

# ExpoTalent 2017

in association with DigitalCity

Showcasing the next generation of digital expertise

School of Computing

Thursday 9 March



where digital happens



Teesside University

## PROGRAMME

### EXPOTALENT IN ASSOCIATION WITH DIGITALCITY

11.00am	Food court opens, Teesside University, campus heart
1.30pm	ExpoTalent registration, Europa building foyer
1.30pm	ExpoTalent student showcase, Europa building labs
4.00pm	ExpoTalent student awards ceremony, Europa building, OL1
4.30pm	DigitalCity business exhibition and networking, the marquee, Teesside University campus heart
	> meet businesses
	> jobs court
	> investor lounge
	> Launchpad playground
	> UKTI Van – Exporting is great
8.00pm	Exhibition closes
10.00pm	Food court closes

# Welcome



I am delighted to welcome you to ExpoTalent 2017, our annual exhibition of second year students' work from Teesside University's School of Computing. This year we are running in partnership with Digital City, providing a single larger event to celebrate, promote and develop digital talent in the Tees Valley. The event brings together student talent, young people and business for a range of activities.

Once again we are proud to showcase some truly excellent work with a wide selection of projects from our second-year students. Project topic areas this year range from software engineering and programming to computer games, web and computer animations. I hope that you enjoy your time at our exhibition. Do use it as an opportunity to meet our students, and find out more about their achievements.

**Dr Simon Stobart**  
Dean, School of Computing



I am incredibly passionate about the immense growth potential of the North East's creative and digital sector. Our region boasts established corporates such as SAGE and Accenture through to fast growing and innovative SMEs such as Double 11, Visualsoft and Viral Effect. However, for our sector to be able to meet its growth potential we must ensure that the right talent is attracted and retained in the North East. Higher wages down south can often be attractive to workers but often they do not know about what great opportunities we have.

I am very proud that DigitalCity and Teesside University's School of Computing have teamed up to bring you a celebration of digital and creative talent and the companies that make our region so attractive to work in. I hope you enjoy your time at ExpoTalent and discover how we can help you on your creative and digital journey.

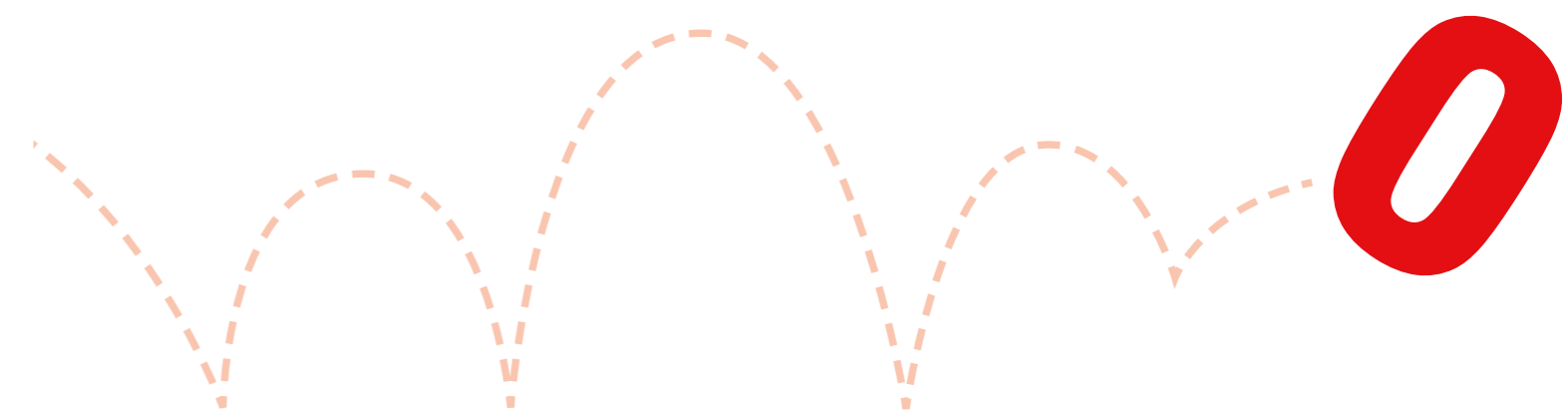
**Rob Earnshaw**  
Director, DigitalCity

