

magazine

SYNC 

Northern Ireland's Tech & Business Community

AUTUMN 2013

Issue 11

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SIXTEEN SOUTH 07

CULTURETECH 2013 12

DIGITAL SUMMIT 21

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06 Liberty IT
A day in the life of a
principal software
engineer

16 25k Awards
Queen's team takes top
honours



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for children
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Hold a Hug in a Mug coffee morning for NICFC this Autumn!

How your support will help...

A short break with NICFC offers families nursing a child with cancer a safe haven, precious quality time together and a much-needed break to recuperate.

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* Architect's Impression

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Patricia Kidd - Daisy Lodge Manager

"The opportunity for families to spend this quality time together in relaxing surroundings is simply priceless."



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NICFC's Daisy Lodge Appeal

Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Sync NI magazine



foreword

from Tracy Meharg, Invest NI Executive Director,
Business Solutions

Skills. Every business has them and every business needs the best. Technology companies are no exception, and with the continued growth of the ICT sector in Northern Ireland it is crucial that we invest in the people we currently employ, as well as invest in those we will need in the future.

It sounds simple but in reality it is a mammoth task, and one that lies not with any single body or organisation. It is an ongoing task that requires full collaboration at all levels of government, industry and academia if we are to have the right people with the right skills at the right time.

The biggest challenge is not only the number of graduates – over 1000 graduate in ICT and related subjects from the University of Ulster and Queen's University annually – it is ensuring that they are industry ready and have business relevant skills that ICT employers can immediately tap into. In a sector which is constantly changing, it is also essential that once in employment, there is continued investment in skills to ensure that they remain relevant and up to date.

As our ICT sector has grown and developed, its skills needs have also evolved. International companies working in niche areas of industry such as financial services software, connected health, digital media and telecoms have recognised the availability of quality graduates here, and are keen to tap

into that raw talent. Alongside that is the pool of exceptionally experienced software professionals who are increasingly in demand across those niche areas. Our challenge is making the skills base relevant and sustainable if local companies are to grow and new investors are to remain committed.

Collaboration has been ongoing for several years, with Invest NI, the Department for Employment and Learning, the Department of Education, our universities and further education establishments investing significant resources to support skills development.

Individually and in partnership we have developed conversion courses, software testing and capital markets academies, grant support for training, apprenticeships and even a new A-level qualification. All of these are designed with the needs of the wider ICT sector in mind.

The ultimate objective is to ensure that indigenous firms and inward investors can quickly access talented people with the industry ready skills they need to grow their business. As the International Investment Conference on 10-11 October fast approaches, the clear commitment to skills development for the ICT sector and beyond has never been more timely.

Tracy Meharg

Invest NI Executive director, Business Solutions

magazine
SYNC NI
Northern Ireland's Technology, Science & Innovation Community

CONTENT & EDITORIAL

Emma Leahy
Email: emma.leahy@syncni.com
Phone: 028 90820944

ADVERTISING

Sales and Advertising:
Nicola McNair
Phone: 028 90820941
Email: nicola.mcnaair@syncni.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Email: subscribe@syncni.com

GENERAL ENQUIRIES

Sync NI
Northern Ireland Science Park
Queen's Island
Belfast
BT3 9DT
Phone: 028 90820944
Email: info@syncni.com
Website: www.syncni.com

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DANI Awards 2013

This year the 2013 DANI Awards took part during CultureTECH, the night was a fantastic celebration of the achievements and talent of the Digital Industry in Northern Ireland. The newly refurbished St Columbs Hall, Derry was the venue for the gala evening.

With support from title sponsors CPL Jobs, associate sponsors University of Ulster and award sponsors Invest Northern Ireland, 360 Production & EpiServer, and our media partners Sync NI, ensured all attendees had a fabulously 'Geek Chic' evening



Gaming & Animation

Winner: Predestination by Brain and Nerd
 Highly Commended: iD Gum by Rehab Studios
 Commended: Lone Star Soul by Lone Star State

Digital Culture Project of the Year

Winner: BT Portrait of a City by City of Culture
 Highly Commended: The Clandestine by Video Hacker
 Commended: Bushmills Live by Smarts

Mobile

Winner: iShoogle by Origin Partners
 Highly Commended: Isle of Man app by Ardmore
 Commended: Go Report by GCD Technology

Web Project

Winner: Linen Hall Library by Ardmore
 Highly Commended: NI Water by Being
 Commended: SS Nomadic by The Web Burea

Social

Winner: Red Bull by Rehab Studios
 Highly Commended: Back in Belfast by Ardmore
 Commended: Bushmills Live by Smart

Viral

Winner: Antrim Grammar Style by Red Morgan
 Highly Commended: Fly your family home for Christmas by NITB
 Commended: Red Bull Skate Arcade by Rehab Studios

E-Commerce

Winner: Sportique by Ambition Digital
 Highly Commended: Shuphoric
 Commended: The Beauty Company by Engaged Web

Export

Winner: Rehab Studios
 Highly Commended: Sport Changes Life by Mammoth
 Commended: Engaged Web

E-Learning

Winner: Komodo
 Highly Commended: Go Berserk
 Commended: League of Credit Union, Aurion Learning

Rising Star

Winner: Dog Ears
 Highly Commended: Ambition Digital
 Commended: Dokoo Digital

Digital Agency

Winner: The Web Bureau
 Highly Commended: Origin Partners
 Commended: Ardmore Advertising

Digital Industries Person of the Year

Winner: Kathryn Pyper



Introducing: Taggled.tv

Taggled is an online tool to help bloggers and video bloggers (Vloggers) make more money.

