

magazine

SYNC

Northern Ireland's Tech & Business Community

SPRING 2013

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Welcome to the Spring edition of the Sync NI magazine



foreword from Mark Ennis, Chairman of Invest Northern Ireland

Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon, said: "What's dangerous is not to evolve". Evolution is innovation, and without innovation we would indeed be in a very dangerous place – a place with little or no economic growth.

While often equated with IT, innovation is much broader than that. Although IT is integrated into almost every aspect of innovation, it is often the facilitator rather than the innovation itself. Northern Ireland companies are pioneering innovations across a range of sectors, driven not by technology but by ideas.

What if we had a way of detecting signs of ill health? In the healthcare sector in Northern Ireland we have several companies developing biometric sensors which, when embedded into wearable devices, can detect changes in temperature, eye movement and blood pressure and send an alert via Bluetooth to health professionals or carers.

How can we make better use of natural resources? In the green sector, Northern Ireland companies have developed patented waste separation systems, emergency liquid storage systems for use in disaster zones, rain harvesting systems and electronic controls for heating and cooling.

What if we combined the idea of a food and a toy? A local company has invented pliable chocolate that does just that.

In every case the idea drives the innovation; and innovation in one sector can spark innovation in another. Sensors designed to predict epilepsy in sufferers have now

been deployed in wave measuring devices in Galway Bay. Car manufacturers are using MRI scanners to get assess customer reactions to new product launches.

Innovation is driven by ideas based on rising expectations, and nowhere is that more evident than in the IT sector. We expect mobile data access, fast broadband, instant connectivity, and limitless data storage space. In Northern Ireland we are lucky that fast broadband is increasingly available and the roll-out of super fast broadband services is facilitating innovation and flexible working practices.

These rising expectations present opportunities for business. Cloud computing, for example, is not just helping with the management of data, but also represents an opportunity for SMEs to create new products and services that better serve their customers.

Supporting business innovation is a priority for Invest Northern Ireland. We want companies to put innovation at the heart of their operations because it is essential to business and economic success. We have many companies already innovating successfully; we need many more. In the words of Martin Naughton, the founder of Glen Dimplex, one of Northern Ireland's most successful businesses, "innovate or evaporate".

To conclude, what's dangerous is not to innovate.

Mark Ennis
Chairman of Invest Northern Ireland



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Got kids? Get them coding!

For the past 12 months young people aged 7-16 have been gathering at Belfast Metropolitan College's Titanic Quarter campus on various Saturday mornings to engage in an exciting new activity – CoderDojo. CoderDojo is a free coding club movement where young people learn to code and create with help from industry mentors who volunteer their time.

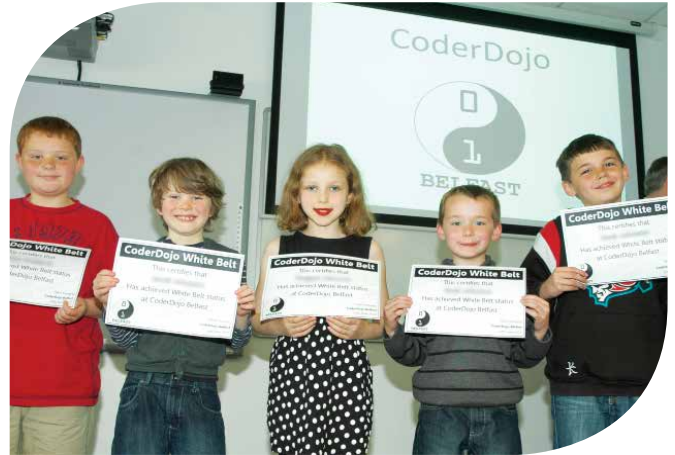
CoderDojo began as an after school computer club in Co Cork founded by secondary school student James Whelton. Later that year he met Bill Liao, an entrepreneur and philanthropist, who was interested in growing the project into something bigger than just an after-school club. The first CoderDojo was launched in June 2011 and the movement now operates in 24 countries with a total of approx. 150 dojos. Dojos are not-for-profit and facilitated by volunteer mentors, most of whom are highly skilled software developers.



CoderDojo Belfast was founded in April 2012, and to date has had over 150 young people exploring how to develop games, produce mobile phone apps, create websites and use - and do some really cool stuff on - the Raspberry Pi. Kids can come along with either no experience, in which case Belfast Metropolitan provide an induction to coding programme, or with existing projects they may be working on and gain invaluable assistance from mentors.

CoderDojo makes development and coding fun and CoderDojo Belfast at Belfast Metropolitan College ensures it is a sociable and rewarding experience which will hopefully encourage young people to pursue a career in ICT. The club provides an invaluable exposure to coding to kids from a young age.

Dr Jonathan Heggarty, Head of School for Electronic and



Computing Technologies at Belfast Metropolitan College, is a game programming mentor at the Dojo. He said: "Coder Dojo Belfast is a great opportunity for young people to learn more about computing and develop new skills in a fun environment. Through programming games, kids at the Dojo have learned the basics of Object Orientated programming and have written playable games to show their friends, parents and classmates in school."

Support for CoderDojo Belfast is provided by Belfast Metropolitan College, Momentum and various local, national and international IT companies including Citi and Blueprint.

Dr Ian Graham from Momentum said: "Northern Ireland has a skills shortage within the IT sector and programmes such as Coder Dojo are one way in which young people can get excited about software engineering and possibly stimulate an interest that will help them choose a career in the sector in later years. The staff and Belfast Metropolitan College and mentor volunteers from industry have embraced this concept and Momentum plans to work with other colleges in the sector to promote such Coding Clubs all across Northern Ireland."

For further information on Coder Dojo (and to find a Dojo in your area) visit www.coderdojo.com. Dojos are constantly popping up in new locations so if there isn't one within your reach please check back soon! For further information on CoderDojo Belfast or to grab a ticket to attend please visit: www.coderdojobelfast.com. Follow us on twitter @CoderDojoBMC for updates!

If you are interested in becoming a mentor for budding programmers or supporting CoderDojo Belfast please send us a tweet or drop an email to pdoherty@belfastmet.ac.uk

Introducing: Sensum Mobile Audience Insights Platform

Sensum is a mobile, cloud-based platform which measures audience engagement via tiny changes in people's sweat levels.

The brain child of cross-platform production company, Filmtrip, Sensum was born out of an interactive cinema project which debuted at SXSW in 2011. Whilst developing the short horror film *Unsound*, which used the aggregate response of sensor-wearing audience members to change elements of the film, co-creators Gawain Morrison and Shane McCourt spotted applications of the technology for audience testing, as well as 2nd-device content and personalised entertainment.

Traditional test screenings of TV, film and ads rely on survey responses, which, are by nature, subjective. Morrison and McCourt developed a complete end-to-end mobile platform which uses skin sensors to capture more objective feedback – the fluctuations in sweat levels which show a viewer's changing engagement as they watch a piece of media. They paired skin sensor units with a mobile app which can be used to stream media, allowing tests to be conducted outside the lab, and which wirelessly uploads audience data to a cloud-based dashboard. There, visualisations show users the points at which the audience's attention peaked or dropped off, as part of a suite of functions for viewing, filtering and reporting on results.