Thanks to our sponsor



## Campus map

<b>CAMPUS HEART</b>	
1 The Curve	
2 Library	
3 Students' Union	
<i>Campus Heart is a designated smoke free zone.</i>	
<b>BLUE ZONE</b>	
4 Greig	
<b>EUROPA</b>	
5 Europa	
6 Victoria	
7 Mercuria	
<b>PURPLE ZONE</b>	
8 Olympia	
9 Centuria	
<b>GREEN ZONE</b>	
10 Student Centre	
11 Clarendon	
12 Waterhouse	
<b>YELLOW ZONE</b>	
13 Brittan	
14 Middlesbrough Tower	
15 Constantine	
16 Stephenson	
17 Cook	
18 Foster	
19 Phoenix	
20 Education House	
21 Orion	
22 Athena	
23 University House	
24 Aurora	
25 Centre House	
26 mima Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art	
Professional services	
Main Entrance	



## What is ExpoTalent?

ExpoTalent is our annual showcase of the School of Computing's second year digital students talent, providing businesses a unique opportunity to talent spot and target students for placement opportunities and employment.

This year we have partnered with Digital City to bring you a single larger event to celebrate, promote and develop digital talent in the Tees Valley. We will be bringing student talent, young people and businesses together with a full day of talks and showcase events to coincide with National Apprenticeship Week and International Women's Day.

Companies showcasing their organisation in an exhibition space in the heart of our campus will also:

- > talent spot and recruit the best of our second year students in the areas of web, digital media, computing, animation and games
- > find out more about the digital apprenticeship offers at Teesside University and the implications of the levy
- > showcase their own company expertise
- > share discussions about the challenges of attracting women to courses and careers in tech
- > promote job and placement opportunities to Teesside's digital students and young people from across the region
- > discover how a student placement for a year or over the summer would work for their business.



## Student placements

The School of Computing have a dedicated team to support businesses through the recruitment process from start to finish. If you have any questions or would like to find out more about our student placements scheme, please email [scm-placements@tees.ac.uk](mailto:scm-placements@tees.ac.uk) or call 01642 342619.

ExpoTalent provided me with the opportunity to showcase a web application to visiting businesses. I was approached by the Head of Development at VisualSoft. He was very impressed by my work and the approach I had taken to solving the problem, as well as my PHP and databasing skills. I was offered a year-long placement on the spot, which was an absolute shock to me as he was the very first person I had spoken to that day!

Lana Hedley,  
BA (Hons) Web and Multimedia/VisualSoft

We took on an intern from Teesside University for the role of technical animator, which was a great success. He became an integral part of the team and we will now struggle without his help. As a result, we have offered him freelance work throughout his final year as well as a position when he graduates. Offering internships through Teesside University is something we are keen to continue providing.

Sophie Smart,  
assistant producer, Hammerhead VR



Join us in May 2017 for the usual fabulous mix of inspiration and motivation from world leading games, animation and VFX studios.

Find out more: [animex.net](http://animex.net)

### Hobgoblin3D

Hobgoblin3D have built a unique business from the ground up. With the latest 3D printing technology, soon to be in every home, they sell their own cleverly crafted blueprints for the lucrative table top gaming sector and have some great plans in the pipeline.

#### What motivated you to form Hobgoblin3D?

We all had first class degrees but after putting the time into job application after job application we thought why not do something for ourselves. Then we found out about Launchpad and DigitalCity offering excellent support for start-ups.

#### Did Teesside University prepare you well to start-up your own business?

Those that pay attention on the games courses do learn quite a lot. The lecturers place a great emphasis on problem solving, teamwork, project management, all in addition to the necessary digital skills put us in that professional mind set to start our own business.

#### What did you get from DigitalCity?

Funding and mentorship support. We're now in a position to consider a Kickstarter campaign, and talk with investors – so it's really allowed us to move quite fast. It's fantastic to think that a small team of three can now design, manufacture and distribute physical products on a shoestring budget, and that's the advantage of 3D printing, and social media there's never been a better time for digital creatives!

We can't recommend the whole experience enough, and would advise any graduate to make full use of what's available at Teesside University. Starting a business isn't for everyone, but for us it's been very rewarding.



