

# SSIFF Startup Challenge Wins: Witscript and Hyperate.io Now Vie for €500,000 Incubation

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Witscript and Hyperate.io took home the prizes at the 5th Zinemaldia Startup Challenge, Thursday afternoon. Each received €10,000 (\$10,600) and access to incubation to nurture their fledgling companies, with the potential to vie for €500,000 (\$530,000) in funding.

Speaking with "Variety" following her win, Hendrikje Wagner CEO of Hyperate.io was delighted with the validation: "Other people think it's a really good idea and it enables us to move discussions forward." The startup integrates heart rate data into live streams, events, and games. Its goal is fewfold: One is to help streamers automate the creation of short highlight videos from their streams using heart rate as a guide. It meets a need from streamers who attract users across social channels via manually edited short form video.

A second was to enhance visibility of emotional impact further to facilitate hyper personalisation across a wide breadth of media.

The taking of a simple idea of heartbeat capture and elevating it impressed the judges. "The potential for it to go outside the entertainment industry is quite staggering," Harry Chadwick, director at Interflix Media told "Variety", citing the fact that 23,000 streamers signed up to it with 57 million heartbeats pumped through the app.

The Spanish judges were equally enamored with Witscript. Co-Founder Mercè Delgado walked us through the tech which minimizes the time and costs associated with voice-over quality control processes. A slide showed the negative press "Squid Game" received when poorly executed. The presentation stood out for the level of due diligence on show as she drew attention to their TPN Gold status. TPN is the Motion Picture Association owned network dedicated to content safety. With the sensitivity surrounding pre-released shows, key streaming clients and studios demand the highest protections from partners.

The Startup Challenge saw nine entrepreneurs, from across Europe



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take the elevator to the top of the Tabakalera, affording glorious views of San Sebastian, all to pitch their visions to the juries. With the welcoming speeches over, and the statue of Christ looking across the city at them, the pitches began.

First up from the European projects, was Anymate Me, a German startup focussed on automating the generation of synthetic videos in over 65 languages. Kaey Low, their CTO, showcased sign language as one of the languages generated through text input. One of the judges noted the potential of applying the sign language aspect to back catalog content cheaply.

Next up was Nathan Neuman, a London based filmmaking entrepreneur with Dreambird. He promised a new revolutionary democratized online film industry platform for the 21st century. A slide showed it will combine elements from Netflix, Facebook, Amazon, and Kickstarter. These big dreams are shared by business partner Mark Forstater, a veteran movie producer best known for his involvement with *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, who could not attend.



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The more established Drylab followed. A competitor of Framer.io, it is currently used in the majority of productions in Norway, which includes productions such as *The Worst Person In The World*. It offers on-set production tools and the ability to review details on dailies in real time, and refer back to them when shooting non-linearly. The plan is to

take its foothold in Norway and expand globally.

Marionette, a Danish company, closed out the pitches from outside Spain. Thore Ipsen, CEO, handled the momentary technical glitches in the room with upbeat ease. With the timer reset, his pitch told of their suitless motion capture and editing software. One use case is giving fans

the chance to animate the characters they love.

And so to the Spanish projects. First up was Union Avatars, with COO David Perez-Villar presenting in person. Metaverse is not dead, according to Perez-Villar, he sees it as the natural evolution of the internet, picturing a world where all our digital power will be worn over our eyes, not on our phones. Union Avatars offers tools for managing digital identities through avatars for both companies and users.

Staying within the gravity of the metaverse were Uttopion, Spain's first Metaverse. Miguel Ángel Fito Jordán, co-founder, believes we're moving to a more "experienced based world" one where people want to take part and interact with media more than ever. They craft spaces for content creators and brands to interact with people via the metaverse. He spoke of a desire in people to not just be watching *Money Heist* but to interact with and connect to the other people watching it. Uttopion recently signed an agreement with Chinese metaverse Dayou. The first agreement of its kind allows brands and creators to have their own spaces in the two metaverses.

Bringing us out of the metaverse and back to virtual reality was Javier Acosta with VRMulticam. They unify immersive audiovisual technologies and broadcasting in a single service, offering a unique experience to the viewer. Think live events where you could be sat in the dugout at a sports match or right there in the studio with your favorite stars. He spoke of balancing the tension between how much freedom to allow users vs. the need to curate the experience with care and creativity.

The whiff of *Black Mirror* did not go unnoticed from effortless moderator and self-titled "Chief Time Officer" AC Coppens. The energy here was high to take these innovations in multiple directions. Some look to compliment processes, others to disrupt entire industries. The questions they raise for the industry were not for today.

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