As Morrison explains, "We're already in the physiology age and are seeing more and more applications of wearable technology and feedback tools. Meanwhile, entertainment industries and other content creators are seeking deeper engagement

with their audiences. The platform we've developed uniquely combines leading-edge emotional response technology and proven research tools to give clients a richer understanding of consumer habits – as well as the capability to create really innovative, interactive content."

In 2012, the prototype platform was featured in *New Scientist*, *DesignTaxi*

mobile products in the UK. Morrison and McCourt are excited about opportunities opening up for Sensum, and appreciative of the support they've enjoyed so far from the public, the creative and tech communities and funding agencies in Northern Ireland. Morrison says, "Since we began the Sensum journey, many agencies, including UK Trade and Investment, Invest Northern Ireland, Northern



and *Prote.in*, and showcased at SXSW, the TV of Tomorrow Show, Channel 4's *Fuel4* and *Connected TV* events, the Nordic Games Conference, the Tel Aviv International Student Film Festival and other events. At the TV of Tomorrow Show in San Francisco, Morrison joined Intel Research and Microsoft Kinect on the "Natural Human Computer Interfacing for Future Entertainment" panel. Sensum was demoed to members of the NI public and media industry insiders, including cast and crew of HBO's *Game of Thrones*, Belfast-born Oscar winner Terry George, futurist Gerd Leonhard and Grammy award winner Imogen Heap.

In 2013 the beta platform was launched and was shortlisted for the Smart UK Project, being recognised as one of the 20 most innovative

Ireland Screen, Belfast City Council and the Arts Council's Creative Industries Innovations Fund, have been massively supportive of our vision and helped us throughout our product development. It's great to see the alignment across all of the agencies beginning to take effect and a master strategy of how best to support creative and digital companies. Long may it continue."

At time of going to press the Sensum team are preparing to present the platform at the "Back to the Future 2023" event at Mobile World Congress 2013 in Barcelona. They will be measuring audience members' emotional response to speakers and pitches throughout the event on Wednesday 27th February. See how they got on at www.facebook.com/sensumco and www.sensum.co

Meeting: The AppBuilder

▶ We hear you're good at making things. What kind of things?

We have developed TheAppBuilder, a web-based platform which enables the non-technical among us to create their own mobile app. When we started out as JamPot over two years ago, we realised it was too difficult for the majority of people to create their own app. This is where TheAppBuilder excels, enabling the rapid and easy creation of quality apps. The extra bonus is the price point – it's free for individuals, groups and small businesses to create and publish their app. Plus, large businesses can create apps at a much lower cost than hiring a team of developers to custom code their project, and massively reduce the time from idea conception to the delivery of the app.

▶ What support have you received since starting up?

The support of key journalists just after we launched TheAppBuilder was invaluable, and really accelerated the uptake of the product. A key breakthrough at this stage was meeting a senior journalist from online tech magazine, Engadget, at Mobile World Congress in Barcelona. She saw the value of the product, wrote a glowing review article, and traffic to the site really ramped up. From here, Fast Company and a number of other U.S. based publications reviewed the product and really got behind it.

▶ TheAppBuilder has enjoyed great success in the US since starting up in 2011. How have you found the US market in comparison to the local market?

Quite simply, the US market is a huge mobile app market. Approximately 80% of our customers are based in the US, with the rest spread around the world.

The fundamental reason for this is that the US has the greatest smart phone and tablet penetration levels compared to any other market. This was identified from our research, and quickly proved to be the case. As a result we have aimed a lot of our marketing and messaging to the US market. In addition to the actual language used on the website, our adword campaigns, PR, promotions and

are now launching outward bound marketing campaigns to this market for the first time.

▶ How is your calendar shaping up for 2013?

It's looking busy, but I'm sure that's the standard response from every start-up! If the last year has taught us anything, it's that there is no such thing as a long-term plan



trade show selection are all focussed on the US market.

▶ We hear that you have just launched the Enterprise edition of TheAppBuilder in San Francisco. Can you tell us about this edition?

TheAppBuilder Enterprise is focussed on enabling large companies with distributed workforces to quickly, easily and inexpensively create mobile apps for events, report delivery, internal messaging, sales presentations, project status, and just about anything else required by the enterprise. We have been working with some of the largest enterprises around the globe for the past year on such solutions and we

in this industry. It is so young, and developing at such a rapid pace that both the product and commercial plans of the company need to be agile and respond at break-neck speed.

▶ Have you any words of wisdom for a new start-up in Northern Ireland?

Be bold, be confident in your product, and do not accept any barriers. We have had many hurdles thrown in our path over the past two years and each has served to strengthen the product and company. Don't get me wrong, though, it's been far from easy!

VIEW Practical MultiMedia Production Workshop led by Willis McBriar

▶ What makes your 'Practical MultiMedia Production' course different from other Video Production Courses?

Firstly, we use very inexpensive technology. For shooting, this could be a mobile phone or a simple 'Flip' camera. For editing, it depends on whether the user wants to use Apple or Windows.

For Apple, we train using the bundled iMovie software. For Windows we will use cloud based editing apps, a number of which are currently being trialled. However, if participants have already invested in PC editing software such as Adobe Premiere or Pinnacle, the course can be adapted to use these.

For distribution, Louise Friel explains the use of Youtube and Facebook/ Twitter as ways of getting the video to the audience.

Secondly, this is file-based. It takes as a starting point that tapes and discs are obsolete technology, and that many more people want to create their own videos but are held back by not knowing what to buy, how it all fits together and how to build an audience for their work.

▶ What would a participant get out of your 'Practical MultiMedia Production' course?

Our course enables a participant to shoot, edit and distribute short videos via the internet. At the end of the course a user will have all the knowledge they need to make and distribute short videos.

▶ What organisations have taken part in workshops so far?

We have had a very good relationship with The Bytes Project, a charity which delivers IT training to assist young people to overcome extreme social and educational disadvantage. VIEW has delivered two different sessions to staff. The first covered shoot, edit

and delivery for Apple computers, the second was an iMove edit package.

We have also worked with staff from Groundworks NI, The Irish Human Rights Commission, and Digital UK.

▶ How does your course fit in with the other Digital media workshops offered by VIEW?

VIEW also runs other Media Production Courses and they are all interlinked:

- Broadcast Media Production Workshop – Julia Paul (www.viewdigital.org/category/broadcastmediaworkshops)
- Social Media and Digital Storytelling Workshop – Kathleen Holmlund (www.viewdigital.org/category/socialmediaworkshops)
- Digital Publishing Workshops – Brian Pelan and Louise Friel (www.viewdigital.org/category/digitalpublishingworkshops)

▶ Who presents your Practical MultiMedia Production workshop?

Louise Friel and myself present, and the workshop is coordinated by Una Murphy (www.viewdigital.org/una-murphy).

▶ Why do you think this course is needed?

