PRESS RELEASE

Ground-breaking partnerships between tech firms and education returns: Digital Schoolhouse is now open for applications!

Digital Schoolhouse, the non-for-profit programme set up by UK games industry trade body Ukie, is once again open to applications from new schools, bridging the technology and education sectors in this innovative way of teaching computing.

Following the introduction of a new computing curriculum in 2014, Digital Schoolhouse was launched as a **free programme** to inspire students in computing education to ultimately tackle the digital skills gap. This academic year, the programme confidently hit its 30-school milestone and more growth is expected in 2018, with **over 15,000 pupils and 1,600 teachers** to benefit from the creative computing workshops and support from the Digital Schoolhouse team.

Benefits of joining the programme includes:

- Resources
- CPD events
- Personalised support programme for every school
- Funding opportunities
- Direct links with the UK video games industry
- Raised profile within the community
- Part of a fast-growing network of schools locally and nationally
- Direct contact with a specialist Digital Schoolhouse teacher
- Part of leading teaching pedagogy

Applications close 31 March 2018, by which point the Digital Schoolhouse team will then shortlist schools for selection. Once a school becomes a Digital Schoolhouse, a Digital Schoolhouse Lead Teacher (DSLT) is appointed to supervise the programme in their school. To support them, each DSLT will be trained by universities and industry, with free resources and CPD opportunities available, as well as personalised support programmes.

Teachers are introduced to the national network of other Digital Schoolhouses and are encouraged to collaborate with each other to form a powerful and collaborative approach to revolutionising computing education.

PRESS RELEASE

Julie Bond, computing lead, Ryder Hayes Primary school, commented on this, saying: "Digital Schoolhouse has supported teachers across the partnership and helped teachers develop their skills and knowledge in order to help children learn."

At the start of each academic year, each Digital Schoolhouse writes to their local schools to invite their pupils to attend a Creative Computing day, plus free and flexible [workshops](#) are taught throughout the year by Lead teachers to visiting schools.

Mark Ward, head of computer science, St. John Fisher Catholic Voluntary Academy has been with the programme since its inception and has seen a significant impact on the engagement of his students.

Mark explained: "Any student that experiences Digital Schoolhouse loves it. Some of the children I'd met when I lead a workshop at their primary school remember the fun they had by the time I teach them in secondary school. It's amazing! I think every primary school should have access to Digital Schoolhouse, otherwise no change within the technology sector can be seen en masse."

Shahneila Saeed, director, Digital Schoolhouse, said: "We believe that the next generation is an essential driving force for the UK's Creative Digital economy and if they're to thrive, it is our duty and responsibility to ensure they are aptly equipped.

"We need to be more visible, reach more children and more teachers. That's why the backing of the industry and having SEGA and PlayStation on board is so important. They are household names; their names alone will get the students asking questions. And that's where the power lies. Spark the curiosity within the child so that we can help them satisfy it."

Dr. Jo Twist, CEO of Ukie said: "Many UK tech companies need to recruit from overseas due to a shortage of UK graduates with the necessary digital skills. Now is the time for us all to work together to solve the issue and ensure that the UK continues to lead other countries in advances in the fastest growing sector in the world."

Ukie's Digital Schoolhouse, powered by PlayStation and sponsored by SEGA and Warwickshire County Council, uses play-based learning to engage the next generation of pupils and teachers with the computing curriculum. Its vision is to bridge the gap between industry and education, preparing the next generation for a digital age.

PRESS RELEASE

To find out more about Digital Schoolhouse, visit digitalschoolhouse.org.uk.

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Notes to editors:

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.

Quotes from Digital Schoolhouse's Partners

Warwick Light, UK Managing Director and Vice President of Sony Interactive Entertainment Europe, said**:** "PlayStation is happy to be partnering with Ukie to bring Digital Schoolhouse to more schools, and even more children, across the UK than ever before."

John Clark, Executive Vice President of Commercial Publishing for SEGA Europe Ltd, said: "SEGA Europe has a history in working with educational organisations in order to help bridge the skills gap in the UK with regards to the video games industry. Our partnership

PRESS RELEASE

with the Digital Schoolhouse programme is particularly exciting, as it aims to engage the next generation of school children, and their teachers, with the new Computing curriculum. The video games industry has a diverse work force across a variety of different professional disciplines and it's a fantastic opportunity to be able assist Ukie and Digital Schoolhouse in nurturing talent from a young age."

Monica Fogarty, joint managing director, Warwickshire County Council, said: "We are delighted to be sponsoring Ukie's Digital Schoolhouse programme to enable this innovative model to be rolled out into four Warwickshire schools. Programming and computing skills are vitally important to the continued growth of the technology sector, and it is essential that we are teaching our young people these key skills in an effective and engaging way. Ukie's Digital Schoolhouse programme is therefore a perfect fit for our area."