

**“DigiTraining Plus: New Technologies for European Cinemas”
- Third edition -
(Kuurne, Belgium, 5-9 April 2006)**

**Welcome speech by Mike Vickers,
Treasurer of MEDIA Salles**

On behalf of the MEDIA Salles' Executive Committee and as Treasurer of the Association, I'd like to welcome you to the third “DigiTraining Plus: New Technologies for European Cinemas” course.

As many of you may already know, ours is the only one of the 60 or so training initiatives co-financed by the MEDIA Programme to deal with digital screening purely from the exhibitor's point of view.

We are therefore very grateful both to the MEDIA Programme and also to the Italian Government, which co-finances this initiative, as well as to Barco, who have been hosting the course on these premises ever since the first edition.

The aim of the course is to respond to the demands of that particular sector of the cinema industry represented by the movie theatre – the point where film and audience meet.

How may digital technology influence the future of movie theatres?

How will it influence their ability to respond to the demands of the public?

What social factors are involved in the transition to digital?

What are the opportunities and the risks?

The objective of this course is to provide figures and information, to give clear explanations and make room for sharing the experiences of those who have adopted digital projection, so as to provide the tools that will allow each exhibitor to evaluate the advisability of changing over to digital.

At the same time the course means to be an occasion for giving European exhibitors a voice and listening to their needs, so that all the energy and resources involved in the transition to digital are directed towards the development and success of viewing in cinemas.

I should like to thank the experts who will be with us over the next few days and encourage all the participants to take full advantage of this occasion for meeting and sharing their experiences.
All the best for your work.

And now, with renewed thanks to all those present, I shall hand over to Stephan Paridaen, President of Barco Media & Entertainment.