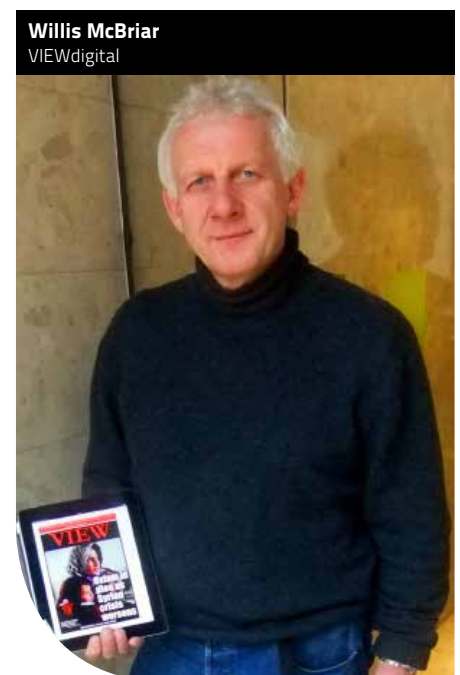
IT and computing are going to play an increasing part in Video and Film production, and yet there is little cross-over between courses in IT and in Video/film production. The technology is changing rapidly, with many of the tools such as cameras or editing software, plummeting in price. At the same time, though, other technology now essential to production will need to be purchased and understood. For instance, the backup and filing requirements of each piece of content

created needs to be thought about and performed meticulously.

I first saw the impact of this transition to file-based production in BBCNI, where I worked for over thirty years.

▶ How are you going to develop these courses?

We are working with The Open College Network (OCN) Northern Ireland (www.ocni.org.uk) and The Bytes Project to have the course accredited at Level 2 and 3.



Willis McBriar
VIEWdigital

What is VIEWdigital?

Brian Pelan and Una Murphy co-founded VIEW, a FREE digital social affairs magazine aimed at people who work and volunteer in the community and voluntary sector.

Editor: Brian Pelan

Email: brianpelan@viewdigital.org.

Website: <http://www.viewdigital.org>.

Are you ready for changes to Payroll?

The Pay As You Earn (PAYE) system has changed very little since it was introduced in 1944. Real Time Information, or RTI, is a new system that HMRC is introducing to improve the operation of PAYE.

PAYE information will be collected more regularly and more efficiently as employers submit their regular payroll submissions, rather than with their end-of-year tax return.

RTI will be introduced to most employers in April 2013, and by October 2013 all employers will be enrolled into RTI.

Local Company Acorn I.T. Solutions recently provided a seminar for their clients in conjunction with Sage (UK) and HMRC to explain the impact of R.T.I. and also to demonstrate how the latest version of Sage Payroll software would provide a quick and easy solution.



Companies who attended the seminar held recently at the Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim



The speakers on the day included Michaela Beggan from MBFS. Michaela explained the impact of Auto Enrolment for new Pension legislation. Alex Jennings - Temple (Sage UK), who demonstrated the new RTI edition of Sage Payroll and Tracy Kelso from HMRC who detailed the reasons for introducing RTI.

The seminar was a success and provided clients of Acorn I.T. Solutions an excellent forum to find out about the changes, see at first hand the solutions and ask questions of the highly experienced presenters.



The Finance staff from Specialist Joinery Group



The Finance staff from Topglass Contracts



The Finance staff from SJC Hutchinsons



The Finance staff from Acorn I.T.

To find out more about the RTI edition of Sage Payroll, or on how Acorn I.T. Solutions can help your business processes, call on 028 79644975, or email info@acornitsolutions.com



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CyberSource NI – Changing the landscape of the payments industry

CyberSource, A Visa Inc. company, is a truly global organisation. Saying that, its global nature hasn't hindered the Belfast centre in taking a pivotal role in shaping the company's strategic direction, and making its mark on the Visa Global network.

CyberSource, A Visa Inc. company, develops solutions that are globally changing the landscape of the payments industry. As an international organisation at the forefront of the electronic payment industry, Visa is a dynamic organisation. Visa's global strategy is focused on delivering the next generation of payments solutions, enabling consumers to transact wherever and whenever they choose, using a card, a computer or a mobile device with Visa's reliability, security and global acceptance. Every day, approximately 7,500 Visa employees with diverse perspectives from varied backgrounds work together across geographic boundaries to provide valuable solutions for our customers and to further Visa's legacy as an innovator – CyberSource NI is no exception to this.

Since its formation in 2008, CyberSource NI has grown from strength to strength. With full life-cycle responsibility of CyberSource's payment security and international payment acceptance global product sets, it has established itself as an integral piece of both the CyberSource and Visa jigsaw. For those who have been working in NI, the holistic knowledge and appreciation of both the product sets and the industry has created a platform whereby their input and expertise are influential in honing the strategic direction of the organisation in terms of technology, process and product.

Stephen McNamara, one of the first members of staff in Northern Ireland is now Head of Technology for CyberSource globally. Working from Foster City, California, his team is tasked with setting the strategic technical direction for CyberSource worldwide. Marty Bell, Senior Staff Engineer in CyberSource NI, is an active participant in Stephen's team. He notes "As a technologist, having the opportunity to influence and set technical direction for the organisation is a highpoint of one's career. When that organisation happens to be a global and aligned with one of the most recognised brands in the world, then that opportunity is the icing on the cake. This is a recognition of the skills and dedication of the teams based in NI and the value they add in making CyberSource a success."



Fergal Downey, Senior Development Manager, CyberSource NI

Pictured with his Visa Go Beyond Award

Fergal Downey, Senior Development Manager within CyberSource NI, was one of eighteen employees globally individually recognised for his contribution to Visa. Commenting on his career at CyberSource to date: "I've always been one of those individuals who wasn't afraid to challenge the norm; CyberSource was the correct fit for me. We built a team of game-changers in Belfast; people who both have the ability and passion to make a difference. I rarely know what challenge each day brings; but it's that challenge that makes the day enjoyable"

CyberSource NI recognizes that there is a certain excitement that comes with working at one of the world's most recognised and most respected companies. We acknowledge that this excitement can be leveraged not only to accelerate the continued growth of the business, but also to allow our engineers the opportunity to shape the technological advances of the industry.

Looking ahead to the DANI Awards in 2013

When the DANI Awards launched back in 2011, I thought this was an opportunity to raise awareness of the work being carried out in the digital sector within Northern Ireland and, give our talented marketers, designers and developers a pat on the back for their achievements.

Never did I imagine, when we started the awards that 3 years later we would actually be celebrating NI's first EVER Digital Industry awards encompassing the entire Creative Industries sector. 2013 will be a massive celebration of the Digital Industries sector, and I am delighted to say that we are hosting the awards at CultureTECH on 13th September, in St. Columbs Hall, Derry.

CultureTECH is an 'epic' festival of digital technology, media and music which runs from 9th – 15th Sept in Derry-Londonderry. With an estimated footfall of 30,000 people, this is going to be a very exciting event.

