

**THE MERSEYSIDE
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) SECTOR**



INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS
ENABLING MERSEYSIDE



CASE STUDY PROFILE >>>

ENTREPRENEURS SUCCEED IN CHINA

Determination and an enterprising spirit can go a long way in China. If you are serious about setting up your own, potentially highly successful, ICT operation, Strategic Systems Solutions (SSS) offers a commercial gateway that could replicate its own achievements in establishing a 200-person-strong, £4 million turnover local business since 2004.

Working in China is a tantalising possibility for companies with the right attitude, judging by the experience of Strategic Systems Solutions (SSS). In 1995, the remote software solutions provider began life in Liverpool with 15 people. Today, it has a worldwide workforce of 700 - including 200 working close to China's swiftly growing domestic financial industry.

It now operates from five UK development centres, another north of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania and, most recently, its venture into the Far East. Together - via dedicated lease-line or the Internet - these hubs can 'chase-the-sun' around the world and its 24-hour clock, delivering timely solutions to London's venture capital market - and the great merchant banking houses of Europe - New York, Singapore, Hong Kong and modern China.

SSS is built around the experience of founders Steve Burrell from The Wirral and Mark Williams from Barrow-in-Furness who in the 1990s were working in The City of London where software solutions came at an inordinate price.

Their answer was a cost-efficient model by-passing the Capital's dizzy accounting conventions for floor-space costs, overheads and salary norms.

The result is a modus operandi that SSS has replicated again and again. It consists of modules of 70 to 200 IT experts and support staff, typically in 8,000 ft² of workspace, working in a non-hierarchical management structure with a 'don't step over the milk' philosophy. In other words, if you have a suggestion, or think something should be done, take the initiative and do it. The company empowers you.

After Liverpool, Newcastle upon Tyne, Preston, Leeds and Nottingham came expansion into the USA and inevitably the Asian-Pacific. SSS initially examined India's thriving software industry but decided that China offered a high level of competence and an exciting potential home market. It opted to operate south of Beijing in China's third largest city - Guangzhou.

'We literally landed with our suitcases and set about making the system work for us,' explains Director, Business Development, Pete Richardson. 'At first, no-one believed us in China. What we were offering was beyond their experience. But as we generated credibility, we became accepted,' he adds. Chinese industrialisation favours large organisations making sizeable investments, which can lead to

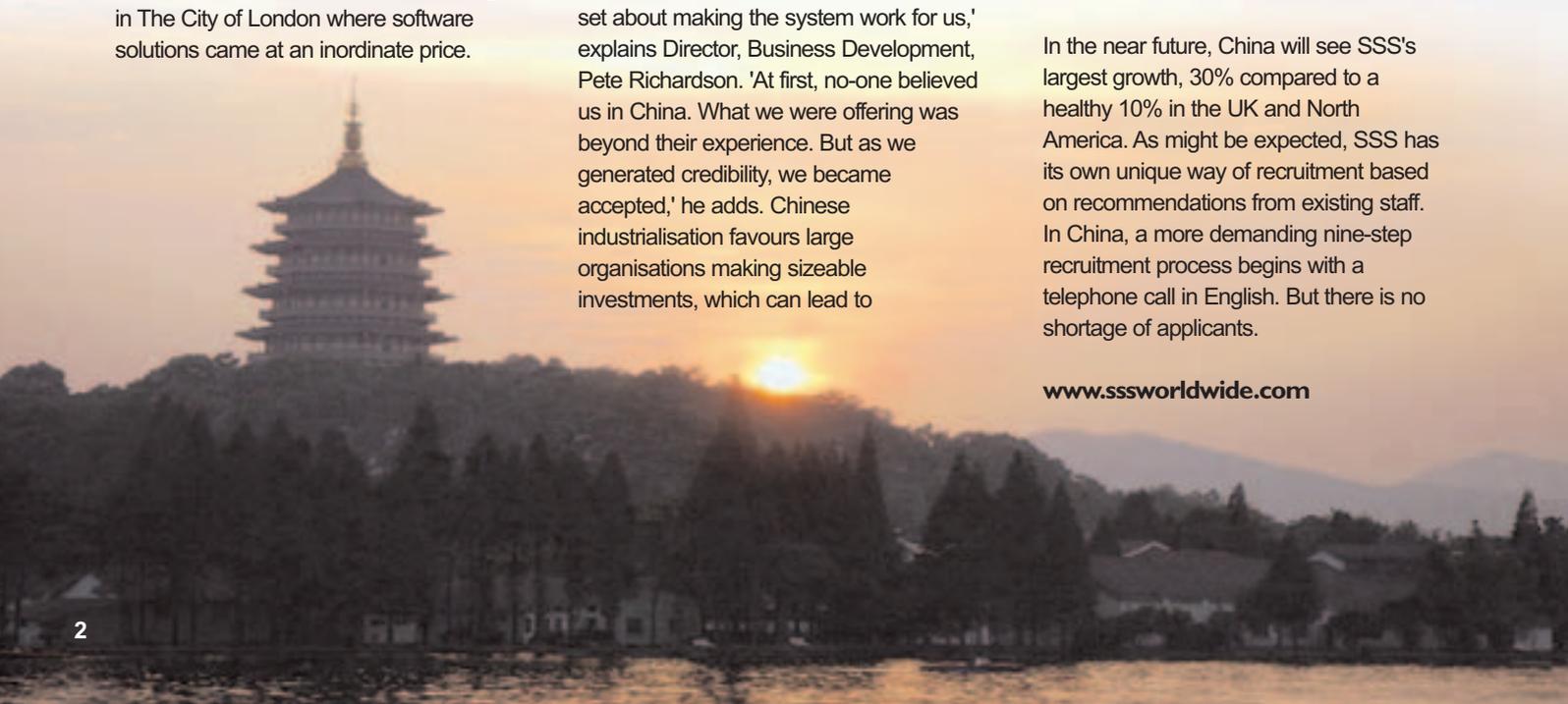


conundrums for small firms. Leasing premises on new, purpose-built business parks depends on official registration as a business, while registering as a business requires leasing property. The same applies to promotion and marketing and even accessing the Internet.

