



DIGITAL BUSINESS & TECH INNOVATION

Innovation in Galway - from a medieval trading hub to a tech haven

BY RÓISÍN KILROY

There was a time when Galway was known primarily for its merchant trading, its traditional musical and creative community and its thriving fishing industry. But in recent decades, the City of Tribes has charted a new course, becoming an unexpected yet vibrant hub for tech innovation in Ireland's western seaboard.

So, how did a city that was once better known for its arts festivals and its music scene transform into a cradle for cutting-edge technology?

The answer lies partly in Galway's innate resilience and adaptability, alongside the city's long history of international trading and global outlook which continued even after its golden era of merchant trading ended. With a centuries-long aptitude for looking beyond its shores, undoubtedly the 1990s were a pivotal time in Galway's development but this decade of change was made possible by decisions which were set into

motion when the Celtic Tiger was just a mere cub.

Economic focus

To truly understand how a largely agricultural and overlooked region at the edge of the continent became home to some of the biggest players in technology, digital business and innovation, we need to look at where it all started.

From 1922 to 1972, post-independence Ireland's fiscal policy was decidedly conservative, operating a predominantly agricultural-based economy. This conservative fiscal strategy and economic focus would change in the 1970s, with Ireland's entrance into the European Union in 1972 coinciding with a dramatic change in spending patterns and initiating a change towards a knowledge-based economy.

The drift away from a conservative traditional economy was later accelerated in 1980, when the EU agreed to waive State-aid waver rules for Ireland, resulting in a 'special rate' 10 per cent tax on

manufacturing. From 1996 to 2003, Ireland would introduce a phased reduction in its standard corporate tax rate, dropping from 40 per cent down to 12.5 per cent.

Educated workforce

In 1956, there were just 7,200 third-level students in Ireland, a figure which accounted for just 0.0002 per cent of the Irish population. Shortly after, Ireland would undergo a golden era of learning development, with free schooling being introduced in 1966, the development of further education institutes focusing on technology in the 1970s, the abolition of college fees in the 1990s and the introduction of education grants such as SUSI to name a few.

This renaissance of learning, while marred with some low points, was revolutionary for the Irish people. By 1998, the number of third-level students in Ireland rose to 112,200, a rise of 1,500 per cent compared to 1956.

The 'Digital legacy'

Galway is now an established global hub for a range of leading businesses in the manufacturing, technology and digital industry, but the city's origin as a haven for the information technology industry began in 1971 with US computer manufacturer, Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC).

It was the first technology company to come to Galway, with DEC choosing to establish

its first hardware manufacturing base in Mervue because of the 'availability of an English-speaking workforce, a favourable tax policy, a local university, and the anticipated entry of Ireland into the EEC'.

Over three decades, DEC would play an integral role in highlighting Galway's potential as a production hub, leading to the pivotal growth of manufacturing and production activity in Galway during the 1990s, with DEC's legacy attributed as being the foundations on which today's industry is built.

Fifty years of innovation

With Ireland's 'Celtic Tiger' roaring to life in the 1990s, multinational companies started looking beyond Dublin's borders. Galway, with its rich talent pool fed by NUI Galway (now University of Galway) and GMIT (now Atlantic Technological University), was ripe for investment. The educational institutions weren't just churning out graduates; they were cultivating minds steeped in problem-solving, critical thinking, and a healthy dose of west-of-Ireland ingenuity. Having spent decades cultivating educational programmes and courses to cater to the multinational corporations which had a local campus, Galwegians and the global companies which call the city home have entered into a form of a symbiotic, mutually beneficial relationship.

MedTech giants like Boston Scientific and Medtronic set up shop, drawn by not just the talent

but Galway's quality of life. As these companies grew, they seeded an ecosystem of startups, spin-offs, and innovative SMEs, creating a ripple effect that transformed the local economy.

Indigenous entrepreneurs

But it wasn't just foreign direct investment doing the heavy lifting. Galway's entrepreneurs, many returning from stints abroad, brought fresh ideas and bold ambitions. They found a city ready to support them, with co-working spaces sprouting up alongside tech incubators and accelerator programmes. This has further evolved with time, with today's indigenous entrepreneurs no longer having to leave Ireland to bring their ambitions and ideas to life.

Galway's growth may originally stem from the introduction of multinational industry bigwigs but the future tycoons of trade in Galway are likely to come from somewhere closer to home, possibly even from our own families.

