

Digital skills academy formally launched in Edinburgh



Scotland's first digital skills academy has welcomed its initial intake of 15 students, who are due to graduate in January 2016.

Industry-led CodeClan has been created to help meet the immediate and short term need for skilled software developers in Scotland.

The Scottish Government's support has been drawn from the £6.6 million made available to Skills Development Scotland to drive forward the implementation of the ICT and Digital Technologies Skills Investment Plan (SIP).

Speaking at the launch, Deputy First Minister John Swinney said:

"I'm delighted to be here at CodeClan today and to meet the first intake of students. They are already learning the skills that will help them embrace the wide-ranging and vibrant career opportunities the digital sector has to offer.


"The digital and ICT sector is very important to Scotland. It contributes over £4 billion GVA to the economy. Estimates show there are over 84,000 people working in digital or IT jobs across the economy as a whole and this number is rising fast. Scotland needs an estimated 11,000 new digital / ICT workers each year to meet current and future demand in the sector and we need to take urgent action to close this gap.

"We know this challenge will not disappear overnight, but CodeClan is a strong step in the right direction. By providing

a pool of job-ready talent, CodeClan will not only help businesses to achieve their full potential, but also help Scotland build its reputation as a global player in the digital economy.

“As the flagship action of the Skills Investment Plan, and with business driving its design and offering, we welcome CodeClan’s potential to help meet the immediate need for software developers across Scotland, support for young people in becoming work ready and to play a part in the growth of both the digital / IT sector and the wider economy.”

Harvey Wheaton, CodeClan CEO said: “We are at the start of an exciting journey and we are under no illusions about how tough the challenge is that we face. But everyone on the team here today – instructors, academy and students – are fully committed to delivering on our pledge. To create and feed the talent pool that will help grow Scotland’s digital sector and drive the economy.”

 John F McClelland CBE, Chair of Skills Development Scotland, said: “The launch of CodeClan is an exciting one for Scotland’s vibrant digital sector and for the very first group of students to begin their training. Through the academy, they will have the opportunity to gain valuable experience and learn the skills required to work in a growing digital sector.

“This launch also follows the announcement of the Digital World campaign that aims to showcase the range of careers available in the sector. As someone who has worked in the IT industry for a number of years, I am aware of the many exciting and rewarding jobs and it is important that we get that message across to a wider audience.

“The CodeClan graduates will become part of that dynamic industry and will also help to meet pressing skills shortages within the sector and help safeguard future growth.”