### Big Nasty

Big Nasty may have launched just last year but they are really flourishing with the support of DigitalCity and the Launchpad at Teesside University. Their games art, design, animation and audio talents and have recently proved that there is a promising future for them in virtual reality.



#### How did you start up your own development studio?

We had part-time jobs but we didn't like the thought of working for somebody else. We went to the Launchpad, where we were given great offices in the heart of the University campus. Then we went to DigitalCity and spoke to Cheryl who was absolutely fantastic at explaining everything we needed, and we were able to get onto their Fellowship Scheme.

#### How has the experience been?

It's been great. We've got some great leads now, secured some more funding and hardware to move into virtual reality so we're getting there now. All the consultants the Fellowship provides were great at getting us sorted, particularly with our branding and business plan. We were awarded a £5k grant and access to three consultants for business and financial planning, and branding – and a number of hours to spend wherever we need them most.

DigitalCity gave us some contacts, and alongside local networking events, like Gamebridge, we have been exposed to all sorts of opportunities, particularly for virtual reality work after we made a really polished demo for a VR game. We were a finalist for 'If we can you can', a challenge for the most up and coming North East start-ups, which was great exposure and a proud moment at the start of our careers.

#### Was Teesside University the right choice?

Absolutely. The lecturers were always on hand whenever we need them, you just had to ask – so you have that balance of support and independence. We wouldn't be here without the collaboration of everyone at Teesside. Honestly we didn't know how to start up and each person at the University was able to point us in the right direction to get that support we needed.

DigitalCity acts as a one-stop fount of knowledge, resources and support for growing a digital business within the Tees Valley. Operating in partnership with the University we have a long history of securing grants and investment for both new and established businesses, alongside supporting activity within the region to ensure our digital cluster can continue to innovate and thrive. Here we feature just a small sample of our successful graduate companies, made possible with the support of Teesside Launchpad and through DigitalCity.

### SockMonkey Studios

SockMonkey Studios is a game development studio in Middlesbrough, founded in 2013 by Bob Makin and Darren Cuthbert, and includes a team of several successful Teesside University graduates: Jacob Keane, Dave McCann, Sophie Morris and Joseph Fletcher-Ward. Formed with the help of DigitalCity, the team work across mobile, console and VR with a wide range of development expertise.

#### How did DigitalCity support you going into business?

DigitalCity gave us financial and legal mentoring, and helped take the pressure off finding money for living expenses. We knew how to make games but we didn't know how to run a business so that support was key. In fact we kept on one of our mentors, Mark Delauny, as a director. He stayed with us to share his knowledge and helped us steady the ship so it was an invaluable experience.



#### What clients do you work with?

Individuals to global corporations like Disney and Motorola, world class game companies like SEGA, Hello Games and Team17, and some really stellar intellectual property like *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* and *Star Wars*. This is all through contacts we've built up from our previous experiences in the industry before setting up on our own.

#### Do you have a staffing policy?

Ha! Actually almost everyone in SockMonkey went to Teesside University at some point! Everyone was a graduate who did well and everyone worked with us in some capacity before we hired them. It's not necessarily a policy that we have to hire immediately from the University, more of a case of quality graduates available and us being in a prime position to hire them. Nearly all of our placement students across the years have gone on to work in the industry; I think it shows that there are great opportunities here to learn and collaborate if you're an enthusiastic person willing to get stuck in.

### Jacob Keane

Jacob graduated with a first class honours in computer games programming as well as the ExpoTees Games Programming award for excellence. He is a freelancer working with some of the best in the North East, including several well-established DigitalCity Fellowship companies such as SockMonkey, Hammerhead VR and Coatsink.

Jacob is a DigitalCity Fellow who moved back to the Tees Valley from his native Gloucester. He said, 'I would not have been able to financially justify the move back up here if it hadn't been for the DigitalCity Fellowship Scheme. Aside from that, there is a lot to learn about being a sole trader that differed from my past employment and time as a student. Having DigitalCity as a reliable, up to date and relevant source of information for the practicalities was extremely helpful.'

'The games industry scene up here is really open and friendly, and we also have good professional networking through DigitalCity, Teesside University and beyond. I was able to gain a much broader range of experiences compared to just securing a full time job and so my skills set is always growing. I've worked with all sorts of companies, on the latest tech and published my own original IP in the short time since being a Fellow, so it's fair to say I was fortunate to get such a good start.'