Shaping the future

In the end, Galway didn't so much transform as evolve, guided by the same forces that shaped it over centuries: a spirit of adventure, an openness to the world, and an unyielding sense of community. And as the tech tide continues to rise, Galway stands not as a city that followed the wave, but one that helped shape it.



PorterShed
#backedbyAIB

Galway's tech scene is thriving, and PorterShed is at the heart of it - fueling innovation, supporting startups, and driving economic growth across the West.

GET INVOLVED

MEETINGS

Book a 4 - 12 person room in the city centre

MEMBERSHIP

Join 60 Companies | 300 active members

RECORD A PODCAST

Voice Overs | Video Podcasting | Editing

HOST A WORKSHOP

or team day at our 80 person capacity Innovation Space

HOT DESK

Enjoy a hybrid work balance
1 - 10 Day Package Deals

SUPPORT

Galway's tech ecosystem.
Join 20+ Corporate Members

JOIN AN EVENT

164 events in 2024

MENTOR

A Start-up Company

INVEST

€125m+ raised in 2024 by member companies

Backed by Enterprise Ireland, the Western Development Commission, AIB, KPMG, and Vodafone/SIRO, PorterShed is committed to growing Galway's reputation as a tech powerhouse.



Check out our website and socials by scanning the QR Code or visit portershed.com | 15 Market Street, Galway.

PorterShed: Driving innovation and startup success in the west

Galway's tech scene is booming, and PorterShed is leading the charge - fueling innovation, supporting startups, and driving economic growth across the West of Ireland. More than just a coworking space, PorterShed is an innovation hub, offering entrepreneurs, remote workers, and tech leaders the resources, connections, and community they need to thrive.

PorterShed doesn't just provide desks, they foster real growth. Through startup programs, investor connections, and dynamic networking events, it has become a launchpad for success. Hosting more than 164 events last year, including hackathons and mentorship programmes,

PorterShed has cultivated an ecosystem where founders can scale their businesses with confidence.

This month, two member company success stories underscore PorterShed's impact: CitySwift, one of Ireland's scaling tech champions, expanded its operations at PorterShed aHaon into a dedicated office space to match team growth.

FleetOps, who started at PorterShed's original Eyre Square location with a hot desk moved into its own dedicated space as the company continues to grow. FleetOps co-founder Liam Lynch recalls, "PorterShed is all about community and network. Within two months here, we had met our CFO, an investor, and hired our first engineer."

Today, FleetOps boasts 21 employees at its new location and serves as a testament to PorterShed's ability to nurture and support scaling local talent.

Supported by Enterprise Ireland, AIB, KPMG, Vodafone/SIRO, and others, PorterShed is a catalyst for the West's innovation-driven future. As Galway builds its reputation as a tech powerhouse, PorterShed ensures that the next wave of groundbreaking startups - like FleetOps - start, scale, and succeed here.

If you're ready to help shape the future of innovation, collaborate, mentor, join as a member or become a key supporter, reach out today.

Contact PorterShed today and be part of the next success story: hello@portershed.com

DIGITAL BUSINESS & TECH INNOVATION

Revolutionising global investigations: How Siren transformed research into reality

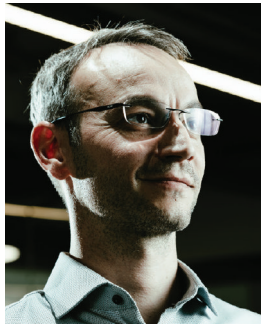
Born from groundbreaking research at the University of Galway, Siren has emerged as a leading force in investigative intelligence technology since its formation in 2016. The company's roots trace back to advanced data science research conducted at the university in the Digital Enterprise Research Institute (DERI now Insight Centre), where Dr. Renaud Delbru, Siren Founder and Chief Scientific Officer, led a team of over 30 researchers in collaboration with MIT. Their pioneering work focused on deriving meaning from data through innovative search technologies.

From its headquarters at Galway's PorterShed, the company has grown to over 70 employees, with a significant number of graduates from the University of Galway working alongside experienced professionals from across the

technology sector. Siren has expanded globally with offices across the United States, Asia Pacific, Italy, and France.

Siren's all-in-one investigation platform combines AI, automation, and advanced search capabilities to help organisations protect people, assets, and networks. The company's patented technology enables investigators to link and analyse data from large volumes of sources, serving national security, public safety, financial services, and cybersecurity communities. Its customers include some of the world's largest police departments and intelligence agencies. Among its partners are organizations like the Anti-Human Trafficking Intelligence Initiative and the National Child Protection Task Force.

