1. **Background**

Own-it was established in 2004 by London College of Communication (a constituent college of University of the Arts London). After the funding landscape changed considerably, Own-it was looking for a way to re-shape the service focussing on the fact that the project is based at one of the biggest and most successful creative Higher Education Institutions in the country. The University of the Arts London (UAL) comprises six colleges – including world leaders in design innovation and research, such as Central Saint Martins and London College of Fashion. With over 20,000 students and approximately 5,000 members of staff, many of whom are practitioners and owners of creative micro and small businesses, UAL is the largest Arts and Design institution in Europe and a major provider of creative professionals, skill, expertise and talent in the UK and internationally.

In 2011, Own-it moved to the heart of the university and is now funded and part of UAL’s new Student Enterprise and Employability department, where the service can support the UAL community.
2. The need of the service

The 2008-11 recession has accelerated the long-term structural change across all OECD countries from a manufacturing and heavy industry to a knowledge based economy. Service sectors that are exploiting their intellectual assets will lead the way in the 2010s including the creative and cultural industries¹.

UK graduates are well-equipped for the challenges facing the UK economy in a global market place – they work collectively, have a well-established ability to adapt to change and continue to learn. They contribute to innovation not only in the creative sector itself but also in other industries they supply goods and services to.

Whilst formal IP rights provide security, it is often business know-how or informal IP that represents the majority share of a company’s intellectual asset base. Understanding the full range of IP rights and how to protect and exploit them are key business skills² for creative graduates.

3. Activity

The Own-it service is delivered through the development of learning resources (including e-learning and webinars), case studies, live workshops and an innovative IP student learning project based at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, that gives students access to legal professionals and supports student enterprise and knowledge transfer.

Additionally, Own-it provides training for staff throughout UAL, as a first point of contact for students that have questions about IP. Staff development training raises awareness of:

- UAL’s IP policy;
- Procedures when working with external companies on student projects;
- The value of IP to increase potential of commercialisation throughout UAL;
- The Own-it service for further engagement and individual intervention.

Students, staff and alumni have access to Own-it’s online resources such as fact sheets, podcasts and FAQs. Access to service provision such as IP clinics (45min consultations with lawyers), sample contracts and events are provided free of charge to the UAL community. Furthermore, Own-it events and workshops give creative students and graduates the opportunity to network, make valuable contacts and gain knowledge about professional practice.

¹ Benjamin Reid, Alexandra Albert and Laurence Hopkins, A Creative Block? The Future of the UK Creative Industries, The Work Foundation 2010
² Creative Britain – New Talents for the New Economy, DCMS, BERR and Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, February 2008
4. Aim

Own-it intends to strengthen already existing ties with law schools and develop projects where creative and law students learn from each other. The ultimate goal is to embed IP in the curriculum to ensure that every arts and design student leaves university with a basic knowledge of IP and a sense of the value of IP for their future career and business.

Own-it’s ambition is to see IP education embedded in enterprise skills development and innovation programmes across UAL and the Higher Education and Creative Sector as a whole. In short, IP education and management needs a holistic approach and this is the challenge Own-it has set itself.

5. Outcome

Since its inception in August 2011, Own-it received and responded to a great number of enquiries and advised many students and graduates in one-to-one consultations with lawyers. To provide a professional service, Own-it works with 14 law firms, who give their time pro-bono, to deliver clinics, workshops and check fact sheets prior to publication.

Additionally, 55 students of Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design MA Textile Futures and MA Industrial Design are currently participating in an IP learning project, which gives students access to their own solicitor during their final year project. The project is a pilot, which runs until May 2012. 9 law firms are involved in the project and provide professional services to the students, who manage their relationship with their solicitor themselves. Own-it will evaluate impact on the students’ awareness of IP and their ability to commercialise their products later in 2012.

However, Own-it’s experience shows that its users only engage with the service when they are in a crisis situation or already engaged with enterprise or knowledge transfer projects within UAL. This means that many individuals lose significant and critical opportunities to commercialise IP, do not have the requisite expertise to manage IP and are in a weak business position to fully develop a strong brand. Moreover, it also means lost opportunities for knowledge transfer offices within UAL – whose success depends on staff and students recognising the value of their knowledge and research to society.

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3 MA abbreviation stands for Master of Arts and these are two master courses offered by the Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design.
6. Lessons learned

- IP and knowledge transfer is essential for all students and graduates, including creative students from an art and design practice-based university involved in less scientific fields;

- Raising awareness of IP among graduates is critical to help them transfer their knowledge and to avoid losing commercial opportunities;

- The increasing participation of students and recent graduates in Own-it’s service offer shows that IP is progressively gaining importance in the academic environment.
GET IN TOUCH

For comments, suggestions or further information, please contact

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ABOUT THE EUROPEAN IPR HELPDESK

The European IPR Helpdesk aims at raising awareness of Intellectual Property (IP) and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) by providing information, direct advice and training on IP and IPR matters to current and potential participants of EU funded projects. In addition, the European IPR Helpdesk provides IP support to EU SMEs negotiating or concluding transnational partnership agreements, especially through the Enterprise Europe Network. All services provided are free of charge.

Helpline: The Helpline service answers your IP queries within three working days. Please contact us via registration on our website – www.iprhelpdesk.eu – phone or fax.

Website: On our website you can find extensive information and helpful documents on different aspects of IPR and IP management, especially with regard to specific IP questions in the context of EU funded programmes.

Newsletter and Bulletin: Keep track of the latest news on IP and read expert articles and case studies by subscribing to our email newsletter and Bulletin.

Training: We have designed a training catalogue consisting of nine different modules. If you are interested in planning a session with us, simply send us an email at training@iprhelpdesk.eu.

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This Case Study has been initially developed under a previous edition of the European IPR Helpdesk (2011-2014). At that time the European IPR Helpdesk operated under a service contract with the European Commission.

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