Editorial

Multimedia communication technologies are becoming more and more important both in our private and professional lives. They provide us with many great possibilities to spread information, knowledge and know-how all over the world. The BIE has always had the mission of promoting the EXPOs legacy and supporting an international dialogue among governments, members of civil society and experts concerned with the most important issues of today. In order to achieve these goals, the growing trend to use new technologies must be taken into account. As a result, in 2011, the BIE began an exclusive partnership with Crystal CG, one of the first global companies in visual communication. Crystal CG has a strong record of participation in different EXPOs projects such as Aichi 2005, Saragossa 2008, Shanghai 2010 and Yeosu 2012.

This partnership has led to the creation of the BIE Multimedia Exhibition and Training Centre both based in Paris and that have opened in July 2012. The Centre is equipped with advanced digital facilities which are available to delegates, organizers of future EXPOs and other experts to assist them in their work, to allow them to better understand the past EXPOs and to be able to prepare future ones using modern technologies. This is a very unique tool and only a few international organizations have the chance to own one. Members of the BIE Committees, delegations of EXPOs candidate countries and members of EXPOs host countries have already had the opportunity to visit the Centre during its first months of activity and were able to appreciate its high level of competence.

I strongly encourage all the delegates and members of the big « EXPOs family » to visit it. This Centre has been created for you and it is only thanks to your concern, your involvement and your contribution that it will continue to function and improve.

Interactivity is the key of this new BIE project - which coincides perfectly with the spirit of the world of multimedia and the extraordinary world of EXPOs.

Vicente González Loscertales
Secretary General of the BIE
Crystal and Expos

Crystal CG is no stranger to the world of International and Universal Expos, through its regular support to China’s participation in World Expos (Aichi 2005, Zaragoza 2008). Crystal CG has proven to be the ideal Visual Design and Exhibition Design service provider for the World Expo 2010 Shanghai. Furthermore, Crystal CG was the producer of the first World Virtual Expo or “Shanghai Expo Online” and the designer and creator of the “Qing Ming Festival Along the riverside” exhibition, the China National Pavilion’s main attraction.

For this project, Crystal CG has received several internationally acclaimed and respected awards like THEA Gold Award (Theme Entertainment Association), The IVCA Creative award (International Visualisation and Communication Association) and the EMF (European Multimedia Forum) European Platinum seal of excellence, to name a few. Even this year Crystal CG was the Exhibition Service Provider of the Marine Life Pavilion and the digital contents Provider of the BIE Pavilion “EXPO x EXPOS” at the Yeosu Expo 2012.

Crystal and Mega-Events

Crystal CG is widely recognized for its expertise and technical capabilities to deliver the most comprehensive and richest visual experience on the biggest scale and limited only by the imagination. Its creative visual solutions have powered notable events such as the 2008 Beijing Olympics (Opening and Closing Ceremonies), and the 2011 Shenzhen Universiade. In March 2009, Crystal CG was recognized as the official digital imaging service supplier for the 2012 London Olympics.

July 28, 2012 - The London 2012 Opening Ceremony saw an animated display of images from Crystal stretching across the entire expanse of audience seating from the arena itself to the edge of the Olympic stadium, that is to say 900 m of length in total.

The giant video screen was made up of small paddle-shaped LED Pixel Tablets designed by Tait Technologies, each attached to a seat in the stadium and bearing 9 full colour pixels arranged in a square. Together, the 70,500 Pixel Tablets created a ‘human powered’ screen of extraordinary size (but with a resolution of « only » 634,500 pixels !), on which Crystal’s spectacular digital animations were displayed.

Designed to support and extend the live action of the ceremonies, this is the first time that Pixel Tablets have been used to create such a vast, immersive display during a live event.

The project was delivered in just 14 weeks thanks to the work of a team of 50 designers from Crystal London and the support of Crystal Group. The first tests were performed in the Olympic Stadium on July 10. More than 70 minutes of animations were designed for the concave, bowl shape of the 360° screen.

“The audience literally became part of the action. No longer limited by large flat screens, we were presented with the challenge of creating animations to bring the stage and the spectators together,” said Will Case, creative director at Crystal. “We delivered. The live audience and those watching at home were drawn into the action. We are witnessing the death of the traditional video screen – this will transform the way event content is presented in the future, becoming a more immersive experience.”
Jointly created by the BIE and Crystal CG, this new site, located in Paris, Avenue des Champs Elysées, is dedicated in the promotion of the history of international exhibitions and will be used as a research and training Centre.