Taggled allows viewers to tag online videos.

For example, at the moment, if you film a video showing your latest Topshop haul, you have to list all the items you bought in the description of your video. With Taggled, you can link directly from the point in the video where the item appears on the retailers shop, and earn commission for sharing that item with your viewers!

A tagged video lets you discover more. By tagging videos through Taggled, you are contributing to making videos more searchable. Which will help new followers find your blog, and could even help that bride find her perfect wedding shoes!

It doesn't even have to be your own video. Find a part of a video that inspires a blog? You can link directly to that part of the video. You wouldn't share an entire photo album with your friend if you only liked one photo, why should you have to do that with a video?

The idea for Taggled came from a simple conversation between founder Ian Scott and a friend over coffee. Having watched a movie one Saturday, Ian's friend saw an item of clothing he really liked and spent the rest of his free day trying to find out where to get it.

There had to be a simpler way - and that's how Taggled came into existence.



Users can watch a video via the Taggled website to see everything which has been tagged (which means they don't even have to watch the entire video to find what they are looking for), or they can turn off the tags by simply clicking on the tag button.

Vloggers can post their videos onto the Taggled site and add tags, and then share on their own blogs and social networking sites.

And uploading couldn't be easier. Users can upload directly from their computer and via Youtube, Instagram or Dropbox. Vloggers can reintroduce older videos as a new interactive experience.

There are similar products available online but they have really been focusing on the big brands as their main customers. Taggled wants to work directly with vloggers and bloggers, a community that love what they do and share that passion with others. Assisting these trendsetters make money to keep doing what they love, is what Taggled does best.

Vloggers take a lot of time and effort in making their videos and

building a following. Taggled can help these vloggers not only gain revenue from their videos but also reach new audiences via the Taggled community and via search engines as every tag is search engine optimised.

Vloggers can tag products, music, locations and even people within the video. Taggled is making watching video a more involved experience.

With a growing team, Taggled is now in talks with vloggers worldwide, and will be exhibiting at TBEX at the beginning of October as well as Web Summit, where they have been selected for the Alpha program, in Dublin on the 30th-31st October. Taggled have also been successful in being selected for the Belfast City Council's Tech Mission to Silicon Valley

The Beta version of Taggled is now available at Taggled.tv.

Sign up if you are a blogger and start earning. Follow us on Twitter @Taggledtv or on our Facebook page - Taggled - to stay up to date on what we are up to.

meeting

Sixteen South

Award winning Sixteen South was founded by Creative Director, Colin Williams in 2008. Colin's passion to create television programmes that children could relate to paved the way for the production of programmes like *Sesame Tree*, *Pajanimals*, *Big City Park*, *Big and Small* and *Driftwood Bay*.

He wanted to create shows that children could laugh and sing along with and look back to in years to come.

Colin began his career in graphic design, setting up his first business, Inferno after several years of working in creative agencies in Belfast. Inferno produced high quality animation, film and interactive content for museums, television commercials and promos.

After 600+ successful productions and a client base including the world's leading businesses, the fast success of Sixteen South meant that Colin began to concentrate all of his time on producing children's television.

Over the last five years, they will have produced over 53 hours and 198 episodes of premium children's television for global television networks and are now ranked as one of the UK's top indie producers by *Televisual* magazine.

Overseeing their productions and leading the company's development team, Colin is supported by strong full time development and production teams. A team of more than 60 cast and crew spent over 300 hours in their studio filming *Pajanimals*, the award winning series produced with The Jim Henson Company and Sprout - and part-funded by Northern Ireland Screen.

Nominated for two EMMY® awards, *Pajanimals* airs daily on Sprout and is part of NBC's Saturday morning kids block reaching more than 110 million homes across the United States of America and 300 million globally. From late September, the *Pajanimals* will be 'coming home' as Nick Jr will debut the series in its bedtime slot across the UK and Ireland.

Colin Williams, Creative Director and Founder of Sixteen South, said: 'I am thrilled that *Pajanimals*, the beautiful show that we produce here in Belfast will come to life with quality plush toys and merchandise.

It's very exciting also to think that having been such a



success on a global scale that it will experience a home coming to screens across the UK and Ireland with Nick Jr this autumn."

Pajanimals also received the Parents' Choice Recommended Seal at the Parents' Choice Television Awards 2012 in Maryland USA, and is now a fully interactive app for the iPhone and iPad.

Another of Sixteen South's creations, *Big City Park*, a co-production with CBeebies Scotland, won the BAFTA Scotland Award for Best Children's Programme in November 2011. The show, which premiered on CBeebies in August 2010 encourages children to get outside and rediscover the awe and wonder of nature. *Big City Park* was filmed entirely in the Ormeau Park in Belfast and combines live action, puppets and original songs to entertain and educate young viewers.

So what's next for Sixteen South? Their first animated series, *Driftwood Bay* is in production, employing a team of 54 of the top animation and design talent will premiere in 2014.

Driftwood Bay is a mixed-media animated show for 4-6 year olds about Lily, a five year old girl who lives in a beach hut with her Dad. Every day, the sea washes up a curious new treasure, which sparks Lily's imagination about what might be happening across the way on *Driftwood Bay*. And so, with her best friend Gull - the clever seagull, an adventure begins as they head off to *Driftwood Bay*.

