

NORTH WEST CYBER SECURITY EXPERT CONFERENCE ANNOUNCED AT DiSHmcr

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Digital entrepreneurs and start-ups from across the North West are being invited to attend an event as part of the country's largest cyber security accelerator programme, Cyber Runway.

The Cyber Runway free event is aimed at helping cyber security companies in the early stages of the business lifecycle, providing the region's cyber firms with the business knowledge, skills and support needed to help their progress.

With the aim of making the North West one of the best places to start and grow a cyber security business, the series of talks from some of the country's top experts is taking place over two days, October 19th and 20th, at Manchester's new Digital Security Innovation Hub (DiSHmcr).

Backed by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Cyber Runway is a unique project, being delivered across the UK regions by Plexal, Deloitte and the Centre for Secure Information Technologies.

One of the hosts of the landmark DiSHmcr event is Cyber Security Partnership Development Manager Jon Lomas from Lancaster University, the UK's foremost NCSC accredited academic centre for excellence in cyber security.

He said: "Our region's digital ambition is second to none, which is evident due to the highest calibre of cyber security professionals we have gathered to share their expert insights.

"The event will help them to understand the developing cyber eco-system in the region – gain valuable insights and provide support to develop their plans for growth.

"We are delighted to be hosting the North West event for Cyber Runway, the UK's largest cyber security accelerator, at the new Digital Security Hub in Manchester.

"The North West has a proud history of being at the forefront of industry, dating back to the Industrial Revolution, and now we are proud to be leading the cyber security revolution.

"Through the dedicated work and collaboration between Lancaster University, Plexal, Deloitte and others, this two-day event at DiSHmcr is sure to prove a huge success."

This will be the first event to take place at DiSHmcr, the 11,000 sq ft collaborative working space situated at Heron House in the heart of the city, home to GCHQ and its National Cyber Security Centre.

DiSHmcr is key to the ambition of making Greater Manchester a top five European digital city region putting the city, and the whole of the North West at the forefront of the fight against digital threats.

The centre allows businesses to draw upon world class expertise, as well as the knowledge and support of the consortium partners Lancaster University, Barclays Eagle Labs, Plexal and the University of

Manchester.

Greater Manchester Combined Authority Director for Digital Phil Swan is set to speak on the first day of the event, where he is planning on providing an overview on the region's digital ambition.

Phil said: "Greater Manchester is doing digital differently.

"We are putting people at the heart of what we do as we work towards our ambition to become world-leading digital city and region.

"We're establishing Greater Manchester as the UK and European centre for cyber and digital ethics, trust and security.

"This is a region where digital industry grows and flourishes, and is home to, and the home of, emerging and growing digital industries and digital pioneers."

One of these digital pioneers is Holly Grace Williams, Founder and Technical Lead of Akimbo Core, a leading Cyber Security Testing company.

Akimbo Core, based in Blackpool, address weaknesses in traditional approaches to security testing by helping businesses protect against forms of potential cyber risk, including automatically finding issues that can threaten a company's data integrity.

Holly Grace, who started Akimbo Core in 2021, will be talking about her journey from concept, to founding her company, and ultimately on to success.

She said: "There is a vast amount to learn when you want to start your own cyber security company, so it helps to have what I like to call 'cheat codes.'

"First and foremost of which is making sure you have the right skill and competency.

"Before founding Akimbo Core, I was MD of another cyber security company.

"That role taught me a lot of the things I needed to know in order to run my own company, because I was already in that business environment, dealing with failures and observing successes and learning what worked.

"Obviously, running your own company is different from working for someone else, but if you can gather as many industry-specific skills beforehand, then things are going to run more smoothly.

"One element that I hadn't previously considered when I wasn't running my own company was hiring people for positions outside of my own sphere of competence or expertise.

"Turning to a growth support company, and hiring consultants, not to fill roles but to help do the hiring for those roles, makes sense.

“Branding within tech spheres is of low importance, but with the founding of a company, it is of paramount importance.

“You need to get your company there, with defined USPs and building your name around them.”

Other key topics being covered during the event include detailed insight from Sam Donaldson, Director at forward-thinking advisors Perspective Economics, who is set to explain how companies in the region can use the DCMS Cyber Sector Analysis Report 2022 to identify and maximise business growth opportunities.

Jon Lomas added: “Cyber Runway North West will provide an opportunity for new start-ups and fledgling cyber security companies to engage and network with industry experts, academics and other key stakeholders.”

To register for the event, and for additional information, please visit
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/cyber-runway-manchester-tickets-420506725937>

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