## Become a part of the digital cluster today

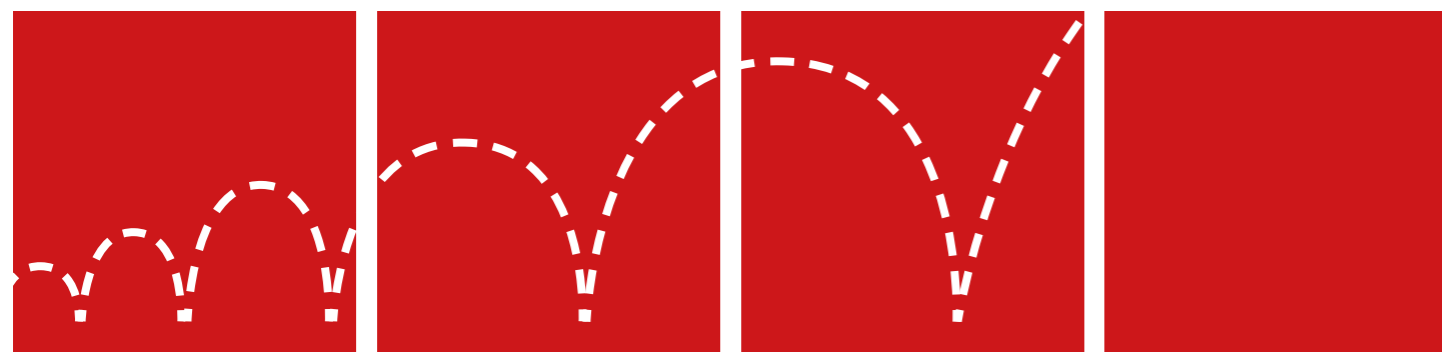
Register on the DigitalCity website for unique access to events, staffing and investment opportunities. The experiences above reflect just one aspect of our work here at DigitalCity but our door is open to all and you might be surprised at what we can offer you. We will not know until you start the conversation! To receive the best answer about what DigitalCity can do for you please make an enquiry on our website or give us a call.

[thedigitalcity.com](http://thedigitalcity.com)

01642 384 324

EXPO  
TEES 2017

ExpoTees 2017  
23-24 May



ExpoTees is an annual exhibition of outstanding computing innovation, technology and design - and an opportunity to recruit bright, new talent to your organisation.

Find out more:  
[tees.ac.uk/expotees](http://tees.ac.uk/expotees)



THEFORGE  
Together with business

TEESSIDE UNIVERSITY

## Higher apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships

Degree Apprenticeship Digital and Technology Solutions (Web Engineering)\*  
Chartered Manager Degree Apprenticeship

At Teesside University we're working directly with employers to develop higher and degree apprenticeships, to deliver the skills and expertise your company needs.

- > Develop the expertise you need with direct input into the skills provision for your sector
- > Upskill, motivate and retain your existing employees – with no age limit
- > Keep your business up to date with employees who have the latest industry skills and knowledge

\*Subject to approval



From April 2017, government funding for apprenticeships in England is changing. All employers with an annual wage bill of over £3m will be required to invest in apprenticeships by contributing to a levy. Funding is available for all employers towards the costs of apprenticeship training and assessment.

Find out more

T: 01642 384068  
E: [theforge@tees.ac.uk](mailto:theforge@tees.ac.uk)  
[tees.ac.uk/apprenticeships](http://tees.ac.uk/apprenticeships)





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Thanks to ExpoTalent I was able to showcase my work to a number of potential employers, including my current employer.

This exhibition helped me gain an interview, which led to an exciting year-long placement at Thrive Marketing. I am now currently studying on my final year of BA (Hons) Web and Multimedia, while working part-time at Thrive, with a permanent junior developer job in place when I complete my course.

**Tom Armstrong**

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We have taken placement students from Teesside for the last three years. We offered two students a place this year and both are exceeding our expectations.

**Nick Drew,**  
Director, Nicander

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2nd year students exhibiting their work. Recruit them for a placement or internship.



Final year students exhibiting their work. Recruit them to a graduate position.

## More information

For further information contact Myriam Mallet, **01642 384610** or email [m.mallet@tees.ac.uk](mailto:m.mallet@tees.ac.uk)

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