The Centre houses a permanent exhibition highlighting the history of BIE and Expos and it also welcomes events. The Centre also features meeting rooms where to discuss Expos as well as a digital research library for BIE Delegates, researchers, professors, students and organizers of future exhibitions.

The Centre held its official opening on July 27th, 2012.

Crystal CG, one of the world’s leading Visual Communication and Design Services company, entered last year in an exclusive Strategic Partnership contract with the BIE (Bureau international des Expositions). The objective of this exclusive partnership was to build the world’s first “Multimedia Exhibition and Training Centre” for the BIE. This project, a 100% funded by Crystal CG, has the mission to inform present and future BIE Member delegates, Expo organizers, candidates and participants concerning Expo history and the BIE organizational infrastructure and background.

Pascal Deseure, in charge of the Centre, Managing Director of Crystal CG Paris, notes “Crystal is a visual solutions pioneer with experience in the industry. We look forward to demonstrate the power of visual design & technology to deliver messages from event sponsors and host cities on a grand scale, and to play a key role in the continuing success of BIE in the world.”

The BIE Multimedia Exhibition and Training Centre is located at Crystal CG’s Parisian office, 125 avenue of the Champs Elysées, in a 240 m² space.

Further the Strategic Partnership Agreement signed between the BIE and Crystal CG, five spaces have been created: the reception, the meeting room, the exhibition space and the Digital Library. The reception area welcomes the visitor with a presentation linking BIE and Crystal.

MicroTiles projection cube units displays, on one of the reception screen, information about the BIE (Member States and flags, BIE Committees, BIE values, etc.) and on Crystal’s realizations in Expos.

Each MicroTile unit contains a short-throw projector based on an LED light source and DPL optical imaging. The picture is formed onto the detachable front screen surface. The building-block nature of the MicroTiles modular system allows to create a digital configuration of any shape and size. MicroTiles display is built for the long run and specifically designed for maximum image quality, taking display technology into a new frontier.

Christie, a world leader in visual technology displays has entered into an exclusive partnership with Crystal CG to supply innovative visual display solutions for the BIE Centre, such as its MicroTiles and projectors throughout the facility, including the meeting rooms and an immersive visitor experience area.

Moreover, according to the principle of the increased reality, by moving an iPad towards one of the logos, you can receive a short video, which presents the history of the BIE with, as a background sound, the hymn of the organization (Antonin Dvorák, Symphony n°9 Of the New World – Allegro con fuoco).

By using visual interactive solutions and high-tech multimedia, the Centre offers a panel of options to help the BIE to propose solutions to the members of the organisation as well as to its partners.
Since September the BIE Multimedia Exhibition and Training Centre was able to welcome the members of the BIE Committees, the delegations of United Arab Emirates, Turkey and Kazakhstan.

Two information sessions about the activities of the BIE, its history and values were organized for the new BIE delegates on November 12th and 13th. The delegates of 21 Member States participated in these meetings together with the BIE Secretary General, Mr V. González Loscertales. It is envisaged to organize other similar seminars during the months to come. The delegates who are interested to participate are invited to contact the BIE Secretariat General.

In the Multimedia exhibition space, the Centre presents a permanent exhibition and an interactive multimedia area.

The permanent exhibition aims at underlining the missions of the BIE and Expos. An update is made after every Expo and the contents, exchangeable, are displayed on mobile panels-screens hanging from rails fixed to the ceiling and allowing the use of the entire space.

The interactive multimedia area is an immersing zone based on KINECT technology – gesture recognition for interaction with the contents.

The interactivity is the key of the success of exhibitions and museums, and it is imperative to integrate the latest material for exhibition to attract and hold the attention of the visitor. KINECT interactive material exhibition can be incorporated into walls, floors and other surfaces, allowing several users to participate and to learn by exploration and reading.

Kinect uses an infrared projector and a camera without the need to touch a game controller through a natural user interface using gestures. By tracking the movement of objects and individuals, Kinect is a technology for people all over the world.

Kinect can interpret specific gestures without touching the screen. You can pass your hand from right to left, from top to down, according to what you wish to see on the screen.

By giving a better knowledge of BIE and past Expos, this space is a kind of educational area. But not only. It is also a fantastic tool for the preparation of Expos; a tool for future organizers of Expos to display their site’s project, to give it virtual life in an interactive way, to show it to the representatives of the participating countries and to their delegates in order to distinguish the possible locations of the pavilions, the accesses to the site, and others.

For example, in the interactive multimedia area of the BIE Centre: a general view of the site of Expo Shanghai 2010 with the different pavilions:

You can choose the pavilion you want to see, or you can take a walk in the Expo site!