



COUNTY HALL

DIGITAL WILTSHIRE

THE SECRET POWER IN THIS
GREEN AND PLEASANT LAND

Digital business: the new growth industry

Across Wiltshire, private and public partners are investing heavily in creating an industry-leading digital landscape that enables a perfect work-life balance.

Think of Wiltshire and what springs to mind? Rolling meadows, leafy lanes, heritage architecture and village life. But take a look beyond the rural idyll and you will find a hive of local businesses working at the forefront of the global digital community.

From creative independents to government departments, cloud hosting services and new digital learning programmes, digital Wiltshire is one of the UK's best kept business secrets. But this looks set to change.



WILTSHIRE IS ONE OF THE UK'S BEST KEPT BUSINESS SECRETS.

Through diligent advice, funding and steering, Wiltshire's digital community is thriving and growing quicker than almost anywhere in the UK. This is a direct result of the high volume of internet traffic routing through the area, combined with high quality international work in IT and digital.

A strategic digital vision

Swindon and Wiltshire Business Hub, Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership and Wiltshire Council are among a host of companies working together to make the county a leader in the UK's



Rob Perks, Partner of the Business Hub

Wiltshire is a rural-based community, and in today's digital economy businesses are thriving without being physically located in big cities. Digital businesses, as well as other businesses looking to use digital technologies to expand their reach, can **benefit from the wealth of digital expertise and infrastructure driving Wiltshire's economy.**

There may be fewer big employers in Wiltshire, but many individuals start out as self-employed and grow from there. We are one of the top counties in the UK with the highest number of small businesses and online is a good way to operate.

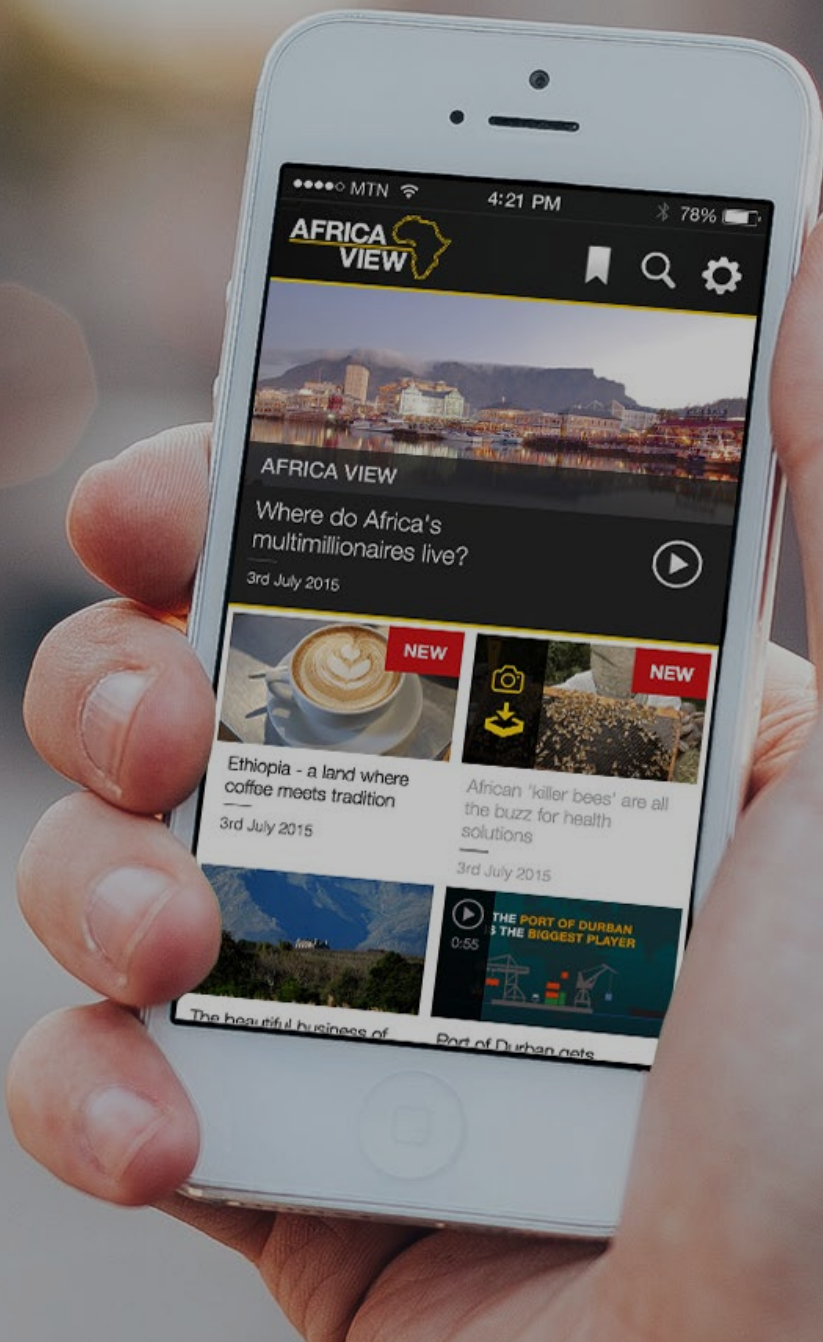
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Partner of the Hub