The established route is through official help. Yet there are ways around such difficulties. 'It simply requires an entrepreneurial frame of mind,' adds Pete, who has been instrumental in SSS's phenomenal growth for seven years. It helps to understand Gunani (literally, 'who you are'), the Chinese culture of favours, obligations and perceived future value. 'For example, by asking someone for advice, you are paying them respect. In return, they feel duty-bound to help you. Once you begin to create respect within the business community, doors open quickly. The key is networking which is everything in China. It's the recognised way of business.'

In the near future, China will see SSS's largest growth, 30% compared to a healthy 10% in the UK and North America. As might be expected, SSS has its own unique way of recruitment based on recommendations from existing staff. In China, a more demanding nine-step recruitment process begins with a telephone call in English. But there is no shortage of applicants.

www.sssworldwide.com



INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION GLOBAL REACH WITH POSITIVE RETURNS

Welcome to the fifth edition of Merseyside ICT's international magazine. Building on the previous themed issues I believe that no ambitious company can grow without considering the global dimensions for its product or service. The mantra much espoused in the 90's was Get Big, Get Niche or Get Out. This has changed with the advent of the web and the ability to market across geographies easily, cheaply and effectively. Globalisation is a much used term but technology and the Internet in particular have changed the dynamic to one built mostly on speed. The faster you can grow and reach larger markets the greater the traction for your business. Of course this is a generalisation and presence in foreign markets is still demanded in most cases. This issue is dedicated to highlighting some of the ways you can achieve that and case-studies of Merseyside businesses who have already found international success.

To enable the ambitious to expand, I have sought to build complimentary networks based on matching Merseyside ICT's local knowledge of the Digital sector with networks, groups and organisations in relevant sectors of the world that have businesses wishing to expand or develop into Europe, ideally using the Northwest of England as a staging post. By sharing information, knowledge and contacts we can effect "speed dating" internationally that encourages businesses here to partner with businesses in desirable markets elsewhere. To date, the most fruitful of contacts has been with the Greater Washington area on the Eastern seaboard of the United States. This significant area is the fastest growing business community in the USA and home to some 12,000 IT and IT-related businesses. It is fuelled by a real shift in the way the US Government funds and sources its \$60 billion annual IT spend. Increasingly it is "outsourcing" its requirements through five major prime contractors, who in turn sub-contract down to specialist organisations. World events have shaped and focussed this spending spree, with Homeland Security one of the key areas of investment.

Merseyside ICT has begun the process of opening doors for Merseyside businesses to understand how best to access this significant market and provides education, trade missions and the very best of advice on how to build strategies necessary to attack complex markets, meet partners, establish premises and plan for real growth. We also provide exactly the same knowledge transfer for incoming companies anxious to serve the significant UK and European markets. Whether you are based in Liverpool or Los Angeles, and you have ambitions for your business, this bulleting is a great first step. The second should be to call Merseyside ICT!



IN THIS ISSUE

As a destination, Merseyside is growing as a centre of ICT expertise. It is also increasingly a crossroads for trade, investment and knowledge transfer between the might of the North American market, expanding Europe, awakening Asia and beyond.

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A WARM AND CONTINUING WELCOME

Mark Basnett, Business Development Director for The Mersey Partnership, analyses the fundamentals of a long-term commercial relationship – Page 14

THE DIGITALLY CONNECTED WORLD

ENTERING GLOBAL MARKETS THROUGH THE BUSTLING INTERNATIONAL AND HOME NETWORKS OF MERSEYSIDE - A TRADITIONAL WORLD TRADING CENTRE

Strong business environments are highly integrated. Merseyside is renowned as a successful world trading centre. Today, it is also home to modern knowledge and technology-based industries that include automotive, pharmaceuticals and bio-technology. A network of universities, research centres, business incubators and science parks make it a world location of choice for entrepreneurs and mould-breakers.

Innovative ICT is a common thread represented by Merseyside ICT (MICT). MICT's connections extend in partnerships across the Atlantic, particularly to the Greater Washington region, straight into Europe and Scandinavia and to the Asian-Pacific. Unique transport access and financial advantages also make Merseyside a prime entry point to the UK's vibrant IT industry.

OPPORTUNITY USA

The Greater Washington Area (GWA) is home to the US Federal Government's expanding ICT market, which in 2005 spent \$27.5 billion on defence, \$10.3 billion on homeland security and \$22 billion for the Treasury, transportation and health and human services. ICT procurement is currently being outsourced, creating opportunities for

non-US specialists with solutions rather than technology. GWA also accesses markets from Ottawa and Montreal to Chicago and Atlanta. By 2008, the GWA's population is projected to reach 6.3 million, with a Gross Regional Product of \$313 billion (£170 billion). In the last half decade, GWA economic growth, after inflation, of 19.6% compares

to 14.5% nationally. ICT employment has risen by 350,000, reflecting government economic priorities, with commensurate skills growth. MICT works closely with universities, enterprise and incubation centres and leading companies in the Capital area, plus other US ICT centres in Boston, New York and San Francisco/Silicon Valley.



“Currently, the big US opportunities for Merseyside are in homeland security and defence. This really is an aggressive market for larger businesses.”

*Steve Smith,
Merseyside ICT Sector Director*

WORLDWIDE ICT SPENDING

ICT spending worldwide will reach \$3.2 trillion (£1.7 trillion) by 2007, according to the World Information Technology Services Alliance (WITSA). As a snap-shot of a world spend of €2.167 trillion (£1.5 trillion) in

2004, the US accounted for 32.1%, Europe 30.1% and Japan 12%. WITSA predicts Eastern Europe's ICT spend will surpass any other region by 2007, followed by the Asia-Pacific region, Africa and Western Europe.

OPPORTUNITY MERSEYSIDE

Merseyside is a home, destination and a portal for ICT projects with world reach. MICT helps to develop market opportunities with key growth industries, drawing together public and private sector, academic and business communities. Merseyside is currently home to some 700 ICT companies employing circa 8,000 staff. It adds nearly £1.4 billion to the regional economy, specialising in interactive media and bespoke software development. With EU funding, in-depth support from economic development agencies and an emphasis on skills generation, ICT on Merseyside enjoys also strong partnerships with IBM, BT, Samsung, Cisco, Microsoft and the financial services house of PricewaterhouseCoopers. MICT organises and leads annual trade mission and study tour programmes to world ICT excellence centres.

