

Business hatchery thrives because of deal with Virgin Media Business

Enterprise Minister Fergus Ewing today discovered how Scotland's economy is set to benefit from fifty fledgling businesses gaining access to superfast connectivity thanks to Virgin Media Business.

During a visit to start-up accelerator Entrepreneurial Spark® in Edinburgh, the Minister heard how Virgin Media Business has teamed up with the social enterprise to provide its 50 start-up entrepreneurs with a free 1 Gigabit Big Red Internet connection.

Entrepreneurial Spark has three accelerator sites – or “hatcheries” – across Scotland. The first two, in Glasgow and Ayrshire, launched in 2012. Opening in February 2013, the Edinburgh site at Napier University, has already helped generated more than £1.3 million for the Scottish economy.

With up to 50 companies logging on to the hatchery's internet connection simultaneously, it was crucial that the facility had enough bandwidth to keep the infrastructure from buckling under the pressure. Virgin Media Business is providing these budding entrepreneurs with a high-speed, secure, dedicated business-grade internet connection.

With more bandwidth and faster upload and download speeds, the start-ups can focus on what's important: creating innovative products and services and growing their business.

Enterprise Minister Fergus Ewing said:-“It is vital that new start businesses like these have access to high speed broadband to enable them to thrive and compete internationally.

“Our ability to exploit these new opportunities is central to positioning Scotland as a world leading digital nation within a global digital economy. Already, Scotland has world class strengths in areas like renewables and life sciences, and I want our digital industry to be a similar driving force for this country.

“Investments like these will boost jobs, transform our businesses, raise productivity and open up new markets to attract inward investment.”

One company that knows better than most about the integral role that a superfast broadband connection can play in business development is smart commerce business Basewarp, which is based at the Edinburgh hatchery.

The company’s Founder, Mark Sorsa Leslie said:-“For a digital business like Basewarp, access to a reliable and fast internet connection is absolutely vital. Every day we’re meeting with companies who are interested in working with us and investing in our business. With offices both here and in Finland, tools such as Skype are fundamental for us to make decisions, take action and build our business. Our app has to provide our customers with up to the minute information, and the only way we can do that is via a superfast internet connection.”

Robert Parker, Director, Public Sector, Virgin Media Business, said:-“By giving Edinburgh’s talented and ambitious start-ups at Entrepreneurial Spark access to the kind of superfast connectivity that we provide to major businesses and organisations across the country, we’re helping them to unlock their potential ensuring that they can grow their ventures and inject prosperity into the local economy to enable a better Scotland for all.”

Lucy-Rose Walker, chief solutions officer, Entrepreneurial Spark® said:-“We work with entrepreneurs moving at a superfast pace and we need connectivity that can keep up! Covering a

range of sectors, our Edinburgh Hatchery is home to a thriving mix of businesses working hard and putting in the hours to grow and develop. We're excited to welcome Enterprise Minister Fergus Ewing to Entrepreneurial Spark to see the passion and energy in action – as we work towards creating an entrepreneurial renaissance in and from Scotland.”

The Edinburgh entrepreneurial spark hub brings together entrepreneurs and start-ups across multiple industry sectors. Everything from the cost of the premises to the utilities and internet services are taken care of by Entrepreneurial Spark® through its work with Napier University and Ann Gloag OBE, whilst Edinburgh City Council supports the site by paying the overheads. Start-ups are invited to join the accelerator for a five-month business acceler-8 programme. They're able to access everything for free for the duration of the programme if they demonstrate they're moving their business forward.

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