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Paul Goodenough
CEO and Founder

From market town to digital diamond

Corsham is just one example of where digital industry is flourishing.

This traditional Wiltshire market town punches well above its weight in terms of its digital infrastructure, with its history as a hub for communications and a centre for the Ministry of Defence and other

official bodies in the area. There are also a growing number of highly creative digital businesses in the wider area, with web platforms, design and built by local businesses accounting for over 2% of the world's internet traffic. Businesses in these sectors are thriving.

The beauty of a growing digital industry is that it leaves the Wiltshire countryside unspoiled. Digital doesn't need roads, buildings or other heavy infrastructural changes.

Therefore the environmental impact is negligible, and funds can be diverted to invest in people, education, upskilling, WiFi, business funding and support

These are the key factors that will create a digital economy to rival any throughout Europe and affect how we live and work in Wiltshire.

In the not too distant future, superfast WiFi will become available in the same way that electricity, gas and water are everyday household utilities.

Growing a digital business

Aerian is just one example of a successful Wiltshire-based digital businesses.

Starting out as a one-man creative service, Aerian has exploited its Wiltshire roots, and benefited from support and advice from the Swindon and Wiltshire Business Hub, including a Gateway to Growth grant that has helped the company grow from a team of 18 to 25 in the past year.

Today Aerian has a national client base that includes well-known brands such as BBC, Sky, CNN, Tesco, Good Energy and Breast Cancer Now.

Aerian regularly wins national campaigns and industry-leading projects normally managed by the big name agencies in London. They are able to do this by giving staff a much better work-life balance than you traditionally get in large cities like London, with a closer knit team and much shorter commute times.

“If you are a niche supplier, or you work in digital, as long as you’re up there with the best in your industry, there’s no reason you can’t succeed nationally or internationally, wherever you’re based,” explains Paul Goodenough, Founder and CEO of Aerian.

“The whole point of digital and being environmentally friendly, is to not keep moving things and people around the world, but to work from where you already live,” says Paul. “Wiltshire is a great place for a digital business like ours.”

People are the powerhouse behind any business and finding and keeping staff is essential to growing a successful business.

At Aerian, the company ethos is very much about training and upskilling staff, so they can continue to compete with talent in the cities.

Both directors are qualified lecturers, having taught at Wiltshire College, Bath Spa and Swindon. “I am a big fan of apprenticeships,” says Paul, “and teaching is a good way of finding the best young talent – we have often employed past students.”

Getting a digital education

It helps that the county is well served by further education courses.

At Wiltshire College, over 20% of the annual student intake for the 2014-15 academic year was enrolled on Digital Technology based subjects. Iain Hatt, Vice Principal of Curriculum and Quality, says "There are a whole range of ways in which we are responding to technology.

