

# we write about the things we build and the things we consume



written by Jonathan Tweed on 4 February 2013 in BBC, ideas

## bbc iplayer creative studio: our experience and pitches

A couple of weeks back [Chris](#) and I spent the day at the [BBC's](#) newly refurbished, and wonderful, [Broadcasting House](#) at the top of Regent St.

We were there for the first part of the [Connected Studio](#) event for [iPlayer](#), the Creative Studio. The [Creative Studio](#) is a one day event during which you work to refine a pitch that meets the innovation brief for the product in question, in this case iPlayer. Successful pitches get invited back to the [Build Studio](#), where teams get two days to prototype the ideas in the pitch.

### the experience

First up, I'd just like to say how much I enjoyed the day and how incredibly well organised it was. Not only was it great to see and talk to so many people from the BBC, some old friends, some for the first time, Broadcasting House provided a fantastic backdrop to the event. The main creative part of the day was spent in the Radio Cafe, overlooking the newsroom, while presentations and pitches were held in the iconic [Radio Theatre](#). How wonderful it was to present on stage in the Radio Theatre.

In addition, not only were there BBC people present from both technical and editorial teams, there were also people from marketing who were able to share a fantastic range of audience research and insight around the product. I was also really impressed to see that teams could book sessions with a small group of real audience members to user test their ideas before pitching. All in all, a great day.

But onto the brief!

### the brief

The brief for iPlayer had three key themes and there's more on each of these on [the BBC's page for the event](#):

1. Encouraging users in a continuous experience
2. Reminding users there's a smart alternative
3. Enabling the discovery of hidden treasures

## finding hidden treasures

I worked with Faith, Vicky and Kai from the BBC on a pitch called *Finding hidden treasures*, which explored ways in which the BBC could make its ever growing collection of permanently available content discoverable in iPlayer, moving it beyond the current focus on 7-day catchup and potentially helping to attract older audiences.

We looked at two ways of doing this: including older content alongside current content in the recommendations provided for onward watching from a particular programme and adding decade based discovery of all currently available content.

Both ideas went down well with the audience members in our user testing session, who connected with the simplicity of decade based discovery and said that they would watch older programmes recommended on current shows.

## iplayer shuffle

Chris worked on an idea called *iPlayer shuffle*, which I'm sure he'll write about in more detail at some point. It centred on adding a channel-specific shuffle feature to iPlayer that could provide an automated on demand version of each channel, continuously improving its recommendations by learning from what a user is watching.

## fingers crossed

We have our fingers crossed that we get through to Build Studio, but that's now in the hands of the judges to decide. I know that we have many great ideas for taking both of these pitches forward and I hope that no matter what happens, I'll get the chance to go to another one of the Connected Studio events soon.

**Update, 5th Feb:** Unfortunately we've just heard that both our ideas have been turned down, so we won't be taking them forward to the Build Studio. Although the judges felt that *Finding hidden treasures* presented a strong audience proposition, they concluded that "the panel did not feel that you addressed the challenge of the linked data that would take the user to the hidden gems enough" and that the "user interface required more work".