SECTOR FOCUS:

Digital Sector in Cheshire and Warrington

Organisations in the digital sector use technology to create a vast array of products and services often in a highly productive and innovative way. This includes technology specific firms as well as organisations in other sectors where there is a high reliance on digital skills, for example in retail, finance, advanced manufacturing and health care. Digital careers therefore cross different types of employer, from large retailers selling goods online to small businesses offering specialist tech services.

Job roles include technology experts who research, plan, build and secure digital solutions, but also covers more creative roles such as digital marketing, production of online content and the visual design of web pages. There are also opportunities in design and manufacturing, for example in Computer Aided Design, 3D printing and robotics, and for those wishing to pursue a career in financial technology.

Developing the digital skills of local people, and particularly ensuring a good supply of highly skilled individuals, is a key priority in Cheshire and Warrington. This is because digital careers are set to grow, with particular demand for those with experience in the newest software and programmes.

Fast Facts
about the Digital sector:

Locally there are digital skills gaps, with a particular need for high levels of skill in emerging technologies.

Many businesses are small and there is a high level of self employment.

Financial technology is a particular strength of Cheshire East.

It is estimated that 2 out of 3 developers gained their skills outside of formal education.

Nationally, around 50% of people employed in digital industries work for a technology firm, others are based in other sectors (such as retail, finance, health and manufacturing).

What types of jobs are available?

Average annual salaries in the sector include:

SOFTWARE DEVELOPER
£20,000 TO £70,000

COMPUTER GAMES DESIGNER
£19,000 TO £70,000

DIGITAL MARKETING OFFICER
£20,000 TO £50,000

IT PROJECT MANAGER
£25,000 TO £70,000

CYBER CRIME ANALYST
£20,000 TO £60,000

COMPUTER AIDED DESIGN TECHNICIAN
£15,000 TO £35,000

What companies are based in Cheshire and Warrington?

Examples of local employers requiring digital skills include:

- Barclays, Knutsford
- Cloud Imperium Games, Wilmslow
- Converge TS, Daresbury
- Airangel, Warrington
- The Hut Group, Northwich
- RedEye, Crewe
- Quint Group, Macclesfield
- Mobica, Wilmslow
- Prodo, Chester
- Blueleaf, Tattenhall
- Entyce Creative, Chester
- Clicky Media, Chester

How do I get into the sector?

Entry into the sector depends on the exact role and level of job. Because many local businesses are small, there is a tendency to want to recruit people with existing skills and experience, therefore prior learning is often required. Many staff are graduates but experience of particular technologies is just as important. Employers are also interested in creativity and business acumen. Opportunities to undertake training 'on the job' through an apprenticeship are increasing.

Colleges and Universities

Most local colleges and universities offer training for those wishing to enter this sector. IT, Computer Science, Mathematics as well as design based subjects will be of particular use. Many courses will include training on specific programming languages (such as JavaScript, SQL and C#). To search for a local course you can use the National Careers Service course search tool at:

https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk/course-directory/home or to find out more about university courses go to **www.ucas.co.uk.**

Informal learning

There are growing opportunities to gain skills without taking a formal qualification. Not for profit organisations and large companies have developed digital skills training (such as Google's Digital Garage) and the expansion of free online learning (for example through www.futurelearn.com) is helping make digital skills training more accessible. There is no single place to look for this kind of opportunity, but most are well publicised online.

Apprenticeships

A range of apprenticeship opportunities are available in digital industries. Higher and degree level digital and technology apprenticeships have recently been developed which means there are more opportunities to train at a professional level, and willingness to travel across the North West will increase the opportunities on offer. Apprenticeships are open to both young people and adults and allow you to work and study at the same time. Recent examples of local Apprenticeship vacancies in this sector have included:

- Digital Marketing Apprentice
- IT Data Analyst Apprentice
- Software Development Apprentice
- ICT & Customer Technical Support Apprentice
- Software & Web Developer Apprentice
- Digital and Technology Solutions Degree Professional

How do I find out more about careers in the Digital sector?

For more information about apprenticeships and to search for vacancies go to: www.gov.uk/apprenticeships-guide
Graduate Careers: www.prospects.ac.uk
Bubble Jobs: www.bubble-jobs.co.uk/career_portal/
The Tech Partnership: www.thetechpartnership.com/about/

National Careers Service
Help is available online, or with one of our careers advisers by phone or in person.
For more information call 0800 100 900 between 8am to 10pm 7 days a week or search online for National Careers Service.
https://nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk

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