Driftwood Bay has also been part-funded by Northern Ireland Screen

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New market, new rules

sarum PR

As Irish technology companies look to the GB market for expansion opportunities, it is vital that they are aware of some fundamental differences in the way PR works across the water.

Carina Birt, the Dundalk-born founder of Sarum PR, based a short hop from London, explains the gap that needs to be bridged and why so many Irish companies fail to have an impact on the British media.

The Irish hi-tech industry has always been strong, thanks to the talent that floods out of Queen's University and associated incubator initiatives each year. Currently there seems to be a surge of unprecedented growth activity, as companies look to expand into the GB market.

If only for its close proximity, GB is the obvious next port of call for technology companies looking to attract a broader customer base – especially if their target markets are niche ones. It is close enough that companies can continue to base their operations in Ireland, benefiting from the lower costs here, which in turn allows them to be price-competitive.

And yet Irish companies have experienced mixed success when trying to crack GB. A common reason is that they

have assumed that GB PR can be handled centrally from Ireland too. This rarely bears out.

Culturally, from a media perspective, there are a number of subtle but significant differences in the way relationships work. As much as building strategic relationships is important, familiarity cannot be relied upon.

Competition is fierce and a company will only be accepted into the conversation if it has something new, strong and relevant to say. Raising a company's profile with the hottest bloggers, freelancers and analysts as well as in-house editorial teams is no easy feat – especially when there are so many of them.

Location, location, location

A more successful approach is where Irish companies harness local GB experts to get them into those conversations – PR consultants who are right at the heart of the action, who already have the relationships and know the right buttons to press to get key writers interested.

The evidence that this approach works is compelling. Take digital solutions company Kainos. Founded in Belfast, but now with offices in Dublin and London, the company is expanding at a phenomenal rate – approaching £30 million in annual revenues, and showing profit growth of 75% over the last year alone. The business has achieved huge success

in the UK public sector, especially in the health service. Its engagement with a GB PR agency has been instrumental here.

Sarum PR, based in Salisbury, Wiltshire, played a key role in the launch and branding of Kainos's flagship electronic medical record solution, Evolve, to the UK NHS. This is a now a £10M business in its own right - from a standing start two years ago, as one hospital Trust after another embraces the technology to address their information digitisation challenges.

Commenting on the importance of local GB PR representation, Head of Kainos GB, Brian Gannon, says, "The agency managed in a very short time to get under our skin - to work out what makes us different and valuable - and has been able to articulate this for us extremely well. They have been particularly adept - and often inspirational - in presenting Kainos and our Evolve product to the market honestly and with style. Finding the right GB agency has made an enormous difference."

A meeting of minds

One of the strings to Sarum's bow is that its founder is from Dundalk (and yes, the Corrs are first cousins), so the agency has a unique perspective of how Irish companies and the British media work.

The success delivered for Kainos has been replicated across several other Irish technology companies too, including VoiceSage, SpeechStorm and most recently TotalMobile, one of our newest clients.

In the case of VoiceSage, which specialises in providing call centre solutions and interactive messaging services, Sarum has helped establish a very strong share of voice and brand awareness among retail and utilities companies in GB. In the first six months alone, VoiceSage grew to become the largest voice relative to its main competitors; 95% of its business now comes from GB.

Going where the conversation is

Sarum PR is a boutique consultancy which doesn't employ any juniors. We've been in business for nearly 20 years, we come from the IT industry and one of our strengths has been our ability to move with the times. This is because we believe that PR is all about starting conversations - wherever and however these might take place. Today this is just as likely to be over social media - through video, animated film, YouTube campaigns, Twitter, LinkedIn and blogs, alongside traditional media, and we proactively embrace all of these channels.

In addition to helping Irish clients to penetrate the GB

market, Sarum has done the same for technology, software and services companies from the US and Europe - including Actuate, Computer Science Corporation, Sopra, EASY Software, Allim and ProductLife Group.

These companies chose dedicated GB PR representation because they recognised that to get busy UK media teams to listen requires more than simply issuing a repurposed press release. It means being attuned to British journalists' and analysts' needs, and knowing what the conversations are so you can join in - with something fresh and original that has been prepared especially for this audience.

This is the GB PR challenge, and Irish companies that do well across the water have understood that.



Carina Birt, Founder, Sarum PR

Contact details

Website: www.sarumpr.com

Email: carina@sarumpr.com

Twitter: @birtie

We're growing in Northern Ireland – Cloud Consulting Ltd.

Delivering excellent service in sales automation and customer relationship management

Cloud Consulting Ltd. would like to thank our customers for their continued support and is proud to announce that we are both further expanding our business and also looking to recruit additional staff for our new office in the Northern Ireland Science Park (NISIP) in Belfast. Plans are also underway for a research and development team to be based in Newry. By offering a broad range of services from business analysis through to solution design and build, data migration, systems integration and support we're building an excellent name for ourselves.

If you want to know more about us please call Mark Richmond on 0756 385 5202 (or email him at mark.richmond@ccltng.com).

New Larger Office in NISIP

In order to accommodate the increased business in Northern Ireland we are pleased to announce that we are taking a larger office in NISIP. For the last 4 years we've seen a steady growth of NI companies investing in sales automation and customer relationship management as the economy has slowly recovered. NISIP has been fantastic location for us during this time and we're very pleased to remain based in such a dynamic, friendly and well located community.

