
Greater Manchester Digital Skills Challenge

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Background: GM Digital Skills Challenge

Context

- GM strategic plan for digital, creative and tech industries
- Digital skills major contributor to productivity and inclusion
- GM well positioned to capitalise

What makes digital different and distinctive?

- Digital skills critical for all
- Demand among learners not translated into workforce skills
- Curriculum development challenged by pace of technological change
- Digital skills not always linked to qualifications
- Structure of sector
- Competition for skills from other sectors
- Lack of diversity

Digital – which jobs and which skills?

- Top advertised job vacancies in GM: programmers and software development professionals (9323), web design and development professionals (4498) and IT business analysts, architects and systems designers (3479). *Labour Insight*.
- All judged capable of 80% growth by 2035.
- In GM three hardest to fill roles in 2015 were developers (48.1%), sales/business development (38.5%) and designers (29%). *Manchester Digital Skills Audit*
- Top digital skills in demand in GM: JavaScript (8500), SQL (6300) and Microsoft C# (5000). *Labour Insight*
- Not all about technical skills – employers also want highly developed generic skills e.g. sales, management, leadership, entrepreneurship
- Nationally 72% of large companies and 49% of SMEs are suffering tech skills gaps. *BIS/DCMS*
- 41% of digital tech jobs exist within traditionally non-digital industries *Tech Nation 2015* (GM particularly manufacturing, health and finance).

What's working across GM?

- Code Clubs for Primary School Children / CoderDojo
- MMU Degree Apprenticeship in 'Technology Solutions'
- UTC @ MediaCityUK (pathway for 14-18s)
- Google Digital Garage – free digital skills training
- Digital Advantage – The White Room
- Hive Manchester Digital Learning Community
- The Juice Academy - Social Media Apprenticeships
- Sharp Futures – Apprenticeships, Work Experience and Volunteering

Strategic Priorities

- Initial workshop with stakeholders identified key digital skills issues and agreed a set of key priorities for action:
 - Curriculum cannot adapt quickly enough to fast moving pace of change. **Address via increased ‘on the job’, experience for learners with focus on higher level technical skills.**
 - Demand for specific digital technical skills combined with broader business skills. **Address via upskilling existing workforce broadening their skillset.**
 - Curriculum often doesn’t integrate digital learning with the broader business and creative skills required by employers. **Address via a new adapted digital curriculum.**
 - Lack of clear pathways for young people interested in digital careers. **Address via ensuring a pipeline of enthusiastic well skilled young people into industries that require digital skills.**

Emerging Actions

- Second workshop with stakeholders identified ‘big ticket’ actions to address digital skills challenges identified:
- *Expand degree/higher level apprenticeships*
- *GM Centre of Digital Skills (virtual/physical)*
- *Embedding digital skills across school and college curricula*
- *Improved and co-ordinated industry led careers, education, information advice and guidance*