OPPORTUNITY UK

The UK is the world's 4th largest IT market, employing more than 250,000 people in 7,800 companies. It is also home to Europe's largest telecommunications sector. High convergence of telecommunications and broadcasting technology runs in parallel with innovation in areas such as wireless broadband. Approaching nearly 100% coverage, the UK is the G7's most comprehensive broadband market, with a flexible, IP-based

network forming fast. Eight of the world's ten IT majors contribute to increasing exports. A vigorous UK mobile sector heads 3G in Europe and drives a thriving mobile contents industry. The UK also leads Europe in e-commerce. Concurrently, the UK is a prime network technology exporter, by both global players and smaller businesses. It leads in fibre-optic systems and accounts for circa 40% of Europe's chip design. Some 20

OPPORTUNITY EUROPE

ICT is a European priority for enhancing competitiveness in an economic and social community that is consolidating expansion to 25 states. While committed to being the 'most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy by 2010', much EU progress is led by ICT centres of excellence. MICT is a gateway for two-way business and technical co-operation with European partners - and particularly between Europe and the US GWA. In Germany, the Saarland Economic Promotion Corporation opens to a network of domestic and international partners, serving a bilingual population across the adjoining border with France. Sweden's Västerås Technology Park brings together companies active in energy and environmental engineering, as well as computer science. In terms of corporate customers, Finland's Technopolis is one of Europe's largest technology centres working to engage new companies with major markets. Further trans-world links from Merseyside connect ICT markets as diverse as Japan, Thailand, Brazil and Romania.

universities - including Merseyside's - conduct world-class ICT research, accounting for circa 20% of all UK commercial R&D. Meanwhile, swiftly growing UK software and computer services account for more than a fifth of Europe's software market and circa 7% of global computer services markets. The UK is still the top choice of Europe's foreign investors.

MERSEYSIDE

MERSEYSIDE IS SEEN INCREASINGLY AS A COST-EFFECTIVE LOCATION, IDEALLY POISED FOR RAPIDLY GROWING DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL MARKETS CENTRAL TO MODERN ECONOMIES.

For new and established businesses alike, Merseyside integrates sustainable progress with historic certainties. Many companies find Merseyside an optimum all-round operational, administrative and development base. It offers an enterprising culture combined with swift geographic access to UK and European markets and direct world air links. Pro-business commercial environments are supported by world-class university research and skills generation. Unique government and European Union (EU) growth and funding incentives complement the package, including access to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).



LIVING

Merseyside's local and commuting skilled workforce is able to enjoy some of Britain's finest natural and urban amenities, with lifestyles ranging from city-centre living and Georgian terraces to leafy suburbs and new developments in rural settings.

TRAVELLING

Within minutes of the main UK motorway network, Merseyside's famous maritime trading tradition via the Atlantic seaport of Liverpool is today supplemented by Liverpool John Lennon Airport - the UK's fastest growing air hub which served 4.4 million passengers in 2005. Manchester International Airport is an hour away by road. There are parallel freight and rail links.

FINANCE

Central to the advantages Merseyside offers within England's Northwest region is strategic EU and UK Government support from the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) over five development priorities - business, people and jobs, skills and education, infrastructure and quality of life. Within Merseyside itself, the city of Liverpool benefits from The Mersey Partnership's value adding work in attracting investment interest on behalf of key growth sectors from around the world.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

The University of Liverpool and Liverpool John Moores University are regionally, nationally and internationally active in industry-shaping research and spinning out commercially-viable young companies

with globally-significant ideas. Higher and Further education centres (HEI and FEI) are equally involved with universities in developing technical, management and leadership skills.

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENTS

Acknowledging the importance of balanced business environments in help fledgling proto-companies with formative ideas to realise their commercial potential, Liverpool Science Park offers not only near ideal physical and contractual conditions for leading knowledge and technology based entrepreneurs, but also networking links with the internationally respected Cambridge Science Park (page 10). Liverpool's Digital Academy specialises in worldwide co-operation between business incubators for ICT innovators (page 11). Daresbury Science & Innovation Campus, with many successful commercial spin-outs, is the NWDA's premier science offering across many industries (page 11). In a swiftly emerging specialist field, MerseyBIO leads the development of Merseyside's life sciences sector, with incubation provision for 15 bio-technology companies.