With only 350 seats available for the gala evening, this year there will be a total of 16 categories, including an outstanding achievement award given to an individual who has contributed to and advanced the growth of digital media and the creative industries sector.



The variety of awards extend right across the Digital Industries, which include, Web design and applications, Interactive content which includes gaming, publishing and digital arts, mobile, film, TV, animation, music and digital marketing. We will also be acknowledging the best start-up, breakthrough exporter, and Digital Industries Person of the Year, which will be selected following nominations.

If you would like to find out more or become a part of the DANI Awards 2013, please get in touch via www.thedaniawards.co.uk, or simply call 028 8775 9784.

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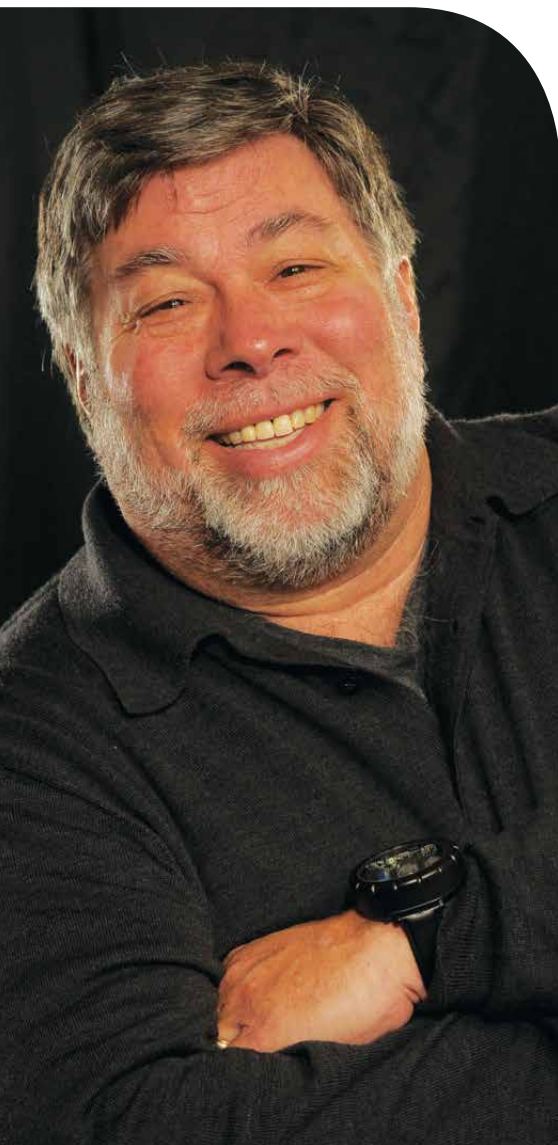
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Derry~Londonderry secures European Business Innovation Centre Network Congress

Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak will be headline speaker

One of Europe's largest and most prestigious business events will take place in Northern Ireland's second city in May with Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak as headline speaker, it has been announced.

The European Business Network (EBN) Congress, which annually boasts international decision-makers, investors, and business angels amongst its high-powered audience, will take place in Derry~Londonderry between 29th and 31st May, and this year is open to a local business audience.



Local companies, including tech firms, can find out more about registering and taking exhibition space at www.ebncongress.eu

Hosted by The Northern Ireland Business and Innovation Centre (NORIBIC) in association with Invest NI, the EBN Congress will take place over three days at the Millennium Forum and a number of other venues around the themes 'Digital', 'Cultural' and 'Social Innovation'.

From start-ups to multi-nationals, for entrepreneurs and innovators, for those who just want to say "I experienced EBN Congress 2013", with over 40 organisations exhibiting across the Digital, Social and Cultural Villages, it is an event, you'll not want to miss out on.

Benefits to delegates will include an opportunity to participate in an unconventional business and innovation conference and to get inspired and amazed by a stellar line-up of speakers.

Those attending will also have the opportunity to share knowledge, best practice and contacts, find new partnerships and avail of unrivalled networking opportunities in the event's Villages. The event was attracted to Northern Ireland this year in part because of Derry~Londonderry's status as UK City of Culture as well as NORIBIC's long-standing involvement in the European Business Innovation Centre Network.

EBN Congress 2013 will include a series of events and exhibitions, including the Digital, Cultural and Social Innovation networking Villages,

and promises to provide a significant economic boost to the city due to the spend by delegates, who will come from all over Europe, as well as the positive image of Derry~Londonderry it will present to influential people.

Headline speaker, Steve Wozniak, who has been a Silicon Valley icon and philanthropist for more than thirty years, will be speaking in Northern Ireland for the first time. In 1976, Wozniak co-founded Apple Computer Inc with Steve Jobs, helping to shape the computing industry with his design of Apple's first line of products.

Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Investment, Arlene Foster, welcomed the announcement of the event. Arlene Foster said: "This is the first time the Congress will take place in Northern Ireland, and one of the first times it will have been hosted in the UK. Past host cities during its 22-year history have included Budapest, Naples and Lyon so it is a tremendous vote of confidence in Londonderry and Northern Ireland.

The Congress offers a major opportunity to showcase the Northern Ireland proposition to an influential global business people and decision makers. There will also be an immediate economic boost to the city as in excess of 350 hotel rooms will be required to accommodate the delegates."

Dr Bernard Toal, Chief Executive of NORIBIC, says it will be a programme with a difference that will do the city and Northern Ireland proud.

"We are absolutely delighted to have secured the Congress for Northern Ireland as it is a fantastic and very

highly thought of event, and even more pleased to have signed up Steve Wozniak as headline speaker. We are now finalising the remaining list of international keynote speakers, befitting the kind of audience this conference attracts. The programme, which will include a large cultural element, will also showcase the very best that the city has to offer, and we can't wait to unveil it to the delegates," he adds.

Joining Invest NI as sponsors of the event are, the Irish BICs, Derry Visitor & Convention Bureau (DVCB), SEUPB's INTERREG IVA Programme, the Department Culture Arts and Leisure (DCAL) and the Department for Employment & Learning (DEL).

What is EBN Congress 2013?

For 22 years now, the EBN Congress has attracted international decision-makers, business frontrunners, innovation centres, incubator managers, business analysts and angels, investors, policy-makers, academics and role model in their respective sectors. It will be Northern Ireland's leading Business & Innovation Conference of 2013.

- Themes: Digital, Social & Cultural Innovation
- World class international speakers
- 500+ local and international business leaders, innovators and entrepreneurs
- Connections to new business opportunities & partnerships
- Located in a Culturally rich and vibrant City

Further information about the event and registration is available at: www.noribic.com/ebncongress

Steve Wozniak

A Silicon Valley icon and philanthropist for more than thirty years, Steve Wozniak has helped shape the computing industry with his design of Apple's first line of products the Apple I and II and influenced the popular Macintosh.

In 1976, Wozniak and Steve Jobs founded Apple Computer Inc. with Wozniak's Apple I personal computer. The following year, he introduced his Apple II personal computer, featuring a central processing unit, a keyboard, color graphics, and a floppy disk drive. The Apple II was integral in launching the personal computer industry.

