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North East's IT and digital excellence celebrated at Northumbria

Dynamo 16 took place at Northumbria's City Campus in Newcastle, and featured keynote presentations from Ed Vaizey MP, entrepreneur Dame Stephanie Shirley and Northumbria's Professor Rebecca Strachan, among others.

The focus of the conference was the North East's resurgent IT sector, with sessions covering Cyber Resilience, Professional Services, Automotive & Advanced Manufacturing, Build, Skills, Future Workforce, Big Employers, Data and Intelligence. Mr Vaizey, the Minister for Culture and the Digital Economy,

said the North East tech sector was full of ‘success stories’ but more needed to be done to raise awareness of everything that was taking place.

Dynamo 16 Chair, Charlie Houlton, said: “Dynamo 16 was a fantastic event with 300+ delegates and speakers. Highlights were Dame Shirley, the 82-year-old IT entrepreneur, talking through her business experience battling feminist stereotypes to create an IT services business with 8,000 staff, followed by Alex Depledge, another woman turning her first name androgynous to avoid female discrimination in the tech world, who exited her ‘sharing economy’ start-up for \$32million.

“It is testament to Dynamo’s momentum that the Minister for the Digital Economy, Ed Vaizey, came north to deliver a message. He also spent the day exploring our tech cluster and came away with a vastly increased knowledge of our ‘hotspot’ and promises to bring more investment to support us. It’s thanks to such a ‘show of strength’ that we can build on the tech successes.

“Appropriately, for the mantra ‘if you skill it, they will come’, our host for Dynamo 16 was Northumbria University – a hotbed of digital learning.”

Professor Strachan, Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Strategic Planning and Engagement) in Engineering and Environment, said: “Northumbria was delighted to host Dynamo 16 which celebrated both what the North East has achieved in the IT sector and how the region’s universities and businesses are continuing to promote innovation and push back boundaries.

“The conference also provided an important platform for the sector to focus on future innovation and research and closing the skills gap to enhance future employment opportunities.”

She added: “Northumbria is at the forefront of the challenge to address the skills gap in the UK IT sector by combining vocational skills developed through employment with cutting-edge knowledge.”

Developed in collaboration with employers and accredited by the Tech Partnership, Northumbria was the first university in the region to offer a degree apprenticeship in BSc Digital and Solutions, designed to create confident and capable IT graduates. Apprentices are employed full-time by their organisation and attend Northumbria University one day a week to

study a range of modules. Apprentices are awarded a BSc (Hons) Digital Technology and Solutions degree on successful completion of the four-year programme.

Northumbria is also the UK's biggest riser in research power, following the Research Excellence Framework 2014, and is on track to become one of the leading centres of knowledge about secure digital cities and the intersection of people, technology and place. This vibrant multidisciplinary research and innovation theme in digital living has an enviable track record of working with business and industry to solve problems through Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and user-led research.

A team led by Professor Strachan is currently working with BT to provide an evaluation of the impact of ultrafast broadband on business and consumer users. The study by Northumbria explores how people are using this technology and what difference it is making to their lives both at home and at work.

Simon Roberson, BT regional partnership director, North East, said: "BT is delighted to be working with the team at Northumbria University who are supporting us with our research on the G.fast trials."

Northumbria recently announced £52m investment in its campus and buildings, including £6.7m to create world-class STEM facilities and laboratories, and a new state-of-the-art building to house its Computer Science department. To find out more about these developments click [here](#) and for more information about this year's Dynamo 16 click [here](#). Northumbria offers a range of courses across the digital, IT, computer science and information science industries. To find out more about studying at Northumbria go to: www.northumbria.ac.uk

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

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