San Francisco - 15 hrs



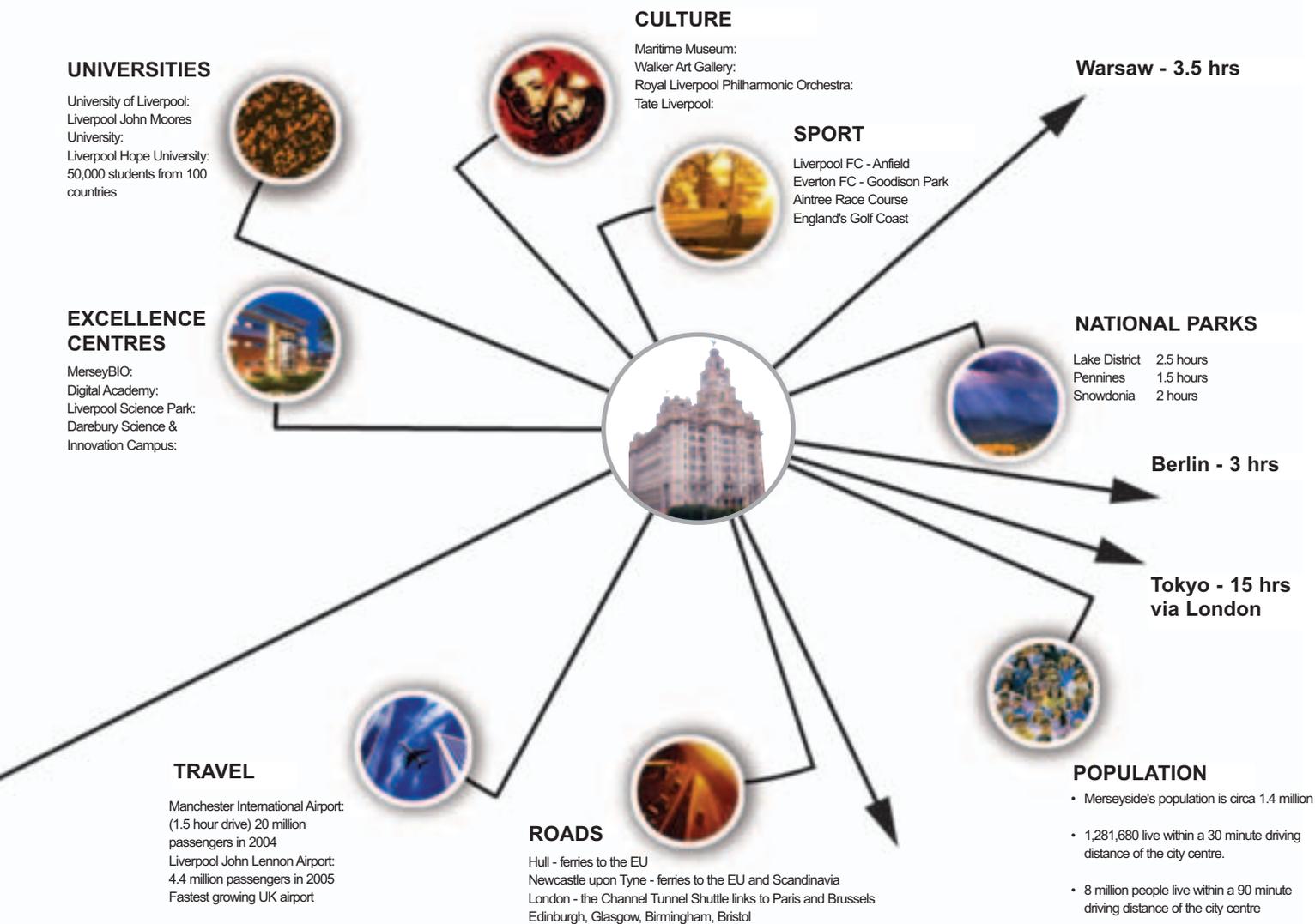
Washington DC - 10 hrs

Blue chip corporate investors that have made Merseyside their home include Jaguar, Unilever, Unisys, Rolls Royce, O2, Alliance & Leicester, Coutts and IBM. The presence of Chiron, Eli Lilly and Medimmune mean that more people go to work daily on Merseyside to produce biopharmaceuticals for the global marketplace than anywhere else in Europe.

A CORPORATE BASE TO THE WORLD

A VERY EUROPEAN CITY

Liverpool, chosen to be European Capital of Culture in 2008, is central to Merseyside and has more museums, theatres and galleries than any other UK city outside London.



HOME AND EDUCATION

Merseyside offers key benefits as a home for companies and employees. Recently rising house prices are advantageously below the UK average. Educational facilities include some of the UK's top-performing private and state schools; local universities have a worldwide student intake.

SPORT

Professional sporting attractions include Premiership Football at Goodison Park and Anfield and horse-racing at Haydock and Aintree - home of The Grand National, the world's most

famous steeplechase race. There are also international contests on England's Golf Coast, as well as top-class rugby league at St Helens and Widnes RLFC (Rugby League Football Club). Numerous matching opportunities are open to the amateur.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Merseyside and England's Northwest are pleasantly close to some of the UK's leading national parks, plus more coastline than any other urban area.

ENTERTAINMENT AND SHOPPING

Liverpool's nightlife claims to have something to suit almost everybody. The region also includes some of the Northwest's most popular retail centres. A new Liverpool city centre development will provide more than 1.6 million square feet of shopping opportunities, alongside bars, restaurants and cinemas. Liverpool's entertainment reputation has earned the city the tag of 'Livercool' in the highly-read Tatler magazine.

www.visitliverpool.com



GREATER WASHINGTON

BUSINESS AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE OPPORTUNITIES BETWEEN MERSEYSIDE AND THE US CAPITAL UNDERPIN A TRANSATLANTIC COMMERCIAL AXIS.

ICT breakthroughs, and their implementation, are by their nature frequently trans-national. For ambitious companies, success means an arbitrage of co-operation and marketing across international borders. Merseyside ICT (MICT) has developed particularly close contacts with principal USA ICT centres, including the Greater Washington Area (GWA).

population in the District of Columbia, Northern Virginia and Suburban Maryland projected to reach 6.3 million by 2008, Greater Washington has created nearly 1.12 million jobs in 20 years, with a high skills profile from local colleges and universities which take 49,000 students annually. More than 283,000 scientists, engineers and computer professionals work in the GWA, 42% of the population

EXCELLENCE CENTRE

GWA has the third-largest number of bioscience companies in the world and leads in human genome research. It is also home to the National Institutes of Health, US Food and Drugs Administration, National Institute of Standards and Technology and will include a \$425 million Eli Lilly manufacturing facility and \$500 million Howard Hughes Medical Institutes research centre. Some 600 companies are already foreign-owned.



GWA benefits directly from Federal Government spending, with a focus on defence and homeland security that invites outside ICT solutions. MICT is able to make introductions to potential partners and support bodies in the GWA, often through regular trade missions and study tours organised from Merseyside.

THE GREATER WASHINGTON AREA (GWA)

US Federal Government is the world's largest single technology consumer, although federal employment is only 11% of total GWA employment. With a

has a bachelor's degree or higher, while some 19% of adults have advanced degrees. A Gross Regional Product of nearly \$288.3 billion (£155 billion) is the US's 4th largest. Strong commercial and residential real estate markets driven by Government contracting are forecast to continue. Three airports, Amtrak rail links, two major ports and an extensive public transportation system serve the region and world. Aside from politics and business, Washington offers inward investors 234,000 acres of parkland, 800 miles of bikeways and 30 new golf courses - plus some 8,000 restaurants and bars and 85 professional theatre companies.

