

DigitalCity

Its role in graduate enterprise and
entrepreneurship

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The University as economic anchor

“A prominent, business-engaged University; an engine of innovation, developing world-ready graduates and employee talent; and a catalyst for business growth, strategic partnerships and regional and national prosperity”.

(Enterprise and Business Engagement Strategy, 2016)

Origins of DigitalCity

- Established: 2004
- Aim: to create a thriving digital cluster, attract, retain and showcase talent, foster ambition through start-up and growth
- Rationale: Strong enterprise record, strong School of Computing, strong regional engagement in line with mission
- Partnerships: Middlesbrough Council and wider Tees Valley

Supported by: ESF, ERDF, Regional Development Fund, TV Investment Fund...and many others

DigitalCity Fellowships: A core offer

Supporting graduates with strong business ideas to start up and provide new business and employment opportunities, through:

- Funding
- Premises
- Specialist and business support
- Access to networks

Across 13 years of developments, this strand remains at the core of DigitalCity

Some achievements 2012/13-2014/15

- 138 new businesses
- 325 new FTE jobs (gross) (164.5 net).
- Total (gross) GVA of £13 million (£6.6 million net)

(New Skills Consulting, 2015)

Premises

- Launchpad – start-up incubator on campus (www.startupteesside.co/)
- Boho – a thriving home for digital businesses in Middlesbrough
- Fusion Hive – tech scale-ups in Stockton
- Close liaison with Darlington, Redcar and Hartlepool Councils

Boho



Some case studies

- Spearhead Interactive: specialising in immersive and interactive content, virtual and augmented reality (www.SpearheadInteractive.com)
- Cardboard Sword: software developers
- Animmersion, Big Bite Creative, 13 Strides: Long-established DC companies in Tees Valley

Animmersion



Spearhead Interactive



Not all of them stay...

- ...some go to London (TransferGo, Seed Animation)
- ...some move north (Gospelware, Fluid Pixels)
- ...some merge or get bought out (thap)
- ...some get broken up (but all get jobs)

Of 238 digital jobs in Boho, 119 are occupied by Teesside University graduates

A refreshed DC strategy

- Start-ups
- Scale-up and growth
- Embedding digital techs in key sectors
- Skills
- Women in Tech

Talent retention and attraction at the heart

Joining up agendas

DigitalCity &:

- Launchpad – enterprise support synergy
- Schools/research institutes – drawing on academic expertise for innovation
- Student Futures Strategy – central to employability agenda
- Tees Valley SEP – promoting and supporting the wider economic agenda through skills, innovation & enterprise
- Wider NE – synergy through partnerships (eg Creative Fuse)

Our challenges

- Graduate employment and opportunities
- Joining things up isn't always easy...
- Funding: short-term funding militates against long-term planning
- Managing relationships and expectations
- Profile – internal as well as external

Our opportunities

- Refreshed strategy and long-term commitment from TU
- Student Futures Strategy
- Strong TVCA support and partnership
- New digital innovation accelerator programme
- Teesside University's strong leadership role

Tech Nation 2017

- 6970 digital jobs in Middlesbrough
- £211m digital GVA
- 14% turnover growth
- Recognition for DigitalCity

Thank you

- DigitalCity – Catalyst for Growth
(tees.ac.uk)
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