

CONNECTING TWO CITIES, THE PORTAL PROJECT



digital
social
impact

education for the future

Figure 30: PORTAL: An Interactive Bridge to Unit

AT A GLANCE

STUDY FIELD:	Engineering, Design
DIGITAL READINESS:	Medium
SOCIAL IMPACT EXPERIENCE:	Medium
LOCATION:	Vilnius, Lithuania
TARGET GROUP:	Bachelor Students, those connected to LinkMenų fabrikas
PARTNER ORGANIZATION:	Municipalities, NGOs, local businesses and others
TEACHING METHODS (DURATION):	Service-learning (several semesters)
WEBSITE:	LINK

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

FREQUENCY:



This project took 5 years to plan and execute with the bulk of the work taking place during the COVID19 pandemic in the final two years from 2020 to 2021. The Portal installation was due to be in place for a 3-month period from May – July 2021. But such has been the impact and love for the project that it is still running in at the time of this case study collection in November 2021. Vilnius Tech involvement of staff and students took place over multiple semesters.

SOCIAL IMPACT



In 2021, in Lithuania's capital Vilnius, the Portal - a high-tech installation helped people to rediscover a sense of connection with others. It was a welcome initiative that came shortly after a wave of pandemic-induced lockdowns which asked people to stay at home, isolate and refrain from travel. In terms of social impact, the Portal served as a visual bridge and a global community accelerator to bring people of different cultures and countries (Lithuania and Poland) together. Resembling the wheel of time, the Portal is a large circle which is connected to another Portal in Lublin. Staff and students from Vilnius Tech worked on the project, some for design, some for construction, some for marketing etc. Engineers from the Vilnius Tech creativity and innovation centre LinkMenų Fabrikas built the Portal. They chose a circle, a well-known and recognised sci-fi symbol, for the visual "bridge". It allows a person to travel and experience reality on the other side of the huge circle by getting in touch with another individual. The high-tech sculpture connects people in real-time. Passers-by wave at each other, sing or even dance together through the screen. It looks as if a science-fi comic has suddenly come to life.

STRUCTURE



Vilnius Tech feel very strongly that students must learn by doing and must learn to work in teams, especially multidiscipline teams. The main learning outcome for the students who participated was the experience gained from working on a real market project, real communication with business... learning by doing. The students learned how to use technology to bring people together. Students learned digital design, they were involved in the design of each piece. They gained insights into the digital media element, for example how to make the screen work during the day and also during the night. All of the students learned about digital marketing in this project. The project received global recognition and was picked up and featured by BBC News. In terms of digital learning, because of COVID nearly all of the meetings for the project were held online. This gave students and staff a real taste of remote, multidiscipline work and project management.