

Broadcast

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Bringing news archives to high streets

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Broadcasters could extract revenues from their British archives in a new initiative

Last month in a Scottish town, far away from the hurly burly of the nation's media capital, a scheme was launched that could help bring broadcasters' vast libraries of archive footage of our nation to the high street.

In a shopping centre in Greenock, a town 25 miles west of Glasgow on the Firth of Clyde, a new store has opened. From the outside, Poppins looks much like any other shop, but upon entering, customers find themselves somewhere that's part hi-tech hub, part centre for local living history.

Poppins is a three-month pilot project created by Belle Media on behalf of the Technology Strategy Board, the UK's innovation agency. It is part of the board's wider initiative The Long-Term Care Revolution, which is exploring innovative approaches to tackle the challenges created by an ageing UK population.

Poppins' role is threefold: to get the 'digitally-excluded' more engaged with new technology (more than 5 million pensioners have never been online); to promote more interaction between generations; and to combat isolation.



The 'Inverclyde Player' is a library of more than 300 handpicked video clips, many about the surrounding area and the era in which the older generation grew up. Clips include a 1960s film about what to do on a wet Sunday in Greenock and the Queen Mary's first voyage down the Clyde.

This unique film collection has been brought together from the libraries of STV, the BBC, ITN Source, Scottish Screen Archive, National Library of Scotland, Getty Images, the British Council and a number of film distributors.

To encourage more active participation in the community, access to these services is 'paid for' with special 'Poppins coins' – free plastic tokens fitted with technology that gathers anonymous data to give an insight into how and where they are 'spent'.

By creating an environment local people find familiar and fun, the shop is overcoming the intimidation many

can feel when faced with new technology.

We've been surprised by how quickly they have grasped the concept and started to adapt it to their own demands, turning up with their own home movies to show in the small cinema we have installed. This will give broadcasters an entirely new way of allowing public access to their massive library of footage and, for some, a potentially new revenue source.

Kay Hutchison is managing director of Belle Media

