

Creative and Digital Industries: Sparking Potential

From the artists that light up its history, to the spark of new ideas today, Cornwall's creative and digital industries shine bright. Whether it's designing, making, thinking or inventing, through its arts organisations, education institutions and sharp young businesses, the county is making its mark – in the UK and beyond. Creative, digital Cornwall today has an undeniable energy, which could drive us all forward – if we harness that energy in a plan for growth.

Over the next 10 years, we want to help Cornwall's creative and digital businesses connect, collaborate, incubate and excel with access to the skills development they need, when they need it.

And the journey starts here.

In the Spotlight

Inventive outlook. Adventurous approach. Desire to succeed. The UK's creative and digital industries are on the right track. Now adding up to 11% of the country's total workforce, the sector has stayed buoyant in the face of economic difficulties, with a stream of graduate talent flowing in.



creative hub in Redruth that plays home to 60 businesses – supporting the creative entrepreneurs that are supercharging the sector, the outlook is positive.

But challenges still lie ahead. With businesses expanding and technology developing so fast, the national demand for digital know how is voracious. We must cultivate, attract and retain creative and digital talent if we're going to stay ahead of the curve. It's essential we bridge the skills gap and boost our businesses.

We need to use the same problem-solving skills inherent in our creative and digital industries to reach out to businesses, schools, universities and training providers – creating a network of skills and training opportunities that support the sector's specific requirements.

Lighting Our Path

For a brighter future, we need to support creative and digital businesses in ways that work for them. With 76% of creative businesses in Cornwall either freelance or self-employed we face a huge challenge when it comes to upskilling.

“...the national demand for digital know-how is voracious. We must cultivate, attract and retain creative and digital talent if we're going to keep growing.”

Which means we have to work from the ground up. We need to help our creative and digital businesses better assess their own needs. Over 80% don't have a

UK: The Facts

- Worth £36bn annually
- Generate £70,000 every minute for the economy
- 1.5 million workforce
- Account for £1 in every £10 of exports

Cornwall: The Facts

- 10,700 workforce
- 14,300 employed in ICT digital and creative roles across all sectors
- 6% of all business
- 6% growth between 2008-2011

In Cornwall too, we're switched on to the high value of the creative and digital sectors. With super-fast broadband guiding the way, businesses have grown rapidly, less reliant on physical location and able to capitalise on the incubation opportunities of the innovation centres in Falmouth, Pool and Truro.

There are 10,700 people working in the county's creative and digital sectors, 14,300 counting people in ICT, digital and creative jobs in other sectors. Around 400 new

jobs have been created over the last four years and 5.4% growth is expected in the next five years. With game changing projects like Krowji – an ERDF-funded

skills training plan, which is vital for recognising barriers to growth. Empowering them to spot the gaps they have and fill them with training and skills development will make a huge difference, boosting new product and service development, and shaping a sector that's fit for purpose in a fast-paced, digital world.

Cornwall is already a hotbed for the creative and digital industries. We have innovation centres. We have the deep talent pool and world-class facilities of Falmouth University. We have growing sub-sectors in software development (software activities now account for 30% of all creative and digital business in the county), video, film and photography. And we have funding. We need to draw this together, fuelling collaboration, growth and excellence.

A Bright Future

Awareness. Skills. Support. The development of our creative and digital industries hinges on how we help our businesses to nurture the skills they have and bring in the new skills they need.

“Software activities now account for 30% of all creative and digital business in the county”

To make this happen, there are a number of recommended steps we can take.

We should work with businesses to identify and fill skills gaps, developing and looking for workers who fuse high level creative and IT skills, to set the sector alight.

We should help sole traders and microbusinesses make more of what they have, nurturing them with marketing and business support so they can focus on what they do best – innovating in products and services.

We should encourage collaboration at every level, capitalising on the hubs and clusters that exist to help individuals and businesses connect, forge partnerships and think differently.

To get started we should focus on the following areas:

- **Skills:** by working closely with schools, colleges and universities, we'll encourage fresh young talent

to shape their own paths – while ensuring they develop the specialist skills needed to propel our industries forward. We need to show that a career in IT is on the creative frontline of the digital revolution, simultaneously addressing the gender imbalance to encourage more women into the industry.

- **Collaboration:** using our wealth of facilities, networks and creative hubs, we'll encourage our many microbusinesses to learn from each other, igniting new passions and sparking ideas that could cement Cornwall's reputation as a leading light.
- **Training:** by offering informal and flexible support options, like train-the-trainer programmes, mentoring support, peer learning groups and cascade learning, we'll help our smaller businesses to grow solid and strong, ready to take grasp opportunity with both hands.

What's Next?

Our creative and digital industries are resilient. More than 70% of Cornwall's creative and digital businesses have been trading for over five years. But they don't exist in isolation. Their success has a direct impact on businesses across the county, which means developing their skills and responding to their training needs is paramount.

The next leg of the journey needs to be one of superboosted growth; a highly-charged drive to create industries that not only lead the way in their own sectors, but illuminate everyone else's too.

This isn't about complicated technology, overwhelming resources or impenetrable reports. It's about bringing businesses together and helping them move forward by collaborating, building their skills and sharing their insights.

Together we can see Cornwall's creative and digital industries burn even brighter, sparking a new era creative and digital growth.

Find out more about the thinking behind this Skills Action Plan and read the full report by visiting <http://www.cornwallandislesofscillylep.com/employment-and-skills.html>