Siren's continued innovation and growth have earned significant recognition, making the Deloitte Fast 50



Dr. Renaud Delbru,
Siren Founder and Chief
Scientific Officer

for the third consecutive year. Last year it won the Scale Up category, ranking ninth overall. In 2023, the company secured €12 million in funding from the European Investment Bank, further cementing its position as one of Galway's most promising technology companies.

Digital marketers get ready to hustle in Galway

BY DECLAN VARLEY

Digital Hustle by All G Consulting is a new community group for marketers to connect, learn and grow their careers. Following the success of the first in-person session at Tara Building in Dublin late last year, they are road tripping around Ireland to connect marketers and marketing curious professionals to learn, gain inspiration and of course... enjoy some wine and pizza — and it's coming to Galway next week.

The first stop of 2025 is at PorterShed in Galway City on Thursday February 20 at 19:00 focusing on how to level up your paid online advertising. They have LinkedIn expert, John Heavey (Galway native) instagram guru Ruth Mc Court (Galway native) and TikTok specialist Gav Buggy discussing trends within a panel discussion and then leading focused workshops with attendees.

This is not your typical networking event where you awkwardly small talk and scan the room for a familiar face. You are guaranteed to meet others, discuss your experiences, learn about trends and have the craic.

Tickets include wine and pizza as well as games and prizes! Ticket types aim to make the event as inclusive as possible with discounted rates catering to aspiring professionals and groups.

Tickets: <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/digital-hustle-tickets-1137948607919?aff=linkedin>

Organiser Heather Nolan said that she has been lucky enough to have built a fulfilling career in digital marketing, graduating from University of Galway.

"As a people person, I have always enjoyed connecting with people and by extending my network, it opened doors to exciting opportunities.

"Over the summer I was searching for a new job and I started to realise how tough it was to find opportunities using recruiters and online job platforms.

"I found the job hunt utterly impersonal and there were limited in-person events in for marketers to meet, collaborate and to share ideas. I was eager to connect with others, discuss industry trends, exchange challenges and continue to develop my skills," she said.

"Frustrated by expensive and quite frankly boring events that often left out aspiring professionals, I decided to take matters into my own hands. With the support of my amazing friends Lisa, Daiane and Ciara, I launched All G Consulting and our very own networking event, Digital Hustle.

"Our mission is simple, to inspire and build a community where digital marketers can come together to connect, learn & grow their careers. We didn't want the opportunity to connect to be limited to people living in Dublin so we decided to organise events around the country, starting with Galway, my hometown," she said.



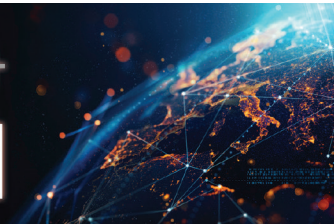
Siren[®]

Powering investigations

siren.io



DIGITAL BUSINESS & TECH INNOVATION



Galway-based web design experts help local businesses thrive online

Your business deserves a website that works as hard as you do.

For high-growth companies looking to elevate their presence, we offer tailored branding and web experiences.

We aim to be your long term ally, ensuring your brand grows and evolves as dynamically as your business.

ROB&PAUL DIGITAL DESIGN **robandpaul.ie**

Located in the heart of Galway on Market Street, Rob and Paul Ltd is a web design and development agency dedicated to helping businesses establish a strong digital presence. Founded by two proud Galwegians, Rob and Paul bring years of experience in web design, branding, and digital strategy to support local entrepreneurs in navigating the online world.

With a passion for creativity and innovation, Rob and Paul specialise in crafting visually stunning, user-friendly websites that drive real results. The duo understands the challenges that small businesses face when building an online presence, which is why they offer tailored solutions that go beyond just aesthetics. Their work ensures that clients' websites not only look great but also function seamlessly to attract and convert customers.



Rob (R) and Paul (L) photo credit: Ciarán MacChoncarraige

Having worked with businesses across various industries, Rob and Paul take an education-first approach, sharing their knowledge with clients to help them make informed decisions about their websites. Whether it is an e-commerce store, a professional portfolio, or a local service provider, their expertise ensures that each project is designed to support long-term growth.

As Galway natives, Rob and Paul are committed to supporting the local business community by providing high-quality, affordable web solutions. Their goal is simple – to help businesses thrive online and reach new heights with a strong, strategic digital presence.

For more information on how Rob and Paul Ltd can elevate your business online, visit <https://robandpaul.ie>.

FUNDRAISE NOW

Support Your School, Sports Club, Cause or Someone in Need!