HELPING HANDS

GREATER WASHINGTON INITIATIVE (GWI)

GWI'S Business Development arm helps companies to expansion or move by providing site selection services and real estate advice, plus professional guidance. It coordinates the Area Business Development Officials Committee, a group collaborating on projects improving the region's business climate. Complimentary services include proposals covering market conditions and



information for informed decision-making. A typical proposal includes a competitive analysis, cluster mapping, industry sector trends, demographics and real estate data. GWI also hosts delegations and site tours so visitors can sample GWA assets and meet local executives. Concurrently, it develops strategic alliances with international organisations, including Trade Partners UK and the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance.

www.greaterwashington.org

UNDERSTANDING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MARKET

Online insights into federal procurement trends are available via: -
Federal Computer Week www.fcw.com
Federal Times www.federaltimes.com
Government Computer News www.gcn.com
Government Executive Magazine www.govexec.com
Washington Technology www.washingtontechnology.com

THE NORTH AMERICAN ICT BRIDGEHEAD

GREATER RESTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce has been a Northern Virginia business growth catalyst for more than two decades. It provides incubator business support to early-stage, technology and government-service focused local innovators and inward investors. As such, it is a first port of call for overseas ICT companies. Qualifying requirements are that a company must have progressed beyond conceptual stages, focus primarily on technology and government service needs, be fully funded, have a formal business and marketing plan and meet business license criteria.

www.restonchamber.org

NORTH VIRGINIA TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL (NVTC)

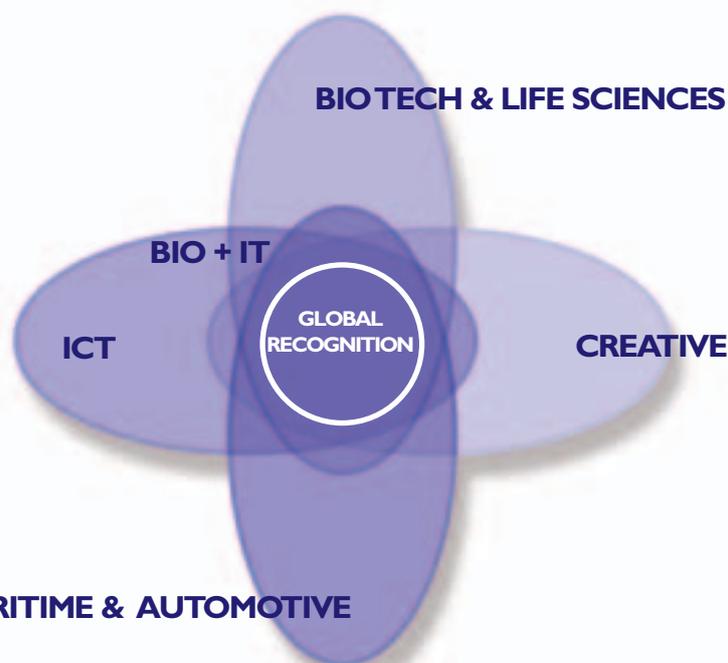
NVTC is the USA's largest technology council. It acts as a trade association with more than 1,100 members, employing circa 160,000 in companies operating in software/hardware, the Internet, ISPs, telecommunications, bio-technology, bio-informatics, aerospace and nanotechnology. As a mature and respected body, it also represents universities, foreign embassies, non-profit organisations and governmental agencies. Its eight technology-related objectives promote national and international business opportunity and partnership.

www.nvtc.org



The Greater Washington metropolitan area represents a geographic concentration of research, business and excellence centres that welcome enterprise.

MAXIMUM GLOBAL RECOGNITION



International recognition is strengthened where the overlapping interests of co-operating specialist development clusters coincide. Merseyside is fortunate in having robust bio-tech and life science, automotive, maritime and modern creative forward-looking industrial sectors with ICT as a common thread.

MASON ENTERPRISE CENTRE

The Mason Enterprise Centre is a university-based economic development driver that focuses on the drive, skills and intellectual capital of George Mason University to create business expansion. It specialises in small business services, government contracting, international business, entrepreneurship, technology ventures, and teleworking initiatives. The centre's International Business Development Programme has two main objectives where inward investment and knowledge partnerships play a part - helping US IT and biotech firms to enter international markets and similarly helping international companies to enter the US marketplace. A major channel for introducing overseas companies to the US is the International Business Accelerator programme.

www.masonenterprisecenter.org
www.masonenterprisecenter.org/intl



DARESBURY SCIENCE AND INNOVATION CAMPUS - LOCAL RESOURCE: INTERNATIONAL DESTINATION



When Chancellor Gordon Brown announced a new strategic investment for Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus (Daresbury SIC) in his 2006 Budget statement, he was backing a premier UK scientific and enterprise environment with innovative ICT at its core.

The complementary North of England twin to Harwell's Rutherford Appleton complex in Oxfordshire, Daresbury SIC is a cradle for science and technology-based business generation and has been described by Lord Sainsbury, former Science and Innovation Minister, as 'one of the national centres for scientific excellence'.

Daresbury SIC is a partnership involving the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWRDA), Council for the Central Laboratory of the Research Councils (CCLRC), the Universities of Lancaster, Liverpool and Manchester, and Halton Borough Council. Its key aim is to develop an internationally recognised scientific, innovation and business community that facilitates the transfer of world-class scientific research into innovative commercial solutions and products and as a result of this, to create profitable entrepreneurial businesses, high skill jobs and internationally-leading scientific excellence.

DOMESTIC AND INWARD-BOUND ICT INNOVATION IS FINDING A NATURAL HOME AT DARESBURY SCIENCE AND INNOVATION CAMPUS WITHIN A GLOBALLY RESPECTED ENTERPRISE AND SCIENTIFIC RESOURCE NETWORK.

The Daresbury site combines the scientifically-renowned Daresbury Laboratory and newly established Cockcroft Institute (National Centre for Accelerator Science) with the innovative and entrepreneurial activities of the Daresbury Innovation Centre.

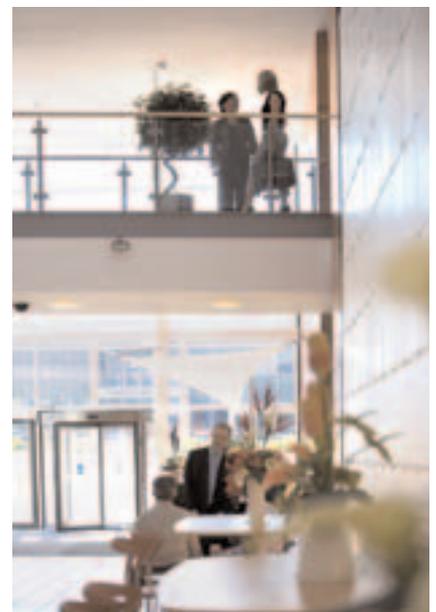
It has become a crossroads of opportunity for private, public and academic organisations large and small that need this highly interactive environment to enable their innovation breakthroughs. It has the even more pragmatic attraction of being a convenient location in a rural setting in Cheshire about 20 minutes drive from either Manchester or Liverpool Airports. Access to the motorway network, is but a stone's throw away.

