript{27} This spelling reflects NWDA, the North West Development Agency in the United Kingdom.

M.K. McCuddy et al. (eds.), 
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DM-U will provide a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) service for professionals in the sector, who will join as members. The emphasis will be on easy and instant accessibility and the service will be both personalized to the member and customized for specific sub-sectors— for example, e-learning or games. Members can enter at various levels and choose their own pathways through the materials and resources.

DM-U will offer a blend of online and offline courses, enhanced and supported by a range of learning and support facilities. The CPD Framework will be underpinned by external and internal accreditation, allowing credits towards MMU awards. DM-U is built on an innovative conceptual model, where the learning and knowledge management functions interact to offer learning programs and sharable resources, such as case studies and project rooms.

It is intended to exploit the relationships among members and project partners to create a ‘sectoral learning community,’ which will influence curriculum development. This sectoral learning community will be formed by MMU, MITER and its networks, project partners, educational institutions, and learners and their organizations.

This paper provides a work in progress report, focusing on:
- The Digital Media sector and the demand for learning.
- Adapting the Corporate University (CU) model.
- Building the curriculum and acquiring content.
- Building a model to link assessment and accreditation.
- Progress on the project to date.

2. BACKGROUND

MITER’s EU funded projects over the past five years have focused on the creative and digital industries. The project benefits, in terms of experiences, expertise, networks and research results, are now being combined in our two main projects, DM-U and Digital Media Watch (DM-W), an industry monitoring and intelligence gathering service. DM-W, through its annual survey and news service, will be a key provider for DM-U’s information resources.