We have helped raise over €130 million for Irish Charities, Sports Clubs, Schools and Emergencies.

WHETHER IT'S A LOCAL INITIATIVE OR URGENT NEED, FUNDRAISING IS SIMPLE AND SECURE WITH IDONATE.

making giving easier

www.idonate.ie | Tuam, Co. Galway

iDonate – In your corner

Contactless donations, anytime, anywhere.

iDonate Tap

Reimagined, Redesigned.

Now available.

Innovation has always been at the heart of iDonate, the brainchild of father and son team, Paddy and Alan Coyne. The most recent innovation, iDonate Tap, has revolutionised the traditional 'bucket collection' for the Tuam based organisations customers, boosting average donations to €30 via the tap technology.

Since its release in 2024, iDonate Tap has raised over €340,000 nationwide.

Now, fundraisers for charities, GAA clubs, schools and crowdfunding can use their mobile phone as a payment terminal. Just like tapping your phone or card for everyday purchases, you can now tap to donate to an iDonate fundraiser. The person donating has full control over their contribution amount, which appears instantly on the fundraisers page.

iDonate Tap empowers fundraisers to ensure that verbal

commitments to donate are not forgotten, capturing donations on the spot.

Pieta used it across key locations for their Darkness into Light Walk last May. GOAL volunteers used the technology across 200 GOAL Mile locations last Christmas, making on the day collections seamless, secure and most importantly, removed the cash-handling element, which is very time consuming for charities.

The ISPPCC creatively sold ponchos at outdoor summer concerts,

with proceeds benefitting the charity. With numerous concerts nationwide, the ability for the volunteers to turn their phone into a secure payment processor was a game-changer for the ISPPCC.

So, be prepared, if you promise to support a fundraiser while out and about, you will probably be presented with the chance to do so instantly.

iDonate Tap is available for download on iOS and Android devices on the app store.

making giving easier

DIGITAL BUSINESS & TECH INNOVATION

Key tech trends and Ireland's role in innovation

As we move through the 2020s, rapid technological advancements are reshaping industries, economies, and societies. From artificial intelligence to blockchain, the digital landscape is evolving at an unprecedented pace, creating new opportunities for businesses worldwide.

Ireland and Galway, with its strong tech ecosystem and pro-business policies, is well-positioned to foster innovation and become a hub for the next generation of digital enterprises. This article explores the major tech trends defining the remainder of the decade, the types of digital businesses that are likely to thrive, and how Ireland can create the right environment for these innovations to flourish.

Emerging tech trends for the 2020s

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Automation AI is transforming industries by enabling automation, improving decision-making, and enhancing customer experiences. With advances in machine learning, natural language processing, and generative AI, businesses can streamline operations, reduce costs, and unlock new capabilities. Ireland's tech sector, already home to major AI-driven companies, can further capitalize on this trend by investing in research and AI talent development.

Blockchain and Decentralized Finance (DeFi) Blockchain technology is moving beyond cryptocurrencies, enabling secure and transparent transactions in finance, supply chain management, and digital identity verification. Decentralized finance (DeFi) is challenging traditional banking by offering

peer-to-peer financial services without intermediaries. Ireland's strong fintech sector can lead in DeFi innovation by fostering regulatory clarity and supporting blockchain startups.

The Metaverse and Extended Reality (XR) The convergence of virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and the metaverse is shaping the future of digital interactions. Businesses are exploring immersive experiences for entertainment, education, retail, and remote work. Ireland's growing gaming and creative industries can play a pivotal role in developing XR applications and content.

5G and the Internet of Things (IoT) The rollout of 5G networks is enabling faster, more reliable connectivity, enhancing the capabilities of IoT devices. Smart cities, autonomous vehicles, and connected healthcare solutions are becoming increasingly viable. Ireland's investments in telecom infrastructure can accelerate the adoption of IoT technologies across multiple sectors.

Sustainable Tech and Green Innovation As climate concerns grow, sustainable technology solutions are gaining traction. Businesses are leveraging AI, IoT, and blockchain to optimize energy consumption, reduce waste, and promote circular economies. Ireland's commitment to sustainability and renewable energy aligns with the global push for green technology, offering an opportunity for the country to lead in eco-friendly innovations.

Digital businesses poised to thrive

Given these trends, several types of digital businesses are positioned for success:

AI-Powered Solutions – Startups developing AI-driven software for healthcare, finance, marketing, and cybersecurity will experience high demand.