We believe that now is a great time to be doing business in NI and we will continue to help companies grow their revenues whilst taking advantage of cheaper operations through the better use of technology.

Training & Events

We're now offering training in several online applications from our new office – including the world's most successful Cloud based system – Salesforce.com (SFDC). We're the leading supplier of a wide range of business and technology services across the UK and Ireland and our training is rated by our customers as first class. Whether it is for lead generation and marketing, contact management, opportunity and pipeline management or application

administration, configuration and customisation we can help.

We have been organising events in Belfast, Dublin and London over the last few years and will now ramp up our activities even further in Belfast. We've been running the SFDC Ireland User Group in Dublin for the last year and have had customers attending from all over Ireland. We will now be starting up a SFDC NI User Group, Developer Workshops and TechBrew sessions from NISIP.

We will also be running free breakfast briefings (for the early birds), lunch & learn sessions for the late starters, and half and full day seminars on a wide range of business topics and applications. We have a Sales and Technology session planned for the **23rd October** (find out more via this link <http://www.cvent.com/d/c4q8zf>) and other events in the pipeline include Electronic Signatures (- are they legal?), Net Promoter Scoring and Payment Card Industry (PCI) Compliance.

Please contact Sinead Leigh on 0289 073 7988 (or email sinead.leigh@ccltng.com) in order to discuss your training requirements as well as to find out details of our forthcoming events in Belfast.

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CultureTECH serves up another Digital Delight!

In 2012 the CultureTECH team began their mission to bring a colourful celebration of digital music, art and technology to the streets of Derry~Londonderry. The success of their four day extravaganza in 2012 secured CultureTECH 2013 firmly in our diaries. So, in the second year of their journey, they came back the only way they know how... bigger and better than ever!

On 9-15th September 2013 the walled city of Derry ~Londonderry was, once again, taken over as it played host to another epic CultureTECH Festival. For those living under a rock these past 2 years, CultureTECH is a week-long quirky, intimate and unique gathering of speakers, artists, performers and industry professionals from digital media, technology, music.

Over the course of the week, the people of Derry~Londonderry, and travelling visitors from the UK and further afield, were treated to a jam packed programme of workshops, exhibitions, video games, presentations and a host of music events.

Sync NI were very proud to be media partners of the festival for the second year running and made the most of the opportunity by taking to the streets of Derry~Londonderry to soak up the legendry atmosphere!

Every corner of the city revealed a new digital delight to explore; from the cat video festival, The Digital Advertising NI Awards (pg. 5) and viral disco, to the dynamic mobile chat show Talkoke and the magical experience of Babble, a unique sound and light show for parents and babies. We were truly spoilt for choice, so,

here are just some of our highlights from the festival!

CultureTECH JR.

With the current skills gap still a very much predominant issue here in Northern Ireland, one of the streams of the CultureTECH festival, CultureTECH Junior, focused on encouraging the education of digital technologies amongst school children and teachers.

CultureTECH Junior kicked off with students from local secondary schools participating in the Young Enterprise NI App Challenge in the Millennium Forum, presenting innovative app ideas that could easily compete with some on the market today. Over 100 Students were invited to participate in an interactive workshop to help them explore entrepreneurship in the digital industry by developing an app product for the UK market.

The students were given the task to develop a new innovative app for the market that they later pitched to Invest NI for a £10,000 investment. The outlay for



their business plan examined everything from the original concept and target market, to finance, sales projections and the 4P's of Marketing. The idea was to give them a realistic idea of what it takes to bring a product to market and, bar them actually developing the app, this was pretty accurate.

As we went round the tables we heard a wide range of apps, not surprisingly aimed at high school students, from fantasy football games, educational tools for study, fashion finder apps and a lot of games inspired by the running game Temple Run.

Having completed their business plan, it was time to pitch their App in a quick-fire presentation to representatives from Invest NI. Listening to these young people talk about their target market, expected sales and net profit and loss so confidently we couldn't help but be impressed with the amount of thought that had went into their plans, and unexpectedly, given how young these guys are, how realistic they were.

In addition to the Young Enterprise events, CultureTECH Jr. took over The Venue at Ebrington for 3 days to create the largest science and technology event in Derry-Londonderry this year. Over 5,000 primary and secondary school pupils descended onto The Venue to check out dozens of interactive exhibitions from CERN, W5, the University of Ulster, Bombardier, BBC and many more. Although we had our own group to mentor, with explosions going off around us, computer games to play and Anthony the STEM robot doing his dance...Gangnam style, we could be excused for forgetting that we were supposed to be teaching the children here. Safe to say we had a lot of fun at the Venue and could have stayed and 'played' all day.

CoderDoJo

The CultureTECH Junior team joined forces with BT to host a monster CoderDoJo. CoderDoJo is an incredible non-profit initiative that teaches children how to code. Local children, and children across Northern Ireland, attended the session which had beginners using scratch and a slightly more advanced group, using notepad++. As a female dominated team here at Sync NI, it was refreshing for us to see a good amount of girls also participating in the girls coding club 'DIVA' at CoderDoJo.