In 1981, he went back to UC Berkeley and finished his degree in electrical engineering/computer science. For his achievements at Apple, Wozniak was awarded the National Medal of Technology by the President of the United States in 1985, the highest honor bestowed on America's leading innovators.

In 2000, he was inducted into the Inventors Hall of Fame and was awarded the prestigious Heinz Award for Technology, The Economy and Employment for single-handedly designing the first personal computer and for then redirecting his lifelong passion for mathematics and electronics toward lighting the fires of excitement for education in grade school students and their teachers.

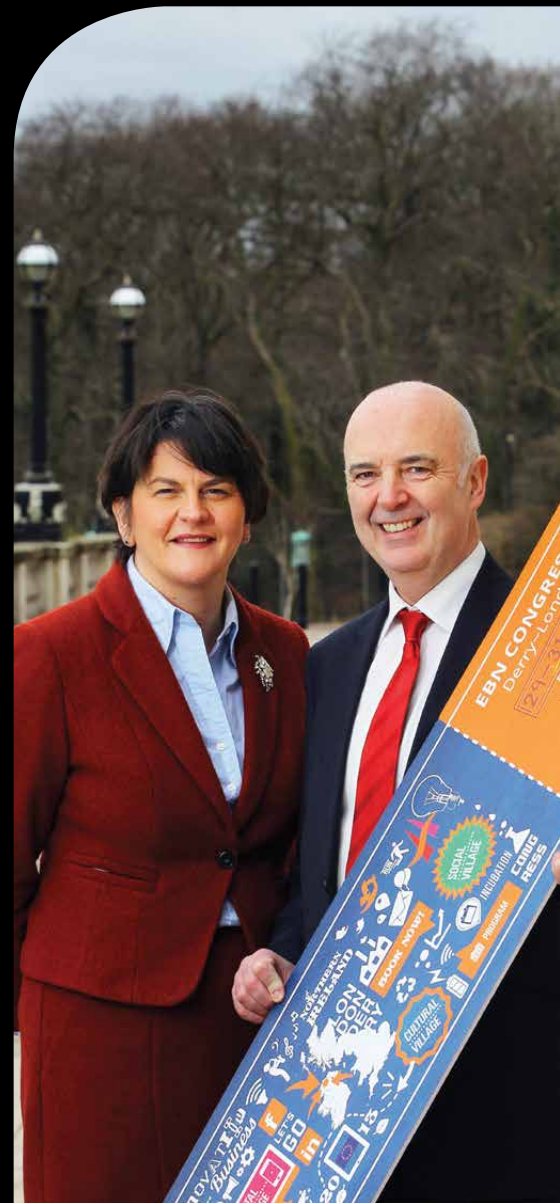
Through the years, Wozniak has been involved in various business and philanthropic ventures, focusing primarily on computer capabilities in schools and stressing hands-on learning and encouraging creativity for students. Making significant investments of both his time and resources in education, he adopted the Los Gatos School District, providing students and teachers with hands-on teaching and donations of state-of-the-art technology equipment. He founded the Electronic Frontier Foundation, and was the founding sponsor of the Tech Museum, Silicon Valley Ballet and Children's Discovery Museum of San Jose.

Wozniak currently serves as Chief Scientist for Fusion-io and is a published author with the release of his New York Times best selling autobiography, iWoz:

From Computer Geek to Cult Icon, in September 2006 by Norton Publishing. His television appearances include reality shows Kathy Griffin: My Life on the D-List, ABC's Dancing with the Stars and The Big Bang Theory.

NORIBIC

NORIBIC has been supporting SMEs to start, develop and grow since 1986. Over this 27 year period, this not-for-profit EU Business Innovation Centre (BIC) has assisted thousands of small businesses and entrepreneurs to embrace innovation through its business support programmes, seminars and conferences. EBN Congress 2013 is our latest and greatest challenge to bring the best of innovation from across the world to your doorstep.



CultureTECH 2013 Launches Open Call for Submissions

Derry's CultureTECH Festival launched on February 12th with the announcement that the festival will take place from September 9th-15th and feature a host of partner-led events including the Belfast Media Festival @ CultureTECH (September 12th-13th), the Glasgowbury Picnic (September 14th), a special creative industries edition of the popular DANI Awards (September 13th), the Loebner Prize for Artificial Intelligence (September 14th), a city-wide games arcade and tournament hosted by Multiplay (September 12th-14th) and a major new educational strand featuring Teen Tech, W5 and a 500-strong Coder Dojo event.

The organisers also announce that the theme of this year's CultureTECH Conference will focus on "Telling Digital Stories" with this one-day conference taking place on Wednesday, September 11th, in the heart of the week-long festival programme.

But perhaps the most important announcement was the fact that over a third of the programme has been left "open" for anyone to suggest an event which they would like to deliver during the festival.

Festival organiser Mark Nagurski said: "While we are absolutely delighted to have so many great events in the programme already, it is the homegrown talent that will turn CultureTECH into something special. We're inviting anyone who would like to be part of the festival to submit their ideas for events - from music gigs to arts exhibitions -



and speakers. We're committed to making as many of these ideas as we can happen."

The Open Call will run until March 31st, with decisions being made in early April ahead of the release of the main speakers and acts lineup later that month. Submission guidelines are available online at www.culturetech.co/ submissions and successful proposals can be supported in three ways:

- ▶ **Marketing** - includes listing your event in the programme and various marketing and PR efforts
- ▶ **Infrastructure** - help with venue, AV requirements or volunteers
- ▶ **Cash** - financial support, for example, to bring in an interesting speaker or act to the festival.

While the organisers are welcoming proposals of all shapes and sizes, they did have a few words of advice: "We're particularly interested in proposals that include strong collaborations, ideally across sectors. For example, we'd love to see events which brought together visual artists with gamers or musicians with programmers. In fact, niche creative ideas that just need a place to happen and a great audience will be an ideal fit for the festival" Mark added.

Further notes can be found in the submission guidelines, but if you'd like to chat about your idea before submitting it, just pop an email to info@culturetech.co



NI's brightest awarded Asidua's £25K Scholarship Programme

Four of N. Ireland's brightest Computer Science and Engineering students - Andrew Kingston, Jake Mercer, Michael Drury and Andrew Fletcher, have been awarded places on Asidua's prestigious Scholarship Programme. Launched in 2008 in co-operation with Queen's University Belfast and University of Ulster, the Asidua Scholarship Programme aims to attract fresh talent into the N.Ireland IT sector, by offering successful Computer Science and Engineering students an unrivalled package worth up to £25,000.

Sync NI recently met up with Asidua's new Scholars (Andrew, Jake, Michael and Andrew) to find out more about them and the programme.

Andrew Kingston



Hometown: Greenisland

Degree: MEng Computer Science, Queen's University Belfast.

I have a longstanding interest in computer systems and their applications, and Computer Science was a perfect fit for me. I heard about the Asidua Scholarship Programme from a presentation at university. I felt the programme offered a unique and rewarding opportunity and their bursaries will be a welcome help. As an Asidua Scholar I am looking forward to putting the knowledge and skills I've learned on my course into practice

and I relish the new challenges that lie ahead.