Fintech and DeFi Platforms – Businesses offering blockchain-based financial services, digital banking, and payment solutions will continue to disrupt traditional finance.

Metaverse and XR Experiences – Companies creating immersive virtual environments, digital assets, and VR training solutions will shape the future of work and entertainment.

IoT and Smart Infrastructure – Businesses focusing on smart home technology, connected vehicles, and industrial automation will gain traction.

GreenTech Startups – Companies developing solutions for renewable energy, carbon tracking, and sustainable supply chains will benefit from increasing ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) priorities.

How Ireland can foster digital innovation

Ireland has long been a hub for tech companies, attracting major multinational corporations like Google, Apple, and Facebook. However, to maintain its competitive edge and foster the next generation of digital businesses, several key strategies must be adopted:

1. Strengthening digital infrastructure Investment in high-speed internet, 5G deployment, and smart city initiatives will be crucial in enabling businesses to leverage emerging technologies effectively.

2. Enhancing tech education and talent development

Expanding STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) programmes, promoting AI and blockchain courses, and encouraging lifelong learning will ensure a skilled workforce to support innovation.

3. Supporting startup ecosystems Providing access to funding, mentorship programs, and incubators will empower entrepreneurs to build and scale innovative digital businesses.

4. Encouraging regulatory innovation Clear and business-friendly regulations for AI, fintech, and blockchain will help Ireland become a preferred destination for companies operating in these high-growth sectors.

5. Promoting sustainable tech initiatives Incentives for green technology startups and sustainability-focused businesses will position Ireland as a leader in eco-innovation.

The remainder of the decade will be defined by rapid advancements in AI, blockchain, the metaverse, IoT, and sustainable technology. Digital businesses that align with these trends will thrive, creating new economic opportunities.

Ireland, with its strong technology sector and favorable business environment, is well-positioned to lead in these areas. By investing in digital infrastructure, talent development, regulatory innovation, and sustainability, Ireland can create the right ecosystem for groundbreaking digital enterprises to flourish, securing its status as a global innovation hub.

Business Case: Enhancing Educational and Recruitment Decision-Making in Healthcare Through Qpercom's Scientific Research

Executive Summary

Qpercom, led by Dr. Thomas Kropmans and colleagues, has been at the forefront of research in educational decision-making and clinical skills assessment. This business case outlines the impact of Qpercom's scientific contributions on two major stakeholders: (1) the University of Galway, where the platform enhances the assessment of clinical skills among healthcare students, and (2) NHS England's Medical and Dental Recruitment (MDRS), where it aids in recruitment decision support for specialty trainees. By integrating psychometric principles, standard error of measurement (SEM), and actionable feedback mechanisms, Qpercom's research has led to improvements in both high-stakes assessment and workforce selection processes.

Background and Research Foundations

The assessment of clinical competence and the selection of healthcare professionals are critical processes that require objective, reliable, and valid decision-making frameworks. Traditional methods, such as unstructured interviews and subjective global ratings, have demonstrated limitations in predicting future

performance. Qpercom's research (Kropmans et al.) has contributed significantly to addressing these limitations by incorporating data-driven methodologies that improve the match between observed performance and global rating scores while optimising actionable feedback.

In the academic domain, Qpercom has pioneered research at the University of Galway on advanced assessment methodologies, focusing on the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) and Multi-Source Feedback (MSF). These methodologies allow for improved reliability in clinical competency evaluation through digital assessment and psychometric validation. The same principles are applied in NHS England's selection processes, ensuring that recruitment decisions for medical and dental specialty trainees are based on robust, data-driven models rather than subjective judgments.

Key Contributions to the University of Galway

Qpercom's research has transformed how the University of Galway assesses its healthcare students by integrating:

1. Standard Error of Measurement (SEM) – By analysing SEM, Qpercom's work ensures that clinical skill scores reflect true competence rather than measurement error. This minimises misclassification of students, reducing



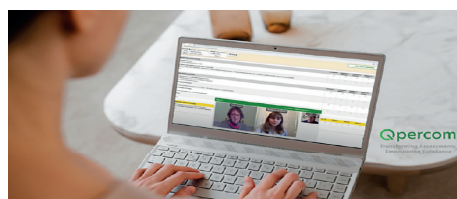
The founders of Qpercom, David Cunningham (L) & Dr Thomas Kropmans (R)

the likelihood of unfair pass/fail decisions.

2. Global Rating Scales and Clinical Judgment – Traditional checklists can fail to capture holistic clinical decision-making skills. Research by Kropmans et al. has validated global rating scales, ensuring that examiners' judgments are both structured and predictive of future clinical competence.