University of Ulster Pop-Up Shop

The juniors weren't the only ones who impressed; we were blown away by some of the University of Ulster students work at the CultureTECH pop up shop in Foyleside. Between detailed maps of Derry City, Interactive pop up books for E-Learning and a stunning motion sensory video game we were spoilt for choice with these original projects.

What was even more amazing about these pieces was that they were all final year projects and were completed in just 12 weeks! If this is just a sample of the University of Ulster students work Northern Ireland has some exciting new talent to emerge!



Honeycomb Launch

We were delighted to attend the launch of 'Honeycomb Creative Works' During the Belfast Media Festival at CultureTECH. The honeycomb project is a £3.5 million programme targeted at the digital content sector in Northern Ireland, the six border counties of the Republic of Ireland and the western seaboard of Scotland. Honeycomb is led by the University of Ulster, in partnership with creative Skillset and Dundalk Institute of Technology and will have a significant impact on the creative sector.

The Honeycomb programme will provide a whole spectrum of support for both small and large organisations, encouraging cross sector collaboration. Through research, networking, skills development and project finance



Honeycomb aims to enhance the digital sector and stimulate creativity.

The launch emphasised the importance of developing a prosperous economy which in turn will create jobs helping to aid the retention of homegrown talent. Mairead Regan, Group Human Resources Director from UTV echoed the long lasting effects of the programme stating that "the Legacy of Honeycomb will last long after the project timescale". At Sync NI we are certainly excited about the positive impact and collaborative effect that this programme will have throughout and beyond the digital and creative sectors.

Sensum

Even before SYNC NI had arrived at CultureTECH we had spotted an event which we would not be missing: the launch of Sensum's new interactive music project 'Mu_'. The Belfast-based tech start-up have had a cracker of a year and we could not wait to try out their latest project. After launching the prototype of their emotional response mobile platform alongside the Tribeca Film Festival in April 2012 they have showcased their leading-edge platform at many international events, from Belfast to New York, Derry to Tel Aviv, London to San Francisco and beyond. We were particularly excited that Sensum had decided to launch their latest innovation at CultureTECH festival.

Mu_ allows you to control and create your own unique song which is matched by your own artwork. By using sensors you can compose your own masterpiece which is based on your movement and emotions. A heightened heart rate increases the tempo of your song and the pitch of the song is based on your sweat levels. Sensum says that 'Mu_' allows you to act as both the 'conductor' and as the 'orchestra'.

A key element of 'Mu_' lies in its ability to record audience response to media and its ability to collect this information accurately, in this interactive way, it is unique. The team at Sensum were enthusiastic and engaging and we will definitely be keeping our eyes out for their current products and future projects.



Conclude

Sadly our CultureTECH experience, like all good things, had to come to an end. However we had an absolute blast at the festival checking out the local talent from Secondary and University students, learning from the new start-ups and enjoying the entertainment with our peers.

For us, CultureTECH really epitomises why we love working here at Sync NI. In Northern Ireland we have a thriving creative and digital industry full of interesting characters and fantastic businesses. CultureTECH is an opportunity for everyone to get together to meet, create new business opportunities, be inspired or just share an appreciation for digital music, arts and technology.

We were delighted to be part of CultureTECH 2012 & 2013 and can't wait for CulututeTECH 2014

See you there!



View Digital at CultureTECH

VIEWdigital Community Interest Company www.viewdigital.org which publishes VIEW social affairs magazine and runs media training workshops for the community and voluntary sector took part in CultureTECH Junior and gave free workshops as part of CultureTECH and the Belfast Media Festival in Derry.

More than 300 school children and their teachers heard about the VIEWdigital media production and training social enterprise for the Third Sector at The Venue at Ebrington Barracks.

VIEWdigital training associates Willis McBriar and Louise Friel ran free media training workshops at the Millennium Forum and The Playhouse.

They took questions from staff from community and voluntary organisation Voice of Young People in Care VOYPIC www.voypic.org and further education students and



VIEWdigital at CultureTECH junior

lecturers about the VIEWdigital 'Shoot, Edit & Upload: Practical MultiMedia Production' workshop - using cheap digital cameras and free (or nearly free) editing software and building an audience for digital media content through social media.

Co-founder Una Murphy said: "Taking part in CultureTECH, CultureTECH Junior and the

Belfast Media Festival was a great opportunity to spread our message about digital media production and training for the community and voluntary sector.

People can sign up for a FREE magazine and find out more about the media training workshops on the VIEWdigital.org www.viewdigital.org website."



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Keith Wilson
Principal Software
Engineer



Keith Wilson joined Belfast based IT company, Liberty IT, 8 years ago as a Senior Software Engineer and following an internal promotion, took up his current position of Principal Software Engineer. Read on to find out what a typical day is like for Keith...

EARLY MORNING

Most mornings I am up by 6.30am and my first job of the day is to make breakfast for myself and for Kaitlyn, my one year old. Once I've got her up and fed, I get both of us ready for the day ahead while my wife also gets ready for work. Then, together the three of us leave the house and drop Kaitlyn off to the child-minders on our way.

Often, I'll get the bus into the office as working in the city centre is very convenient for the various public transport routes. As anyone with a small child knows, this peace and quiet time is much appreciated, so I spend the journey wisely - getting some downtime, listening to music or reading my kindle!

I am normally at my desk by 8am and I spend the first part of the morning catching up on emails that have come in to my mailbox overnight. Working exclusively for our parent company, Liberty Mutual Insurance, means that we work with colleagues based all over the world. I use this time when most of our colleagues in the US are still in bed to sort through and respond to emails, prioritising tasks for myself and the team.