While internationally significant, the expanding complex also gives the Northwest a business and knowledge axis where nearly 30 innovative and technology-focussed SMEs in the Daresbury Innovation Centre are already building a reputation in co-operative proximity to their prestigious partners on the Campus.

Many are making breakthroughs in ICT, healthcare, electronics and instrumentation. The target is to have over 50 businesses taking advantage of the high quality office, accommodation, workshop and laboratory space, backed up by business support from the Innovation Centre team. The Campus also benefits from the facilities within the Daresbury Laboratory, including the library, shop, restaurant, and conference centre.

The advantages of Daresbury SIC are based not only on the key partnership model but also the heavyweight scientific capabilities based locally in the Daresbury Laboratory. For academics, blue-chip businesses and, increasingly, top-flight young SME spin-outs, the Daresbury Laboratory has the gravitas of major scientific

research installations. For example, powerful experimental synchrotrons - like the 4GLS (4th generation light source) prototype - are able to generate short light pulses roughly equivalent to the power needed to light every London home. The site also houses the HPCx supercomputer.



Both are tremendously powerful investigative and analytical tools used across a spectrum of industries.

Obvious synergies have occurred. Inevitable academic and commercially-driven growth has led to the foundation of the Cockcroft Institute, backed by Liverpool, Manchester and Lancaster Universities, as well as the CCLRC and PPARC (Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council) organisations and the NWRDA. Housing the National Centre for Accelerator Science, the institute will focus on technology enabling development in a number of global accelerator projects, calling on high-level scientific and technical expertise and third-party solutions. In parallel, the Daresbury Innovation Centre includes a business accelerator programme with tailored,



YOUR PERSONAL PASSPORT TO EXPORT SUCCESS

VERY GOOD REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD EXPORT FOLLOWED BY EXPERT ADVICE ON HOW TO SUCCEED.

practical support for start-ups working on developments both sympathetic to Daresbury's core projects and opportunities in the commercial world.

'Against this background, powerful network relationships come into play that are crucial for high-calibre inward investors', explains Innovation centre manager, Dr Paul Treloar. 'Our role is de-risking and increasing success,' says Paul, himself a businessman with ten years experience of successful start-ups in healthcare and clinical diagnostics. 'We are not here to provide generic business support but to recognise that, to generate businesses rooted in knowledge and advanced computing capabilities, we must put high-level expertise into place early to minimise risk and maximise commercial opportunities,' he adds.

On a practical level, centre occupants have integrated quickly, for example, drawing on the Laboratory's extensive technical facilities and establishing a number of development partnerships. Meanwhile, venture capitalists - the key to many start-up successes - are impressed by Daresbury SIC's credentials and about ten funds or investors are actively engaged with companies in the Innovation Centre. The presence of world names in the innovation centre, such as IBM, which has chosen it as a strategic base, adds further opportunity and prestige.

There are currently nine feisty ICT mould-breakers already succeeding at the centre, in areas such as gaming, mobile technology and internet-based solutions. These include Aventura, which is developing new smartphone PDA applications for lifestyle management with a major telco. Comworks is working with Microsoft to stream high-resolution video event coverage. Meanwhile, IXIS is developing Linux-based open-source technology for clients in bespoke product development, while EBDEX is working on new technology for e-invoicing. An inward ICT investor from New Zealand is also about to join the centre.

www.daresburyinnovation.co.uk

For one-stop-shop export help and support, contact The International Trade Centre For Greater Merseyside (ITC) in Liverpool's city centre. It helps more than 300 companies annually and is backed by UK Trade and Investment (UKTI), the UK Government's lead body on international trade.

Straightforward advice awaits companies and individuals considering trade overseas for the first time. 'We'll give you positive answers to the most common exporting fears, plus a number of reasons why going global really is beneficial for you,' explains International Trade Director, Colin Gardner, who himself has been involved in international trade for more than 20 years.

The truth is that many organisations well qualified to export are held back by unnecessary worries - particularly small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). Common issues that the ITC hears regularly are: - 'How do I start?', 'I only speak English,' 'I want to buy overseas, not sell,' 'Will I be paid?' and 'Is there really an opportunity for me out there?'

One of the keys to international trade success is to make use of available specialist advice. This includes ITC's team of locally-based International Trade Advisors, such as ICT specialist, Margaret Bourke, who can help with information on licensing matters, joint ventures, knowledge-sharing and study tours.

The first step is usually a diagnostic and action plan carried out by one of the International Trade Advisors who visit clients to carry out this export 'Health Check'. The next possible step is to join the UK nationally accredited 'Passport to Export Success' programme. Signing up offers a flexible programme covering a 12 to 18 month period of planning,



training, mentoring and some financial support on a matched basis, helping to make the first steps for new and inexperienced exporters in a professional and structured manner.

Signing-up to www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk with its huge resource of specialist country and sector reports, and the ability to receive regular, tailored export opportunities from UKTI's overseas teams, is also an available resource that should not be missed by all existing or potential exporters. First-hand on the ground experience overseas can also be gained through some 200 annual trade mission opportunities offered by UKTI nationally, of which the ITC on Merseyside delivers a proportion. These including market visits to USA, South Africa, Denmark, Germany, China and Brazil.

Working through The International Trade Centre For Greater Merseyside to develop international trade creates the chance to better understand available opportunities overseas and offers support to companies to access those opportunities in cost-effectively.

For more information on the International Trade Centre: -

www.itc4gm.co.uk;
tel 0845 450 4990;
info@itc4gm.co.uk



A WORLD KNOWLEDGE SCIENCE PARK

CLASSIC LIVERPOOL INNOVATION WITH CAMBRIDGE'S NETWORKING POWER IS LAUNCHING A NEW BREED OF GLOBAL ENTREPRENEUR.