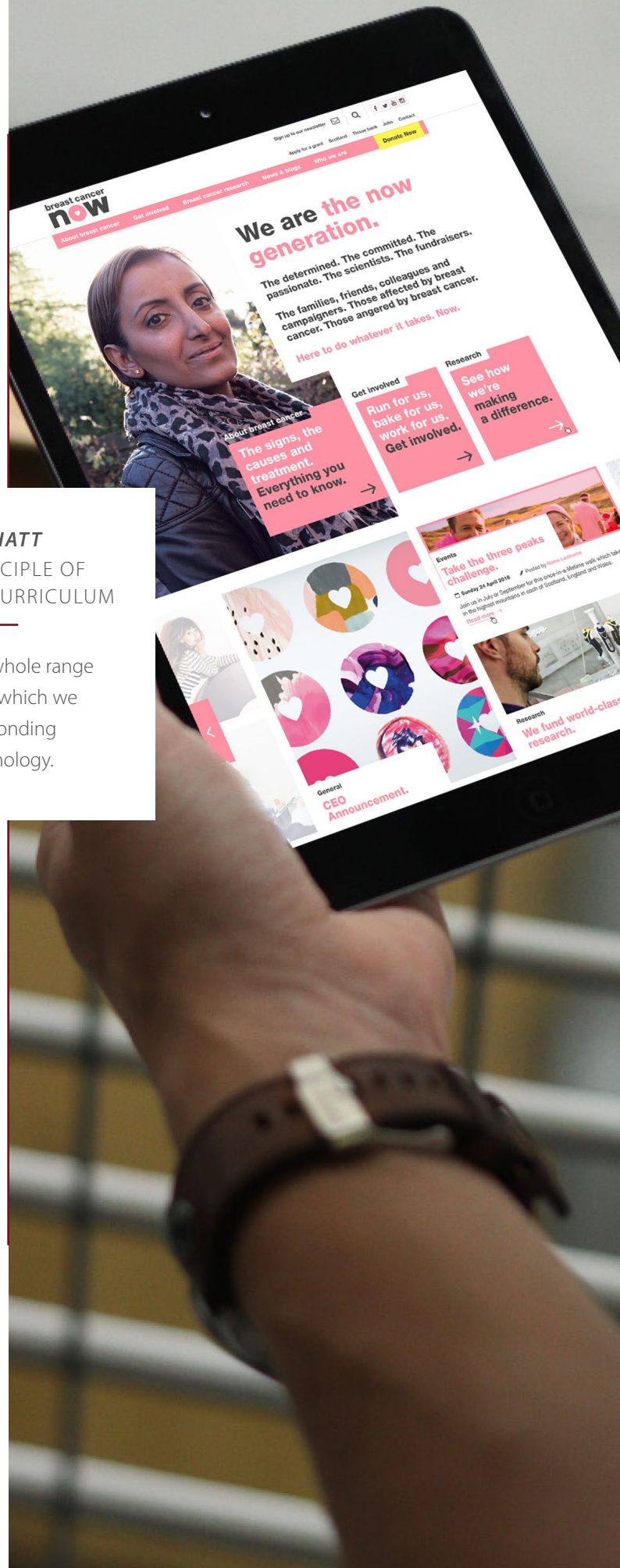
We have employer forums to discuss the needs of a particular sector and how to support businesses. These also help our students to get the best skills by linking them with employers."

Recent collaborative student-business partnerships include working with the MOD on developing games technology as a learning and training tool. "We also have live brief sessions, where students work with employers to solve specific business problems. There is real excitement in how digital can be used."

Looking beyond life at Wiltshire College, there is a positive future for careers in technology with 94% of those who completed their qualifications in the 2013-14 academic year going on to find employment or enrolling in further education and training.

IAN HATT
VICE PRINCIPLE OF
QUALITY & CURRICULUM

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How your business can benefit

The way in which digital integrates with life in Wiltshire is set to change faster than it ever has done before and there are incredible opportunities for businesses.

Swindon and Wiltshire Business Hub offers strategic advice, grants to upscale digital offerings, events to help understand the changing landscape and introductions to those creating this new landscape.

Whether it means getting a business grant or working with local leading lights to understand what the newest, biggest projects are, the Swindon and Wiltshire Business Hub is here to help you.

10 tips for developing your digital business

- 1.** Find your niche – if you have a USP that clients need, keep focussed on it.
- 2.** Be the best at what you do – stay ahead of the competition.
- 3.** Invest in your staff – train your teams and encourage career development.
- 4.** Use apprenticeships to find new talent.
- 5.** Work with local colleges to learn from them while they learn from you.
- 6.** Consider cloud services for expanding technology requirements.
- 7.** Keep your customer and client data safe and secure.
- 8.** Make connections for your business through local business groups.
- 9.** Get advice from other business professionals.
- 10.** Take advantage of business grants to help expand your business.





Swindon and Wiltshire Business Hub - supporting your digital growth.

What can we do for you?

If you're a growing and successful business, fresh challenges emerge! How best to market your Business, beat the competition, keep tax to a minimum, get the right IT package, recruit and retain good staff, avoid pitfalls and so much more.

Our Inspire knowledge programme could be just what you're looking

for, keeping you up to date with the latest developments in every aspect of business, delivered by professionals from every field of expertise. We also offer the service of one of our expert Business Managers to support you with one to one advice and help.

We can even help you find affordable office space in one of the enterprise centres in the county. Thanks to funding from Wiltshire Council, we can bring this invaluable ongoing programme of

support to you at an incredible price of just £25 per month, plus VAT. See our full list of events on our website to find out more and book your place.

Visit www.wiltshirebusinesshub.co.uk/ to arrange a meeting, or drop us a line on 01225 402 096 to find out how we can help.