

PLANS FOR SCOTTISH CYBER INNOVATION HUB BACKED BY INDUSTRY LEADERS

29 SEPTEMBER 2021

Industry leaders have backed plans to create the first Scottish Cyber Security Innovation Hub, to help drive further growth and innovation in Scotland's thriving cyber security sector.

ScotlandIS Cyber is leading the initiative, which is set to benefit the economy through the creation of new jobs and place cyber resilience at the core of Scotland's digital transformation.

Plexal founded by Delancey, the innovative company behind the London Office for Rapid Cybersecurity Advancement (LORCA), Cyber Runway and NCSC For Startups have been awarded the contract to create the business case and strategy for the hub, following funding from Scottish Enterprise.

The business case development is being supported by an advisory group which comprises a team of experts including Professor Bill Buchanan from Edinburgh Napier University, Peter Jaco (cyber investor and entrepreneur), Matt Little (ex-Zonefox CTO), Jamie Graves (ex-Zonefox CEO), representatives from Edinburgh Innovations, The Data Lab, CENSIS, Edinburgh University, Abertay University and more.

Once established, the hub will support early-stage cyber start-ups to grow their businesses, connecting them to potential new partners, collaborators and investors. Business guidance will also be provided as well as professional learning opportunities.

Ciara Mitchell, Cluster Manager for Scotland's Cyber Cluster at ScotlandIS, said: "COVID-19 has caused a significant shift in the scale and speed of digital adoption which presents us with a whole new set of cyber challenges and opportunities. Approximately 10 new cyber companies are being launched in Scotland each year and it's vital that we ensure that the necessary resources and support are available to help them flourish.

"We also have a well-recognised and growing focus on cyber research and education across numerous universities with the number of students in this field growing each year as well as the number of PhDs. It is important to support the commercialisation of the increased number of spinouts generated from this growing volume of PhDs."

Saj Huq, director of innovation at Plexal, said: "Cyber innovation is thriving across the UK and Plexal's excited to unlock the entrepreneurial, engineering and academic excellence that already exists in Scotland to accelerate the growth of its cybersecurity



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cybersecurity innovation ecosystem.

"We will be exploring how a cyber innovation hub in Scotland can be more closely linked with similar clusters in Cheltenham, Manchester, London and many more so innovators can access all the investment, connections and opportunities that they need to grow."

A number of industry partners have already come on board to show their support for the cyber innovation hub such as Cisco, Accenture, Iomart, Barrier Networks, NCC Group, Leonardo and more.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About ScotlandIS

ScotlandIS is the membership and cluster management organisation for Scotland's digital technologies industry. We're at the heart of Scotland's digital economy, shaping, changing, and driving it forward.

We work with members and partners to support the wider digital transformation of business and society. Digital technologies underpin modern business and is critical to Scotland's economic success. The digital technologies industry in Scotland employs over 70,000 people, offering a wide range of skills and professional services from niche specialised companies to global players.

ScotlandIS works closely with Scottish Government, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Scottish Enterprise, and Skills Development Scotland to underline the importance of the digital technologies industry to the Scottish economy.

ScotlandIS has been the driving force behind the development of the ICT and Digital Technologies Skills Investment Plan, published by SDS and now in the early stage of delivery. This aims to reinforce and improve all aspects of the skills pipeline, from the school's curriculum to workplace skills development.

- ScotlandIS members employ about 60,000 people
- ScotlandIS members contribute about £4.7bn to Scotland's GVA
- 6,500 people attended ScotlandIS events in 2019
- Scotland's digital tech sector contributes about £7.5bn to Scotland's GVA
- 13,000 digital tech job opportunities are created every year in Scotland, filling all of them would add £1bn to Scotland's GVA
- Scotland has 3,900 digital technologies companies



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Saj Huq
Director of Innovation at
Plexal

- Scotland's digital tech sector grows 1.5 times faster than overall economy
- We are the 4th strongest export sector in Scotland, exporting more than £3.3bn
- 100,000 people work in digital technologies roles across the Scottish economy
- Average annual salary of digital tech workers: £36,900 = 26% higher than average salary of all workers in Scotland

Plexal's the innovation company that supercharges collaboration.

It combines open, collaborative innovation with a community of fast-growth startups to help enterprises and the government unlock the potential of technology.

Plexal works with some of the most influential government departments and global tech companies to deliver innovation projects. These include the cross-border Rapid Innovation Accelerator, which connected entrepreneurs in the UK and Oman, and London RoadLab, which helped Transport for London fast-track innovation.

Plexal's cyber innovation team is also building the UK's most connected cybersecurity ecosystem. Plexal delivers the LORCA accelerator, is the National Cyber Security Centre's partner for NCSC for Startups and is delivering Cyber Runway, the largest cyber accelerator in the UK. Over the last three years, Plexal has helped cyber startups raise over £200m and earn over £37m in revenue through LORCA alone.

Its workspace in London is home to over 800 innovators who are breaking new ground in cybersecurity, mobility, inclusive design, healthtech, AI and more. Members get access to community events, connections and 1:1 support designed to help them scale and Plexal regularly partners with members to pilot their solutions, bid for business together and enable them to build solutions with large organisations. The community includes Fiit, the online fitness startup, Quantum technology company M Squared and youth-led charity My Life My Say.

Plexal was founded in 2017 by clients of specialist real estate investment advisory company Delancey.

For more information visit: plexal.com



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