Think Liverpool, Cambridge, science parks and ultra-successful business environments. The link is infrastructure, influence - and crucially for Liverpool Science Park (LSP) - vigorous interaction between people highly committed to creating 21st century wealth from knowledge and technology.

'Liverpool is the UK's next up-and-coming city,' explains, Dr Sarah Tasker, LSP's CEO. It makes the science park, she believes, a natural centre for one of the world's most powerful modern economic assets - the creative application of high-quality information.

A new generation of business start-up leaders has been quick to prove her right, moving swiftly into LSP's first phase development - an innovation centre (LSPIC) built specifically to help young companies with great ideas break into world markets. More will follow as university research spin-outs. From its purpose-built, £10 million city-centre home, LSP is well on its way to becoming the UK's second, and Europe's third, largest science park.

Another LSP plus is Sarah's own understanding of science park dynamics - the basis of her doctorate. With LSP Chief Operating Officer, David Lupson, she is determined Liverpool will benefit from Cambridge Science Park's global success. Both were instrumental in Cambridge's rise to become the UK's oldest, largest - at 125-acre - and presently most profitable, science park. Now, they are transferring that experience to Liverpool via the independent consultancy they co-founded. Sarah brings, through the CAM-SCI Consultancy, first-hand knowledge of almost every UK science park and business incubator, plus many in the USA and Europe - echoing Liverpool's own worldwide search for an exemplary science park model.

While LSP draws strongly on Cambridge's powerful global network and commercial links, there is far more to science park success than a fine campus and influential contacts. Liverpool's historic outlook as a world-facing seaport, with the will to invent and export world-changing concepts, will once again be decisive, Sarah believes.

Its 21st century equivalent is a potent mix of motivated entrepreneurs, innovators and developers anxious to promote globally significant products and services, actively supported by a series of academic and research centres that have fought hard to win impressive funding and staff. 'Liverpool visionaries who opened the world's first passenger railway in 1830, financed and laid the first transatlantic telegraph cable in 1886 or, in the case of

Dr Matthew Dobson, discovered diabetes in 1776, pushed forward 18th, 19th and 20th century knowledge frontiers,' says Sarah. 'Today's critical mass includes two world-ranking Liverpool universities and excellence centres for laser technology, magnetic resonance, image analysis research and bio-technology. As the world increasingly invests and trades openly across international borders, this type of physical and virtual resource matrix must be a winning formula,' she adds.

Equally important for young start-ups is a careful balance between perfect property conditions and commercial terms. To minimise worry, LSPIC occupants enjoy flexible tenancy terms and low service costs. It is equally easy to expand rapidly, or leave and move on. There is access to EU and regional development funding. Meanwhile, office space can be converted into special clean-rooms and laboratories, allowing swift growth without disruption. 'Piped in' services provided at cost include sophisticated Internet access, constant security, plus a knowledge-enterprise resource hub for conferences, seminars, master classes and networking.

Liverpool's careful search for the ingredients of a world-class science park has resulted in a science park equipped to serve the world.



www.liverpoolsciencepark.co.uk



ESSENTIAL FUNDING SUPPORT JUST WHEN IT IS NEEDED

MERSEYSIDE SPECIAL INVESTMENT FUND PROVIDES FINANCE FOR BUSINESSES BASED IN, OR RELOCATING TO, MERSEYSIDE. HAILED AS GROUNDBREAKING WHEN IT WAS SET UP IN 1996, THE MODEL HAS SINCE BEEN REPLICATED IN OTHER PARTS OF THE UK.

The Merseyside Special Investment Fund (MSIF) has backed more than 1,000 businesses - many of them in the ICT sector. The organisation has four separate funds totalling £107 million and provides loans and equity packages of £3,000 to £4 million.

MSIF understands the central challenges facing ICT businesses. Its investment teams work closely with other key organisations, such as Liverpool Science Park, The Mersey Partnership, Merseyside ICT and local authority economic development units, to provide businesses with appropriate financial and business support.

Mark Fuller, Managing Director, Fund Manager of MSIF, notes that, 'The ICT sector on Merseyside is vibrant with exciting potential.'

St Helens-based Cybertill specialises in electronic point-of-sale (EPoS) technology. The business was created from the vision of its Managing Director, Ian Tomlinson, who predicted and then exploited the significant potential in multi-channel retailing. The result was a software solution that can streamline and integrate activity across multiple, or single sales channels, whilst overcoming the issues of cost, risk and reliability for the retailer. The Cybertill solution stands out from its competitors by making its EPoS technology available as an ASP service delivered to the retailer over a virtual private network. This approach has removed the barriers to entry, in terms of technical complexity and affordability for hundreds of smaller retailers, equipping them with the same technology as global giants.

Cybertill now employs 50 people and its systems are installed in more than 3,000 UK locations, within both independent and multiple retailers. It is now partnered with IT industry leaders, such as Fujitsu, and its



technology is used by a number of high-profile retailers, including Threshers. The company is now deploying its systems in the United States for its first international client.

MSIF invested a £20,000 loan from its Small Firms Fund. Its Mezzanine and Venture Funds jointly invested a total of £1.2m

The MSIF investment team used its powerful network of contacts to help source a high-profile industry figure as Chairman and assisted the company in its negotiations with Fujitsu on the re-seller agreement.

Ian Tomlinson comments, 'MSIF understand the needs of businesses in ICT. The support that we received from MSIF was critical during our first five years of development and has played a key role in getting us where we are today. We are confident that MSIF will remain a trusted partner in years to come. I would advise any ITC business based in, or thinking of relocating to Merseyside, to approach MSIF if they are looking for a tailored finance package that comes with the highest quality support.'

For more information on MSIF visit www.msif.co.uk or call 0151 236 4040



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DTI Global Watch Missions are visits by small UK groups of technical experts, drawn from industry and academia, to leading-edge technology organisations around the world. Missions offer direct access to the people, technologies and strategies that are driving progress overseas.

Last but not least, DTI Global Watch Technology Partnering provides support to UK SMEs seeking partnerships with world-leading organisations overseas. There are six International Technology Promoters (ITPs) covering the ITEC (Information Technology, Electronics and Communications) sectors in North America, Europe, Asia-Pacific and Israel.