3. Actionable Feedback for Learners – The research highlights how formative assessment data can be leveraged to provide students with individualised, actionable feedback. This improves learning outcomes and bridges the gap between assessment scores and clinical performance.

4. Digitalisation and Real-Time Analytics – Through digital assessment platforms, Qpercom enables immediate result analysis, which streamlines decision-



making for faculty while ensuring fairness and transparency.

These contributions have positioned the University of Galway as a leader in medical education assessment, improving graduate competence and patient safety.

Impact on NHS England and Medical Recruitment

Qpercom's research has also been instrumental in supporting NHS England's recruitment decisions, particu-

larly within MDRS, where selecting the right candidates for specialty training is a high-stakes endeavor. Key applications of Qpercom's work in this domain include:

1. Data-Driven Selection Models – The use of psychometric principles, including SEM and predictive analytics, ensures that recruitment decisions are not based solely on subjective judgments but on objective, quantifiable data. This leads to higher validity in selection.

2. Reducing False-Positive and False-Negative

Selections – Research demonstrates how integrating performance assessment models can minimise errors in recruitment, ensuring that only the most suitable candidates are selected for training programs.

3. Enhancing Fairness and Diversity – By utilising standardised assessment frameworks, Qpercom's work supports equitable recruitment practices, mitigating unconscious bias in the selection of trainees.

4. Longitudinal Tracking of Candidate Performance – Research by Kropmans et al. emphasises the importance of linking assessment data to long-term performance in clinical practice. This enables NHS England to refine selection criteria based on real-world outcomes.

Strategic Advantages and Return on Investment

By leveraging Qpercom's research in both education and recruitment, stakeholders experience multiple benefits:

For Universities: Increased assessment reliability leads to better-prepared graduates, improved accreditation standards, and enhanced institutional reputation.

For NHS England: More effective recruitment decisions reduce workforce attrition, improve patient care quality, and optimise training investments.

For Students and

Trainees: Fairer assessment and selection processes increase motivation, reduce anxiety, and foster confidence in professional development.

The adoption of data-driven decision support models ultimately results in improved workforce competency, cost savings, and enhanced healthcare outcomes.

Conclusion and Future Directions

Qpercom's research provides a critical foundation for advancing educational and recruitment decision-making in healthcare. By continuously refining assessment methodologies and leveraging psychometric validation, the company remains at the forefront of evidence-based practice. Future directions include expanding machine learning models for predictive analytics, further integration of digital assessment platforms, and broader implementation of real-time feedback mechanisms in both education and recruitment.

In conclusion, the synergy between Qpercom's research, the University of Galway, and NHS England illustrates the tangible impact of data-driven decision-making. By reinforcing fairness, reliability, and actionable feedback, Qpercom not only enhances assessment and recruitment processes but also contributes to a higher standard of healthcare education and workforce selection.



DIGITAL BUSINESS & TECH INNOVATION

Pioneering minds: Galway CEO in the running for the 2025 European Prize for Women Innovators

BY RÓISÍN KILROY

As the digital age continues to re-define the landscape of business and technology, Irish women are making remarkable strides on the global stage, highlighting the talent, knowledge and impressive potential available on this small island, while changing the lives of people all over the world.

Living proof of this is Dr Elizabeth McGloughlin, co-founder and CEO of Galway-based company, Tympany Medical, who stands among the distinguished semi-finalists of the prestigious 2025 European Prize for Women Innovators. This esteemed prize, funded under the Horizon Europe framework, aims to celebrate exceptional female entrepreneurs whose innovations are not only transformative

but also pivotal in shaping Europe's future.

The European Commission, through the joint efforts of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) and the European Innovation Council (EIC), has unveiled 19 trailblazing women vying for top honours. **Tympany Medical - revolutionising endoscopy**

Hailing from Galway, Elizabeth McGloughlin has carved a niche in the med-tech sector with Tympany Medical. The company's groundbreaking variable angle endoscopy technology is poised to revolutionise surgical procedures, enhancing patient outcomes and streamlining healthcare efficiencies. Tympany Medical's innovation addresses critical challenges in minimally invasive surgery, offering

surgeons improved visualisation with greater flexibility, which translates to better precision and reduced recovery times for patients.

McGloughlin's journey reflects the resilience and ingenuity synonymous with Irish entrepreneurship. Under her leadership, Tympany Medical has secured significant recognition, standing as a testament to the potential of combining scientific excellence with entrepreneurial vision. Her nomination in the EIT Women Leadership category underscores not just her individual prowess but also the broader impact of her work in advancing healthcare technologies.