MID-MORNING

One of the things that I love about my job is that my role is so varied - I am a technical team lead, software developer, analyst and tester, all rolled into one! Working on numerous live projects, all at various lifecycle stages, ensures that no two days are the same. At the moment, I am involved in at least 8 projects, meaning I get to work with a wide variety of technologies, which keeps things very interesting.

To keep abreast of the latest technology trends I regularly undertake classroom based training and attend relevant conferences. However, I also find it extremely useful to complete online video-based training, for example watching a 5 minute, bite-sized video can really help you learn new and more effective ways of doing things. At Liberty IT, everyone within the company, no matter what their role, is strongly encouraged to be proactive in managing their career, and identifying relevant training is a big part of this. However, it's not

all about technical training, I've also found the softer skills and the business-led, more customer focused training, extremely useful too.

Typically, the latter part of my morning is spent providing support and working with my Belfast colleagues, giving project status updates, bouncing ideas off one another, mentoring less experienced team members, and working through tasks in preparation for our global colleagues coming online.

The team atmosphere here is fantastic, helped by the open and friendly culture of the organisation and open plan office space. We have a lot of banter over coffee and buns throughout the day, and often socialise together outside of work during both team nights out as well as during companywide organised Social Committee events.

of... are Engineer at Liberty IT

LUNCH-TIME

I like to take my lunch very early, normally around 11.30am – this is usually the latest I can last given that I have my breakfast at 6.30am! I really like to get away from my desk during lunch-time, and so when it's nice weather, I often take a walk into Belfast city centre which takes approximately 2 minutes! It's a good chance to run errands such as going to the Post Office or the bank, grab some lunch in one of the numerous places to eat, or just simply take the opportunity to get some fresh air.

AFTERNOON

Taking an early lunch also means that I am back at my desk in time for our American colleagues coming online. So the rest of my afternoon is generally spent interacting or holding meetings with our US colleagues through video calls, telephone, Lync and IM. Email is great too, but I prefer more instantaneous conversation. Even working from home doesn't present a problem as most of our work can be done from anywhere with a Wi-Fi connection!

We have great working relationships with our extended global teams, which are enhanced even further by the regular trips our employees make to their international offices or through our regular host visits here in Belfast.

The focus on work-life balance at Liberty IT works really well for me and my family life as most days I finish work by 4.15pm - 4.30pm and head home to spend some "Daddy-time" with Kaitlyn.

EVENING

Once we've put Kaitlyn to bed, I now have some "me-time" which depending on my mood, can be spent going to the gym, reading books, listening to music, or playing games consoles. However, bedtime isn't long in coming and before I know it, the 6.30am alarm goes off again!

For more information on Liberty IT, including details on opportunities available, visit liberty-it.co.uk/careers



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Forde Campbell Tech Time Out

Separating work and home life is difficult for tech lawyers, say Forde Campbell solicitors Nicola Mallon and Katey Dixon.

A member of FirePoise (local fire dance group), Katey often travels direct from work to gigs: "I jump from software licensing agreements, to crowds watching as we dance with hoops of fire -helps focus the mind!"

But, because tech law is increasingly part of daily life, she can't always rely on fire to switch off, even online shopping reminds her of e-commerce principles – Katey says, "I confess to having 'robust' discussions with a number of online shops about their direct marketing procedures..."

For Nic, a house full of developers is home. This means she's always ahead of the game in relation to digital media and memes, but it allows her little escape from debates over open source. When she gets the chance she takes refuge in Belfast's nightlife, enjoying cinema and local bands or indulges in off-the-wall craft or baking experiments.

Is separation from work impossible? Nic says "No, but given the extent that tech seeps into many aspects of life

– from education through to social media, I enjoy looking at the world through the eyes of a tech lawyer."



Forde Law Solicitors, Katey Dixon and Nicola Mallon

Contact details

Email Katey@fordelaw.com

Email: Nicola@fordelaw.com

Phone: 028 44 610 780

It's not all Greek to us!

Socrates was the first wet blanket when it came to new technologies and his fears over the negative impact of technology have been echoed through the ages. But, says Jackie Logan, Managing Director NakedPR, Northern Ireland's companies should embrace and shout about the advances they are making rather than take a leaf out of the philosopher's book.

There aren't many things to thank accountants for but credit to the profession for one of the world's greatest technological advances. The invention of writing was spurred by the need to track agricultural goods and for administrative purposes as mankind became more settled in towns and villages.

Like many over the years, Socrates feared this progress. Rather than see the possibilities for learning and improvement, he feared that this step forward would 'create forgetfulness in the learners' souls'. He dreaded impact of the written word on the vibrant Greek tradition of debate and rhetoric. And he like naysayers, before and after him, saw the pitfalls rather than the potential.

Thankfully, Socrates and the pessimists around us have not halted progress. The written word has allowed us to capture ideas on the page, thoughts to be shared, argued about and built upon. It has spurred humankind on to develop those worrisome telephones, radios, computers, the internet and so much of what we have come to rely on in our day-to-day lives.

Rather than proving a distraction to ingenuity and inventiveness, we now live in a world where we have unprecedented access to the written word and the accumulated knowledge of thinkers from centuries past and across the globe.

