

Digital Schoolhouse announces XMA-Viglen as partners as its National Esports Tournament returns for a second year

February 2018, London: IT solutions company, XMA, joins PlayStation to support Digital Schoolhouse in its second year running the National Esports Tournament. Launched 8 December 2017, the careers event with a difference is set to bring together over 2,000 students to compete for the final trophy.

The tournament will feature the popular game Overwatch by Activision Blizzard, with 20 schools competing for a place in the Grand Final, which takes place at Gfinity's esports arena later this Spring. With 99 per cent of eight to 15 year olds playing games, Digital Schoolhouse - delivered by games trade body Ukie, - recognises that the esports competition is the perfect opportunity to build on this interest and engage students with the skills and careers in the industry by working with business partners.

XMA, IT manufacturer and solutions provider, is the most recent to join supporters of Digital Schoolhouse's National Esports Tournament; providing British built Viglen desktop computers for schools to use throughout the tournament.

Craig Connell, commercial manager at XMA-Viglen, said: "It's a fantastic opportunity to be involved with the Digital Schoolhouse, with our long standing experience within education and our Viglen range, it's a great partnership. With the recent launch of our New Gaming PC's; the Incepta range, it made perfect sense to work in conjunction with DSH and UKIE."

Regional qualifiers will take place at GAME's Belong arenas in Manchester (6 March), Bristol (12 March) and Kingston (13 March), as well as Staffordshire University hosting qualifiers 7 March. The Grand Final Event, which will be part of the London Games Festival, will see the winners take home the bespoke handmade trophy, designed and produced by leading UK games studio, Creative Assembly.

Andrew Oakley, lead technical artist at Creative Assembly, designed the unique trophy with his 16 year old daughter, Molly:

"Games are now leading the way in the UK's creative industries, yet many young people still do not realise it's a viable career option. I designed this trophy with my daughter,

Molly, who is an aspiring artist, and we hope this event will go on to inspire many more school children to pursue creative careers.”

Bridging the gap between industry and education, the tournament will see students take up roles that are typically seen within the games and esports industries, to give them a taste of the careers available to them. This will be supported by professionals hosting ‘play with the pro’s’ sessions for students to play with esports professional gamers, plus the ‘mingle with the pro’s’ opportunities will offer students the chance to speak to industry guests one-to-one about their career ambitions.

Many of these industry professionals have also volunteered to be paired with schools as dedicated esports coaches. Supporting students with expert knowledge of gaming and esports and providing them with hints, tips, strategies and tactical advice, every school has access to their esports coach’s guidance throughout the competition.

Pablo Calvo, esports coach and marketing manager, commented: “I wanted to help develop the UK esports scene from within, guiding students in their potential career paths. It’s one of the toughest choices we make, so ensuring students have the information available is vital and what better way than showing them? That’s what the tournament does and I think that’s already a huge win for them.”

Joe Hills, founder Looking for Group (LFG) added: “I wanted to inspire the next generation of students to see esports as a true and tangible option for them to pursue either at university or as a long term career.

I think my students’ understanding of the games industry is completely changed by this tournament. It shows the students that there are so many other opportunities in the games industry, such as content creation, marketing, community management and player management. It’s so inspiring to be a part of that.”

Additional support and coaching for students and schools will be on offer from esports business, ESL, who will be deeply involved in the delivery of the tournament with a range of support.

Shahneila Saeed, programme director for Digital Schoolhouse, said: “It’s exciting to see so many schools getting involved in this year’s esports Tournament. The events will be a great chance for students to network, improve their teambuilding and problem-solving skills and ultimately have exposure to a wealth of careers available to them.

“During the process, we are also working in partnership with Staffordshire University to conduct research around the impact of esports on education and students. We look forward

to sharing the results and continuing to champion the use of technology and creativity to boost student engagement with computing, something that will be key to their success in future careers.

“For schools, participation in events like the esports tournament and the industry support they receive as a part of that are key benefits of being a Digital Schoolhouse. We are now [accepting applications](#) for new schools to continue to grow and reach even more students.”

Join the conversation on Twitter using the hashtags #DSHplay #DSHesports and Twitter handles @DigSchoolhouse @PlayStationUK @Uk_ie @SEGA_Europe @Warwickshire_CC @BelongbyGAME @StaffsUni @DigiSchoolhouse.

To register interest in becoming a Digital Schoolhouse, please complete the application: <http://www.digitalschoolhouse.org.uk/applynow>

For more information about the next eSports Tournament, visit www.digitalschoolhouse.org.uk.

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About Digital Schoolhouse

The not-for-profit Digital Schoolhouse programme, powered by PlayStation®, uses play-based learning to engage the next generation of pupils and teachers with the new Computing curriculum. Digital Schoolhouse is delivered by the UK games industry trade body Ukie, and was originally seed funded by the Mayor of London’s London Schools Excellence Fund (LSEF).

Each Digital Schoolhouse is based in a school, college or university environment, and aims to work with a growing network of local primary and secondary teachers to deliver creative and cross-curricular computing lessons using play-based learning. Through this, it supports the new Computing programme of study for the national curriculum in a way that leaves pupils and teachers feeling inspired about, and engaged with, computing and the wider creative digital industries.

The workshops put theory into practice and help teachers embed it with ongoing personalised support and continuing professional development (CPD). The programme has

been accurately described as a 'bridge between education and industry' – and a good one at that.

About UK Interactive Entertainment (Ukie)

Ukie (UK Interactive Entertainment) is the only trade body for the UK's games and interactive entertainment industry. A not-for-profit, it represents businesses of all sizes from small start-ups to large multinational developers, publishers and service companies, working across online, mobile apps, consoles, PC, eSports, VR and AR.

Ukie aims to support, grow and promote member businesses and the wider UK games and interactive entertainment industry by optimising the economic, cultural, political and social environment needed for businesses to thrive.

Ukie works closely with the sector to influence government and decision makers, lobbying successfully for the 2014 Video Games Tax Relief, the UK Games Fund, and the Next Gen Skills campaign which resulted in a new Computer Science Curriculum. Ukie makes connections for businesses and help them access the opportunities a digital economy offers, via a successful International Trade programme, running UK Games Industry stands at the biggest international industry events.

It promotes the industry by working with the media to raise awareness of the sector's positive cultural and economic contribution, as well as the societal benefits of games. Ukie runs askaboutgames.com, where families can learn about safe and sensible online practices, parental controls and age ratings.

Ukie's skills work serves to increase inclusion and diversity, advocating a STEAM approach to education. Initiatives include the Digital Schoolhouse (DSH), Video Games Ambassadors (VGAs), a Student Membership scheme, and a professional development programme.

Ukie commissioned the Blueprint for Growth report in 2015, an independent review of the UK games industry with recommendations for decision makers in Parliament for how the industry can grow.

In 2016 Ukie partnered with Film London to deliver Games London, a ground breaking new three-year programme to promote the UK as the games capital of the world, the focal point of which is the annual London Games Festival.

Website: ukie.org.uk

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About Games London

Games London is a groundbreaking new programme delivered by Film London, the capital's screen industries agency, and UK games industry trade body Ukie. The project is backed by the Mayor of London with funding worth £1.2m from the London Enterprise Panel. Games London partners include London & Partners, BAFTA, BFI, Somerset House and Gamer Events.

Over three years Games London will work on a number of initiatives to make London the games capital of the world. It re-established the London Games Festival in April 2016 with nearly 40,000 visitors joining to champion, promote and celebrate the culture and business of games. Other areas of activity include inbound and outbound trade missions and work connecting and supporting games development skills in London.