With wide-ranging technological, linguistic and commercial expertise, the ITPs are well-placed to help organisations navigate the often complex and time-consuming business of international technology transfer.

www.globalwatchservice.com

LIVERPOOL'S WARM BUT SERIOUS WORLDWIDE WELCOME



THE MERSEY PARTNERSHIP PROMOTES A RESURGENT LIVERPOOL REGION TO THE WORLD THROUGH ITS REGIONAL AND NATIONAL NETWORKS AND MAKES A POINT OF VISITING PROSPECTIVE INWARD INVESTORS AROUND THE WORLD AS THE ALL-IMPORTANT FIRST STEP TOWARDS JOINING A VIBRANTLY SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

The Mersey Partnership (TMP) is deadly serious about inward investment. In-bound companies and organisations bring new ideas and, quite rightly, expect committed professional help in return. Their participation is crucial to the continuously expanding scope, quality, opportunity and mutual business support enjoyed by Liverpool's bustling commercial and academic community. TMP, with the Northwest Regional Development Agency and UK Trade and Industry, is part of a National International Network.

That, however, does not preclude a warm, welcoming and personal approach, explains Mark Basnett, Director of Operations for The Mersey Partnership. Quite the opposite.

Several decades on from the global recognition created by The Beatles' generation, modern Merseyside is a world-facing commercial centre, as numerous recent inward investors can testify.

'International companies see Liverpool as an easy-to-reach world transport hub, with its own strong internal market, fast links across the UK, superb family living environments and low costs. We culture this dynamic carefully with potential investors. My colleagues readily fly the globe, responding to serious enquiries while setting out Liverpool's unique offer.'

WINNING PEOPLE AND PROPERTY

For many investors, the size and diversity of the business base and availability of people and skills is pivotal, says Mark. 'Some 16 million people live and work within a two

hour drive from Liverpool, together with a large number of FT-250 Index companies and leading brands, including Jaguar and Land Rover. Our software expertise leads the world in thriving sectors, such as the gaming industry. For many new companies, the fact that we offer access to massive sales markets, as well as high skill levels, is essential in business planning.

'At the same time, Liverpool is an ideal location for servicing London clients swiftly, while benefiting from business property costs that can be 50% of those in the capital city. First-class company accommodation is currently available across the sub-region from £7.50 to £20 per square foot (£79 to £211 per m²). In addition, innovation and enterprise are finding superb homes at the Liverpool Science Park, Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus and Digitalinc business incubator.'

FAST UK, EU AND WORLD ACCESS

'Liverpool is also well-placed for global travel and connections. Liverpool John Lennon Airport provides a regular and expanding choice of direct services that put all parts of Europe just hours away at very low cost, making a day's door-to-door business commuting attractive and feasible. Manchester International Airport, with a full array of world destinations, is reached conveniently by direct motorway links.'

GOOD SKILLS AND LIFE-STYLE CHOICES

'Modern skills are another important business ingredient. Liverpool offers a pool

of talent that includes both experienced employees and graduates of three local universities, plus a series of excellence centres, such as the International Centre for Digital Content (ICDC). Graduate retention rates tend to be high. SkillWorks is an extremely powerful training initiative backed by the private and public sector that funds companies to create carefully tailored skills within their own workforces.'

Quality of life and living options are an inseparable part of the Liverpool Region's mix. 'We have one of the UK's best kept secrets,' confides Mark. 'Life-style choices range from sophisticated city centre living to extremely attractive green suburbs, with sought-after recreational, educational and family facilities. Liverpool is also within easy reach of three of the country's outstanding National Parks.'

THE WILL TO WIN CONTINUES

An exemplar inward investor is the global ICT leader, CSC, which chose to create a base within the Liverpool Region in Knowsley. 'With enthusiastic support from us, CSC has employed and trained local people to ramp up its workforce from effectively zero to circa 350 in just 18 months. And this is not an isolated example.

'Above all, we care about our clients in Liverpool,' says Mark. 'Once you are here, it is in our interest, as well as yours, to do what we can to ensure that you prosper. Our philosophy is appropriate and professional support from our very first point of contact onwards.'



KEY ORGANISATIONS WHO SUPPORT MERSEYSIDE ICT

UNITED WE STAND

Our strength is our members – their ideas, skills, initiative, adaptability and ambitions.

Members are invited to play an active role in a series of district-level events, seminars and co-operative ventures that are organised through the year.



MAKING CONTACT

We would like to discuss how we can help you to make a success of ICT-based projects on Merseyside.

In particular, we would like to show you the special strengths, skills, financial advantages and support that Merseyside offers. However, we appreciate that any decisions you make must be based on reliable information. If you would like more detail, or to talk to us in confidence, please contact: -

Steve Smith
ICT Industry Sector Director
Merseyside ICT

steve.smith@merseysideict.org.uk
t: +44 (0)151 221 3529
f: +44 (0)151 220 5715

1 Faraday Road
Wavertree Technology Park
Liverpool L13 1EH
UK

The Merseyside ICT Sector has increasing partnerships, and a widening global reach, into international centres of excellence and marketplaces. A major priority is to introduce regional companies and innovators to exciting opportunities overseas, wherever possible making close new matches with successful partners already operating locally.

Concurrently, we are a conduit for international enquiries from organisations seeking commercial entry into the UK and wishing to meet potential Merseyside business and technical partners.

Strong US links with the George Mason University, Washington Center for Innovation & Technology, Greater Washington Initiative, Northern Virginia Technology Council and many others are opening up a trans-Atlantic gateway to north Virginia's world-renowned hub of IT excellence. This relationship offers inbound Merseyside companies first-class business support, networking, research and incubation facilities, en route to opportunities in the North American market. By return, we are able to make American introductions into the EU and beyond.

At the core of our work is recognition that growth in an expanding, dynamic sector depends heavily on the input of inventive minds and entrepreneurs who may struggle today but will provide tomorrow's standard solutions. That is why we believe that enabling innovation and enterprise is important and we make it our business to support individuals and companies at every level.

The Merseyside ICT Sector represents a forward-looking growth cluster in which ICT companies co-operate rather than compete, join in collaborative ventures, provide a voice in local decision-making and exchange technical and commercial ideas.

You are most welcome to join us.



Visit our website at
www.merseysideict.org.uk
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