Michael Drury



Hometown: Belfast

Degree: MEng Computer Science, Queen's University Belfast.

I have been interested in technology and innovations in the IT sector from a young age, and so the decision to study Computer Science was a straightforward one. During an Open day at Queen's University, I found out more about the opportunities in IT from Asidua and so applied for their Scholarship Programme. I believe that working with Asidua will be very beneficial to my degree as well as my future career in IT, and I hope to gain as much experience as I can with the different technologies Asidua uses.

Jake Mercer



Hometown: Portadown

Degree: MEng Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Queen's University Belfast.

I've always loved taking things apart and rebuilding them, especially

computers and other electronic devices, so choosing Electrical and Electronic Engineering was an obvious choice for me.

When I was researching courses for my UCAS Application, I discovered Asidua's Scholarship Programme and applied as soon as I could; the chance to work with and learn from experts in their field was too good an opportunity to pass up! I have no doubt that in the future I will have benefited from this unique and invaluable experience, and I am confident it will help me get ahead in the world of IT.

Andrew Fletcher



Hometown: Ballycastle

Degree: MEng degree in Computer Science, Queen's University Belfast.

I chose Computer Science as I would describe it as my hobby, and, I believe this course will allow me to build upon my self-taught knowledge. I learnt about the Asidua Scholarship Programme from my own research, I then attended one of their presentations at university. I thought the programme would give me the opportunity to fully apply my skills and gain experience. Now, as an Asidua scholar, I am confident that I will be able to further my technical skills and development by working in a world class setting alongside experienced IT professionals on innovative projects.

To find out more about the Asidua Scholarship Programme, visit www.asidua.com/scholarships

An Ecotechnic Future – The advent of Renewable energy and the problems caused by the future skills shortage

The technological advances which drove the birth of the industrial civilisation were only possible due to The Earth's immense reserves of fossil carbon, but this has come at a cost. It's estimated, that so far humanity has used around half, of the world's stock of oil, and a little less than half its stock of coal and natural gas.

The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which is the scientific body tasked with assessing the risks of climate change, believes that world production of oil, coal and natural gas will, in fact, increase steadily for the next 100 years, to the extent that by 2100 consumption of fossil fuels put together will be a modest fraction of today's levels, because alarmingly, there will be very little in the way of fossil fuels available!

This realisation, along with consumer knowledge surrounding the well-documented threat of global warming from greenhouse gas emissions, has perhaps fuelled the rapid and recent changes in government policy which have seen the renewable energy industry experiencing real growth. Innovation is a necessary condition for the growth - and ultimate survival of an industrial society, but if energy resources aren't available in sufficient quality and quantity, innovation can make a successful society, but it won't make or maintain an industrial one.

To feed this energy demand of an ever growing and increasingly environmentally aware human population, huge offshore wind farm projects harnessing wind and tidal power will become an ever increasingly noticeable sight on the horizon for many of us around the coastline of Great Britain.

It has recently been announced that Belfast Harbour, due to its deep water channel, has been chosen as a bespoke site for the construction of wind farms, and the initial construction of The West of Duddon Sands Project off the Northern Irish coast gets underway this year. This huge investment over the next 15-20 years and signal of intent by DONG Energy is, of course, fantastic news, and will bring much needed and welcome respite to the local economy, but will it bring jobs?

Sadly, opportunities will be limited, as the expertise



Martin Carroll

Head of Technical Recruitment, Wellington International

required for this emerging sector is not in Northern Ireland, but in other far flung corners of the planet on similar projects. They are a nomadic tribe who follow the projects, such is the demand for their skillset, and they can often command rates of pay more alike those associated with professional footballers. The energy sector as a whole has an ageing workforce which has serious implications for the future and there is very little investment in it at present.

There are very few national training centres and in Northern Ireland, facilities such as those iconic companies like Harland & Wolff, which would have historically put apprentices through, are now a thing of the past. Within the next generation of talent there is a shortage of individuals gaining scientific, engineering and technical skills, and for those who are gaining the skills, there is strong competition from other industries.

This is resulting in an ever decreasing pool of individuals available to the energy industry. It's time that we invested in the future with training facilities and engineering apprenticeships to ensure that we have fresh and suitably qualified talent available to service this new Ecotechnic age. In the next issue we will look at how organisations like Invest NI are tackling this issue.

How Cloud Consulting helped dotMobi successfully employ their Salesforce.com application

Who are dotMobi?

dotMobi are expert providers of mobile web technology, focused on helping businesses reach and understand mobile audiences, no matter what the device, the content or the context. Our products include DeviceAtlas® which provides detailed and up-to-date device intelligence on mobile and web-enabled devices and goMobi® a mobile web publishing platform. We also operate the .mobi registry. The .mobi domain is the only Top Level Domain designed to let consumers know that a site works on a mobile phone.

Originally founded by 14 leading internet players, including Ericsson, Google, GSM Association, Hutchison 3, Microsoft, Nokia, Orascom Telecom, Samsung Electronics, Syniverse, T-Mobile, Telefónica Móviles, Telecom Italia Mobile (TIM), Visa and Vodafone, we were acquired by our parent company Afilias Limited in 2010.

Afilias Limited is the world's leading provider of Internet infrastructure solutions that connect people to their data through their global registry and managed DNS services.

How did your relationship with Cloud Consulting Ltd begin?

Afilias were looking for a CRM system that could provide a 360 degree view of the business so they could successfully manage a diverse range of customers, channel partners, product types and business models

dotMobi was already a Salesforce customer however we were having difficulty implementing the application to our full advantage. Cloud Consulting Ltd. (CCL) was one of the vendors that Salesforce recommended. We chose them not only because they ranked highest on our evaluation matrix; they were also the most responsive and displayed a real desire to engage with us.



Can you talk us briefly through what the project involved?

Afilias had re-organised their worldwide Sales & Account Management organisation. Salesforce was regarded as the backbone to support this re-organisation. CCL ran workshops focused on ensuring that the Salesforce features and workflows supported the new organisation



and processes on a worldwide basis.

Another project objective was to support the revenue reporting and forecasting processes in both Afilias and dotMobi with a set of enhanced reports and dashboards. Given that Afilias and dotMobi market different service and product ranges the revenue planning and forecasting processes differed.

As the Salesforce system was being introduced, dotMobi launched a redesigned website and a connector was implemented by CCL to automatically pass leads and customer feedback from the website to relevant Sales and Accounts staff accounts in Salesforce.

The final piece of work involved the cleansing and migration of customer and sales opportunity data to ensure that the information available in Salesforce was accurate subsequently avoiding disconnect in customer opportunities.

Was the project successful?

The project was well managed and came in on time. Despite initial challenges co-ordinating between different divisions, products and geographies, Salesforce is now a key tool for our service support. It is used across the whole organisation; marketing, lead management, sales tracking, and support. Having a cloud based system, with easy web access has been instrumental in adoption across the Group.

What advice would you give other Salesforce.com users?

