



News Release

Talking about the West Midlands European Regional Development Fund Programme

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For immediate release

Taking interaction to a new level to boost profits

New groundbreaking, innovative and novel technologies are to be developed in the West Midlands which explore and develop the different ways we use digital technology to interact with each other and the world around us, and turn them into profitable business ideas.

Over the next 3 years, 400 businesses and individuals in the West Midlands holding potentially lucrative and successful innovative digital ideas will get the chance to put them to the test through the use of unique facilities at Touch Digital, the Business Research Centre for Human Interface Technologies. Based at Coventry University Technology Park and Aston University, the centres will provide invaluable access to specialist researchers with expertise in this area, and cutting edge technology, helping individuals to realise their ideas and start up new high tech businesses.

The help on offer at the centres is supported by £2.9 million from the European Regional Development Fund, which is managed by the Department for Communities and Local Government and matched by Coventry University Enterprises Ltd and Aston University.

Communities Minister Baroness Hanham CBE said:

"This is a fascinating area of work which brings together imaginative new and novel ways of developing the different ways digital technologies can interact with each other by bringing them into the academic arena. We must always strive to support innovation and creative ideas to develop existing businesses, help set up new ones and boost local growth.

"It means that exciting and innovative business ideas that may have only been on paper come to life and grow into successful ventures. I am delighted to be able to offer my support to this unique project. "

Louise Fidler, Programmes Manager , from Coventry University Enterprises Ltd, said:

"I'm really looking forward to seeing the variety of ideas that businesses will bring to the centres and the difference that Touch Digital can make to their success. Human Interface Technologies covers such a broad area of exciting and cutting edge technologies offering us so much scope to support businesses across different industries. This is definitely a project to keep an eye on and get involved if you can!"



To find out more about the innovative support on offer, contact Louise Fidler at Coventry University Enterprises Ltd on 024 7623 6000 or e-mail l.fidler@coventry.ac.uk.

Editor's Notes:

The Department for Communities and Local Government is the managing authority for the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Programme which runs from 2007 to 2013. This is one of the funds established by the European Commission to help local areas stimulate their economic development.

The West Midlands European Regional Development Fund Programme has been allocated 400 million euros to invest in projects which will support local businesses and create jobs.

In the West Midlands the priority areas and themes are:

- **Innovation and Research & Development**
Increasing investment in research and development through helping businesses take forward new innovation, sharing of knowledge and developing and demonstrating new technology
- **Enterprise Development**
Increasing business performance through supporting high growth businesses, improving resource efficiency, providing access to finance and developing a strong entrepreneurial culture
- **Sustainable Urban Development**
Improving the performance of key urban areas through regenerating local areas, encouraging investment and new businesses, creating job opportunities and helping communities most in need
- **Inter-Regional Activity**
Working with European partners to learn and improve, share and apply best practice and solve problems

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