In business, it has radically transformed how PR



practitioners operate. As the number of communications channels grows ever larger, ranging from the old-fashioned telephone call, to the blogosphere, social media sites and of course traditional media like the newspapers and radio we now have endless means to tell or discuss a story.

Unlike Socrates, companies in Northern Ireland are embracing the power of technology, they are creating, developing and manufacturing in ways that are worlds away from those of our parents' generation. But in typical Northern Ireland style, most of us prefer to hide our lights under a bushel. We must take the opportunity to talk, shout, share and engage with the world and tell them about our businesses to ensure further success. No longer is it good enough to rely just on word of mouth or who you know.

Effective Public Relations can ensure that companies have the opportunity to talk, engage and discuss all the possibilities created by their innovative technology. It's about managing your reputation by communicating and building good relationships with the people that matter. And just as Plato has been responsible for branding Socrates as a universally recognised icon let the PR professionals ensure your company's story is communicated.

Have faith in your new technologies but please tell the world about it!

Jackie Logan is Managing Director of NakedPR, a PR and Event Management Company which offers no nonsense, no fuss just great PR. www.naked-pr.com

Queen's Team Takes Top Honours at 25k Awards 2013

A Queen's University Belfast team which is developing a range of novel medical diagnostic tests is the overall winner of the 25k Awards 2013, sponsored by Bank of Ireland.

These prestigious annual awards are made under the NISP CONNECT entrepreneurship programme, which is based at the Northern Ireland Science Park in Belfast's Titanic Quarter. The tests being developed by ProAx-SiS will enable routine monitoring of patients with chronic conditions such as cystic fibrosis, either within the clinic or at home.

To do so, ProAx-SiS has developed small molecule, peptide-based inhibitors (Protease-Tags), which serve both as a means to trap active proteases and to provide a visual readout of their presence in biological samples, with applications to protease biomarker identification.

The category winners in the Bank of Ireland UK sponsored 25k Awards, were:

- Bio Tech: ProAx-SiS, QUB, sponsored by Warner Chilcott.
- Clean Tech: ADFeTech, QUB, sponsored by Dow.
- Software & Digital Media: Liopa, QUB, sponsored by Intel.
- Hi-Tech: Eye-C-3D, UU, sponsored by IBM.

The 2013 winner of the Innovation Founder of the Year Award was Dr Peter FitzGerald, Managing Director of Randox Laboratories Ltd, one of the fastest growing diagnostic companies in the world. Innovation Founder of the Year recognises the efforts of entrepreneurs whose unique ideas and positive contribution to the community have helped put Northern Ireland innovation on the map.

The award, made following public nominations and a subsequent

judging panel of previous Award winners, salutes Dr FitzGerald's extraordinary contribution to biochemical research and the local economy. Starting in 1982 with six people, including three family members, he has grown the business to employ over 1,200 staff across headquarters in Northern Ireland and in Randox offices distributed worldwide.

The focus has been on the development of better, more sensitive tests for existing diagnostic parameters, and keeping abreast of new trends and developments by devoting 30% of the company's revenue to research.



Dr Peter FitzGerald (left), Managing Director of Randox Laboratories and founder of recipient of the 2013 Innovation Founder of the Year Award, is congratulated by Ciaran McGivern, Head of Business Banking, Bank of Ireland, sponsors of the 25k Awards.

The awards were presented at a packed VIP gala ceremony in the iconic Titanic Belfast building, next to Northern Ireland Science Park in the city's Titanic Quarter. Steve Orr, Director of NISP CONNECT, said: "Congratulations to ProAx-SiS for an innovation which shows great commercial potential - this is an exciting time for the team, and for all the category winners and finalists.

"The £25k Awards offer a showcase for regional research talent to display world-class innovations, as well as providing a valuable training and development process as they



Kelly Moffit (left) and Lorraine Martin (centre) from ProAx-SiS, Queen's University Belfast, pictured with Julie-Ann O'Hare of main sponsor Bank of Ireland after being named the overall winner at the NISP CONNECT 25k Awards 2013.

move beyond the initial stages of business development. NISP CONNECT programmes are designed to inspire, encourage and nurture local technology entrepreneurs during conception, growth and improvement stages, and to continue that process to help them reach their goals."

Ciaran McGivern, Head of Business Banking Northern Ireland, Bank of Ireland UK, added: "Developing innovative ideas that have market potential is at the core of Northern Ireland's mission to create a more vibrant private sector. "If we are to make this mission a reality we not only need academia and industry to collaborate but we need commerciality to be part of the equation - to ensure that ideas with real potential can be developed into success stories.

"Bank of Ireland UK is proud and delighted to support the NISP Connect 25k Awards again this year. We wish this year's winner, ProAx-sis, and all the finalists every success in the future and look forward to working with them all closely."

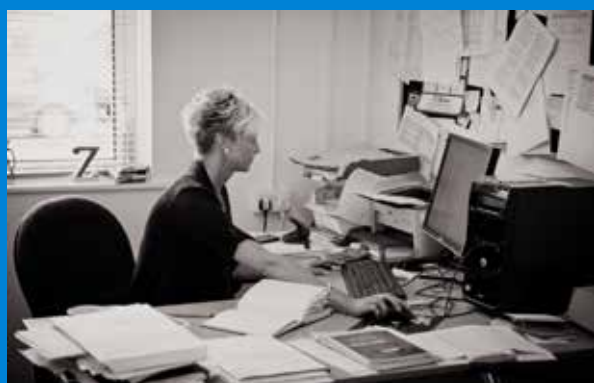
Other finalists in the 25k Awards 2013 included: Jenarron Therapeutics (UU); Digitease (UU), Inkintelligent (QUB), Columbus (QUB), Xpress LF (QUB), Nite Rider (UU).