Speaking about her nomination, Dr McGloughlin said, "I am delighted to be amongst a group of innovative and talented women who are

driving innovation forward in Europe.

"Since the early days of Tympany Medical, EIT Health and the EIT community have been champions and supporters of our vision to disrupt minimally invasive surgery and winning this award would be a huge honour and validation of the work both myself and the team have put in to date."

Irish excellence on the European stage

While McGloughlin leads the charge, she is not the only Irish contender making waves. Rhona Togher, co-founder of Sligo-based company Lios, has also secured a semi-finalist spot in the Women Innovators category. Founded by Togher and her co-founder, Eimear O'Carroll, Lios's innovative SoundBounce material offers unprecedented acoustic performance,



Dr Elizabeth McGloughlin

providing superior noise reduction while being lighter and more versatile than traditional materials. Their technology holds transformative potential across sectors such as construction, automotive, aerospace, and consumer electronics.

The presence of multiple Irish semi-finalists highlights Ireland's dynamic ecosystem that nurtures tech innovation and female leadership. Their

achievements resonate with the European Innovation Agenda's goals of inclusivity and excellence, serving as powerful inspirations for aspiring women entrepreneurs across the continent.

A celebration of vision and impact

The European Prize for Women Innovators is more than a recognition; it is a platform that amplifies the voices and achievements of women who are breaking barriers and setting new benchmarks in their respective fields. The competition features three categories: the Women Innovators Prize, the Rising Innovators Prize for exceptional women under 35, and the EIT Women Leadership Prize.

Ekaterina Zaharieva, European Commissioner for Start-Ups, Research and Innovation, encapsulated the spirit of

the prize: "Be an example. Dream with ambition and lead with conviction." This sentiment echoes in the stories of McGloughlin, Togher, and O'Carroll, whose innovations are driving economic growth and creating meaningful societal impact.

As the finalists prepare for the European Innovation Council Summit on April 3, 2025, where the winners will be announced, Ireland watches with pride.

McGloughlin and her peers' achievements reaffirm the country's position as a hub of technological excellence and a beacon for female innovators. Their stories inspire the next generation to dream boldly and innovate fearlessly, proving that with vision and determination, Irish women can and do change the world.



Research Ireland Centre for Medical Devices
www.curamdevices.ie

Addressing chronic disease to support healthy ageing is one of the most pressing public health and economic challenges of our time. The CÚRAM Research Ireland Centre for Medical Devices, is a collaboration between ten research institutions across the island of Ireland, maintaining a core objective to "support the human experience of illness, chronic pain and ageing from birth to end of life by developing innovative medical devices".

Established in 2015 and headquartered at University of Galway, the Centre has emerged as a global leader in med-

ical device research, fostering collaboration between academia, industry, patients, healthcare professionals, and funders. It is committed to enhancing quality of life for individuals afflicted with chronic illnesses. Together, we catalyse innovation in the medical devices sector with a strong foothold in fundamental science and engineering. CÚRAM recently celebrated its tenth anniversary, and it continuously works with industry donors, foundations, and philanthropists to harness the power of its cross-sector community. Here in Galway, in the West of Ireland, we are embedded in an incredibly strong and innova-

tive MedTech ecosystem. CÚRAM offers new product introduction, device scalability, and conformance with medical device standards to its industry partners and facilitates favourable licensing terms and conditions alongside strict scientific and financial reporting structures. In this way, we ensure that new technologies progress from research to real-world medical applications, driving patient care and medical device advancements, such as pain-alleviation devices, scar-preventing implants, next-generation of neuroelectrodes, degenerated-disc repair devices, and inflammatory bowel disease treating devices.



Prof Abhay Pandit,
Founding Director
of CÚRAM.

DIGITAL BUSINESS & TECH INNOVATION

Grow Digital: A new era of support for Galway businesses

The new Grow Digital Voucher from Local Enterprise Office Galway is here. If you are ready to take the next step in your digital journey, this scheme is for you. The Grow Digital Voucher offers small and medium businesses with up to 50 employees financial support to embrace digital technology, upon completion of a digital for business report.

Businesses can avail of funding of up to €5,000 to invest in software and training/IT configuration, streamline operations and enhance productivity with new digital tools, reach new customers online, and compete effectively in today's marketplace.