Pay attention to scope. We exceeded our initial budget, but that arose from lack of initial scoping.

Have you plans to integrate Salesforce further?

If there is a business case to support it, we might look at doing more around the marketing database. I first saw the impact of this transition to file-based production in BBCNI, where I worked for over thirty years.

Finally, if you could sum up your relationship with Cloud Consulting Ltd in one sentence what would it be?

Cloud Consulting is a trusted partner who understands our business and is very thorough in their approach to delivering a solution.

Lots to shout about for NI!

At Sync NI we have had an exciting year to date. For us and the Northern Ireland business community 2013 is a year brimming with fantastic opportunities. The naming of Londonderry as 'City of Culture 2013' has attracted global attention to Northern Ireland. This year especially, our local companies have the chance to shine. One of the highlights of our year will be the CultureTECH festival; at Sync NI we are delighted to be media partners at CultureTECH.

This year the festival, which celebrates digital technology, media and music, will take place in the City of Culture from the 9th to the 15th of September. Whether or not you join the 30,000 expected visitors we will bring you the highlights of this festival, which will include the CultureTECH conference, Teen Tech, Belfast Media Festival and of course the DANI Awards.

Before CultureTECH festival the business and technology community has another superb event to look forward to. The European Business Network Congress, which is hosted by NORIBIC in association with Invest NI will take place in Londonderry between 29th and 31st May. We are media partners to this event, and this year the congress is open to a local business audience. The EBN will take place over three days at the Millennium Forum and a number of other venues around the themes 'Digital', 'Cultural' and 'Social Innovation'. The Congress undoubtedly culminates in an address from Steve Wozniak. Wozniak co-founded Apple Computer Inc in 1976 and is a Silicon Valley legend and philanthropist.

With such an exciting year ahead of us, we can provide local businesses with the opportunity to network, share

and collaborate with each other. Sync NI strives to keep companies and individuals informed about trends and developments in the business world.

Our clients range from leading law firm Carson McDowell, Omagh Enterprise Company and Aurion Learning to innovative software solutions company Consilium Technologies, and Kana.

We provide our clients with a platform to post news stories, job vacancies and company information. Our specialised platform provides a unique way to remain connected with the local business community.

Our magazine and website also offers competitive advertising opportunities which are offered at a discounted price if membership is confirmed. We offer businesses the chance to become a sector sponsor on our website, this gives you the opportunity to establish thought leadership. As a sector sponsor we can put your company in the spotlight, giving your news and your views a prominent place on our website, social media and magazine. Whether your business is an ambitious start up or well established local player, we can offer you a service that is tailored for your company's needs.

The vibrant business

scene in Northern Ireland this year has given our local companies the opportunity to thrive and go global. With the buzzing Northern Ireland Science Park, and multitude of events taking place in the city of culture we have a lot to shout about. We at Sync NI want to accelerate the growth of local companies and home grown talent, and we look forward to the future together as a business community.



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The Northern Ireland Science Park welcomes The Duke of York

The Northern Ireland Science Park in Belfast's Titanic Quarter has become one of the Top 5 science parks in the UK inside 10 years, a success recognised this month with a visit by HRH, the Duke of York.

Prince Andrew met with board members, toured the facilities and officially opened 'The Here and Now: Innovation in Northern Ireland', a mobile travelling showcase of the best local innovation and technology.

His Royal Highness's visit to the Northern Ireland Science Park was part of his continued focus on promoting institutions at the forefront of maintaining the United Kingdom's global reputation for excellence in technology and science, as well as the vital role of innovation to future economic prosperity.

NISP, with 115 tenants and a 1,900-strong commercial community across 75 acres, has outperformed its peer group of 78 science parks across a wide range of benchmarks. It contributes £80m in wages to the NI economy, has facilitated £10m risk capital pa, mobilised 1,000 business volunteers and 110 Business Angels to help 800 new starts, and showcased to 100 plus school visits and 60,000 visitors per annum.

NISP Chairman Frank Hewitt said: "Government, through the Regional Innovation Strategy for Northern Ireland, recognises that innovation is vital to unlocking future economic growth. This presents us with a vision focused on making Northern Ireland the ideal location from which to run an innovative business or undertake research.

However, the building of an effective



regional innovation economy cannot happen without the proactive engagement and collaboration commitment of the universities, the FE colleges, the business community - and, of course, the Northern Ireland Science Park."

"The Science Park has a unique role to play in this scenario. We are the only UK park with a Euro Zone border, a remit to help build an all-island economy, and an enviable track record of working with specialised organisations like MATRIX and InterTradelreland."

NISP have just completed new building Concourse 2, which is 55,000 sq ft, and have all the statutory approvals in place for Concourse 3. Tenant companies range from 1 person, 1 desk on a monthly deal, to single company, whole building on a 15 year lease - and any number of combinations in between.

The next goal is the North West Regional Science Park in Derry-Londonderry, which comprises a 50,000 sq ft science park facility at Fort George and a 20,000 sq ft extension to the Co-Lab facility at Letterkenny Institute of Technology, with an estimated added value to the local economy of £4m and 285 jobs.

"Without doubt, the harnessing of innovation and the translation of knowledge into new businesses, products and public sector services is key to Northern Ireland's wealth creation prospects," said NISP Chief Executive, Norman Apsley.

"Northern Ireland has the engineering, science and innovation potential to make it a world leader in innovation and the knowledge economy and the current economic environment makes it vital to build a more vibrant private sector based on the ability to translate ideas into commercial successes."

The Science Park is currently undertaking a 5-year Corporate Plan with the aim of making a positive and pronounced difference to the Northern Ireland economy by 2020. To do so, the senior team are directing their energies towards growing NISP's business service offerings to attract a spread of tenants who will bring foreign investment to locally derived technologies.

At the same time, they are reaching towards total sustainability, sourcing new and additional revenue streams, and effectively bridging any remaining gaps between business science and education.

Foundation Degrees can build a firm foundation for businesses

Employment and Learning Minister, Dr Stephen Farry, recently launched a new advertising campaign to promote the benefits of Foundation Degrees to employers and learners.

Commenting on the importance of Foundation Degrees to up-skilling, the Minister said: "Foundation Degrees are higher education qualifications that combine academic study with on-the-job experience. This mix can help boost students' skills and career prospects whilst benefitting employers and their business. Employers are fully involved in the design, development and delivery of the courses. This means Foundation Degree students graduate with a very specialised set of skills designed to meet the specific needs of employers in a particular sector."

A Foundation degree is a recognised Higher Education qualification in its own right and offers a progression route to an Honours Degree at university.

They can help to improve employees' skills and their contribution to your business. The campaign will run across a variety of media platforms, including outdoor locations, online and press. The employer aspect of the campaign will focus on informing employers about the various ways they can get involved with Foundation Degrees and the potential benefits to their organisations.