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Digital Summit puts forward series of Ideas to create 20,000 Jobs

Momentum hosted Northern Ireland's first Digital Summit on 25th September, sponsored by the Ulster Bank. The Summit brought together 6 Northern Ireland Executive Ministers, 6 government departments, the main players in the Northern Ireland Digital sector from huge employers like Allstate and Citi to small one person software development companies, alongside representatives of the Universities, schools, and financial institutions.

The event, which was chaired by lobbyist Barry Turley, discussed the issues of access to skills, access to funding and access to markets leading to the creation of 20,000 new jobs in the sector in the next 5 to 10 years.

Speaking as Momentum launched the Summit, Chairman Rob McConnell said, "Over the past 18 months Momentum has been working with the digital sector, government, and the educational establishment to look at ways of removing barriers to growth across ICT. We've come up with a detailed and carefully considered plan which has been well received by all those with whom we've consulted

The Summit was the next stage of that process, bringing government together with the key stakeholders in a way that has never been achieved before. We will now look forward to the next stage of the process, taking all of the proposals we have put forward, and the helpful ideas and suggestions which came from our breakout sessions, and working them through government and into concrete actions."

Earlier this year, Momentum engaged the services of highly respected economic consultant Colin



Momentum, the voice of the digital sector held Northern Ireland's first Digital Summit, sponsored by the Ulster Bank. Pictured at the summit are Michael Noble, Momentum Barry Turley, Ellvena Graham, Ulster Bank, Minister for Employment and Learning, Stephen Farry, Ken Roulston, Momentum and Rob McConnell, Momentum.

Stutt who developed a detailed series of proposals. These proposals were then considered and added to by internationally respected ICT analysts Gartner and then presented to the summit.

The proposals were then discussed in plenary session and further in a series of breakout sessions along the themes of 'Access to skills, access to funds and access to markets'. Those proposals were then fed back to the overall summit for further discussion.

During the day delegates heard from the DEL Minister Stephen Farry, DETI Minister Arlene Foster, DE Minister John O'Dowd and DCAL Minister Carol ni Chuilain. Later, the First and deputy First Minister spoke at the dinner and underlined the Executive support for the sector.

Among the proposals tabled by Momentum were the following:

1. A Digital Innovations Fund
2. Appoint a finance facilitator for the Digital Sector
3. Practical mentoring on new market entry by those with the right experience
4. Initiatives to support Northern Ireland SME getting access to government contracts locally, nationally and internationally

5. Digital sector to work closely with education to help develop knowledge and experience leading to improved teaching of software design. A dialogue with the education sector is needed to identify how best digital businesses can support transformational change in the educational system by providing knowledge, skills and resources to implement a long term, sustainable programme of change

6. Developing the Skills Supply Chain by a communication and engagement strategy to persuade parents and children of the importance of computing in their careers and to identify talented children at an early age

7. A Regional Commitment to Software Excellence underpinned by the Executive

8. Develop a model studentship scheme and an associated fund to be used by Momentum members to support potential employees through education

9. Develop a scheme for Digital Warehouses or Hubs in provincial town

Momentum will now engage with the relevant departments around the development of an Action Plan, and seek to take the proposals forward in the new year.

Event Preview

Dublin Web Summit

10,000+ of the World's Brightest Minds in Technology!

This year the Dublin Web Summit will take place on October 30-31st in the RDS.

The Dublin Web Summit is a global gathering of the world's leading thinkers and doers in technology. It's not just a gathering of the planet's leading start-ups and technology companies, but of businesses, large and small, who are being impacted by new technologies.

Since its inception in 2010 The Web Summit has grown significantly with 40 full-time staff handling events in Dublin, London, Berlin and New York. In 2012, the summit brought together a dynamic and international group of 200 speakers and over 3000 attendees.

This year, over 10,000 attendees will make the trip from all corners of the globe to hear more than 350 speakers, from world's leading founders, investors and CEOs to inventors, designers and thinkers. Some of those speakers

include Evernote CEO Phil Libin; Digg founder turned Google Ventures VC Kevin Rose; WordPress co-founder, Matt Mullenweg and Rent The Runway founder, Jennifer Hyman.

Sync NI will also be attending this year's summit to listen to the inspirational speakers, and talk about our new Irish version of the website Sync IE. Check it out www.syncie.com

For more information on the Web Summit visit www.websummit.ie



Upcoming Events

1 Digital Marketing Day

BY Audiences NI and Ambition Digital

WHEN 24th October 2013

WHERE Titanic, Belfast

2 FM- Facilitating for the Future

BY British Institute of Facilities Management

WHEN 15th November 2013

WHERE Belfast Waterfront

3 Halo Funding Pitch 2013

BY Invest NI and InterTradeIreland

WHEN 19th November 2013

WHERE Belfast City Hall

4 Smart Business Show

BY SelfBuild Ireland

WHEN 29th – 30th May 2014

WHERE Odyssey Arena, Belfast



Would you like your event highlighted in the Sync NI Magazine or online at www.syncni.com?

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