Referring to a Belfast based software development company, Core Systems, who are advocates of the Foundation Degree qualification, the Minister said:

"Although the Foundation Degree qualification is well regarded, I want to further raise awareness of the benefits of Foundation Degrees amongst more employers. The experience of Core Systems illustrates the important contribution that the qualification makes towards ensuring that the specialised skills needs of STEM sector employers are met. Foundation Degrees can not only raise the skills levels of your workforce, but also by strengthening our indigenous skills base, support the Northern Ireland economy as a whole."

Core Systems have taken two work placement students from the Foundation Degree in Computing and Network Systems course delivered by Southern Regional College every year since 2008, and have subsequently employed six of these students in permanent full-time positions following their graduation. As a result, almost a quarter of their current workforce of 25 people are former Foundation

Degree work placement students.

Core Systems Director, Patricia O'Hagan said: "Core Systems have found to their advantage that hosting Foundation Degree work placement students acts as a cost-effective way of recruiting new talented members of staff. The work placements allow Core to train the students in the very specialised skills that we need, allowing students to gain vital experience relevant to Core's business. The students join us on a work placement and remain on our team throughout their degree studies. The combination of



their studies and real life production experience develops excellent software experience and most of our students remain with Core Systems after graduation."

Dearbail Rafferty is one of the students who completed their work placement at Core and who subsequently secured a full-time position as a Software Developer with the firm said: "The fact that the Foundation Degree in Computing and Network Systems included a substantial four month work placement as part of the course was what convinced me to enrol. I knew that if I could have an extended period working for an employer I would have a chance to work hard, prove my worth and impress them."

Foundation Degrees are designed and delivered through partnerships between employers, universities and further education colleges and are available in a wide range of subjects. Further information about Foundation Degrees is available at www.nidirect.gov.uk/foundation.

Get to know the Northern Ireland Advanced Composites and Engineering Centre

The Northern Ireland Advanced Composites and Engineering Centre (NIACE) is an industry-led, university-hosted technology hub for the research and development of advanced engineering and advanced materials technologies, particularly in the area of advanced composite technologies. The centre's aims are to help Northern Ireland's manufacturing sector grow and develop its capabilities, enabling it to compete more successfully on both a national and global scale.



The centre opened last year and is funded by the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills, Invest Northern Ireland, and Bombardier Aerospace. Its emphasis is on industry-friendly access and collaborative partnerships between industry and the universities, supporting manufacturing companies and their supply chains to improve competitiveness.

It operates a participation model similar to that of the National Composites Centre in Bristol and the Manufacturing Technology Centre in

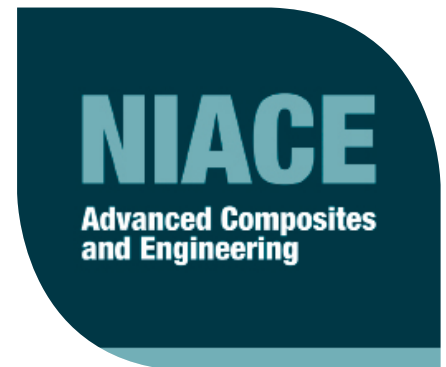
Coventry, but with a much lower cost entry point, an attractive feature to SMEs in particular.

Based at purpose built facilities at Airport Rd, Belfast, NIACE can accommodate up to 120 research and technical staff from participant organisations, and offers a collaborative office environment, a composite and advanced materials research laboratory, materials analysis laboratories, meeting rooms and a lecture theatre, as well as a wide range of workshops. Participating companies are co-located with academic staff from Queen's University Belfast and the University of Ulster to work together to develop world-class technology solutions for a breadth of manufacturing applications.

The co-location of staff and facilities allows companies to work at a scale and in collaborations not currently feasible. It also promotes the development of skills and rapid knowledge transfer between the universities and industry, ensuring the development of innovative new product and manufacturing technologies.

There are currently eight participating companies based at NIACE carrying out research and development. These are from a wide variety of sectors, including Aerospace, Automotive, Defence, Environmental and Marine, and include five SMEs.

Centre manager, Dr Scott King, points out, "By industries and universities working together under the one roof, a range of important benefits, such as helping Northern Ireland's manufacturing sector grow its capabilities and reputation, can be created. NIACE is here to support collaborative research and



development, support and develop networking, stimulate innovation, allowing participating companies the opportunity to share ideas and up-skill."

Participation in NIACE can offer Industries several benefits such as reducing development times, shared responsibility for undertaking projects, potential increased access to funding, and access to equipment for manufacture and testing not currently available to the company.

Participant companies can also benefit from expert workshops and seminars organised in the centre. Most recently, the centre hosted a technology road mapping run by IMechE, sponsored by Invest NI.

Scott King, said, "I am delighted that in the short space of a year the centre is already well established in the R&D community. Already, participating companies are reaping the benefits of collaborative work, from other companies and from the universities. We want to facilitate projects with companies which can lead to mutually beneficial outcomes, and NIACE provides the perfect forum for that."

For further information, please contact Dr Scott King at scott.king@niace-centre.org, or telephone +44 (0) 2890733754.

Event Preview: EBN Annual Congress 2013



An "Unconventional event", that is what you are expected to experience in Londonderry this year with the 22nd edition of the EBN Annual Congress!

2013 is the year for Londonderry as first UK city of Culture. In this specific context, EBN and their partners NORIBIC have decided to take a "festival/unconventional" approach in order to make out of it an event to be remembered for inspiring creativity and innovation, through a cultural platform.

The Millennium Forum located in the city centre will welcome the participants who will have the opportunity to visit relevant Villages areas according to their own interests:

▶ The Digital Village

This area will focus on Digital Innovation and will try to answer issues surrounding the digital content sector.

▶ The Cultural Village

All regions have their own unique culture. This creates a business opportunity that can be used to considerable economic advantage.

▶ The Innovation Village

Particularly in a recession economy, the opportunity for start-up can be limited through many factors – market, finance, staff or customer base. By thinking innovatively, the business model can be translated from a traditional profit taking model to a surplus making model such as social enterprise.

Case studies of innovative processes adopted by BICs in their support of Digital/Cultural/ Social businesses and successful business exemplars. Examples of Digital, Cultural-Traditional business crossover models as well as examples of sustainable Social Enterprises will be showcased.

More detailed information coming very soon to www.ebncongress.eu



Upcoming Events

1

Belfast Pub

Summit

BY Web Summit

WHEN 11 April (18:30 – 22:00)

WHERE 21 Social, Belfast

2

HALO Funding

Pitch 2013

BY HALO NI

WHEN 27 April (18:00 to 22:00)

WHERE Long Gallery, Stormont Estate

3

Investment

Readiness Programme

BY E-Synergy

WHEN 15th – 30th April (9.00)

WHERE Midtown Business Center, Belfast

4

TMED5 'Enabling Healthy Ageing'

BY CTIC

WHEN 2-5th May (9.00)

WHERE City Hotel, Derry

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

Email the Sync NI team at info@syncni.com to find out how

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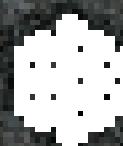


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To find out how **FOUNDATION DEGREES** can strengthen your workforce and business VISIT nidirect.gov.uk/foundation OR CALL **0300 200 7825***

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