For Galway businesses interested in learning more about this grant scheme, LEO Galway is hosting a free online briefing on Tuesday, February 18. This is designed to give small businesses a clear understanding of how digital tools can help streamline their operations, improve efficiency, and drive growth in key business areas.

The event will be hosted by Michael FitzGerald, founder and CEO of OnePageCRM. A multidisciplinary

engineer by profession and a product guy at heart, Michael works closely with all stakeholders, from users to developers, making sure the operations stay agile and the product, effective.

The event will also feature an overview of the digital supports available from LEO - aligned to improve internal processes/operations, details on eligibility for the €5,000 Grow Digital Voucher and next steps for your business on its digital journey.

Book your free place today at bit.ly/growdigitalgalway or email the LEO Galway team at info@leo.galwaycoco.ie if you have any questions.

Meanwhile, LEO Galway is currently preparing a varied programme of events to mark the annual Local Enterprise Week - with events for small businesses across the city and county.

Visit localenterprise.ie/Galway or follow LEO Galway's social media channels for details and booking information



Pictured: Liam Hanrahan, Director of Services - Economic Development & Planning, Caroline McDonagh and Noreen Donohue, LEO Galway and Liam Conneally, Chief Executive, Galway County Council.

Galway businesses compete for Digital Business Awards Ireland

Galway's digital industry is buzzing with excitement following the news that several local businesses have been shortlisted for the 2025 National Digital Awards, organised by Digital Business Ireland.

Underscoring Galway's burgeoning reputation as a hub for digital innovation and e-commerce excellence, the three Galway-based nominees; Ahascragh Distillery, Cúla 4 and the Galway Races are in the running for four awards at the upcoming event.

The National Digital Awards aim to celebrate businesses, organisations, and individuals leading the way in digital innovation across Ireland. This year, the competition was fierce, with hundreds of entries vying for recognition across multiple categories.

Galway Races

Among the esteemed finalists is the Galway Races, which has been named as a finalist in the Digital Business Awards Marketing Campaign of the Year for the second consecutive year. Recognised for its innovative approach to integrating technology with tradition.

Following the announcement, the Galway Races team took to Instagram to share their joy, writing, "This recognition means so much to us as it highlights the hard work, creativity and passion that goes into our marketing efforts during the racing season."

Ahascragh Distillery

In the running for website-based awards at

the event this year, the Ahascragh Distillery has been announced as a finalist in the 'Most Trusted Website of the Year' and 'New Website of the Year' categories at this year's event.

Ahascragh Distillery is 'committed to crafting innovative and sustainable spirits.

Cúla4

Also in the running for the 'New Website of the Year' award is Cúla4. Launched in 2024 by Irish language media outlet TG4, the Cúla4 Channel attracted a 'global audience' in its first year, resulting in an 18 per cent increase in viewership on the Cúla4 player.

In addition to increased online streaming, Cúla4's new website welcomed 1.7 million visitors in 2024, with an average engagement time of 20 minutes per engaged user.

Driving innovation

The recognition of these Galway businesses at the National Digital Awards not only brings pride to the local community but also reinforces the city's position as a leader in digital transformation. As the digital landscape continues to evolve, Galway's enterprises are at the forefront, driving innovation and setting standards for others to follow.

The winners will be announced at a gala event at Twenty Two nightclub, St Anne's St, Dublin on Thursday, March 27.

Regardless of the outcome, the achievements of these Galway businesses serve as a testament to the city's dynamic and innovative spirit in the digital age.

Oifig Fiontair Áitiúil
Local Enterprise Office
Gaillimh · Galway

GROW DIGITAL

A NEW ERA OF SUPPORT

18th February
11am
Online

BOOK NOW

With Michael FitzGerald founder and CEO of OnePageCRM

Join our free online briefing on Tuesday, 18th February

This briefing is designed to give small businesses a clear understanding of how digital tools can help streamline their operations, improve efficiency, and drive growth in key business areas!



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council



Comhairle Cathrach
na Gaillimhe
Galway City Council



DIGITAL BUSINESS & TECH INNOVATION



€2.5 million funding helps to future-proof digital innovation in Galway

BY RÓISÍN KILROY

Galway's reputation as a hub for digital business and tech innovation has received a significant boost with the recent announcement of €2.5 million in funding for 28 industry-focused research fellowships.

Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, James Lawless TD, unveiled the investment as part of the Research Ireland Industry Research, Development, and Innovation Fellowship (IRDIF) Programme, signalling a strong commitment to fostering cutting-edge research with real-world impact.

The funding will support researchers undertaking placements in 22 companies, both domestic and international, with

projects spanning artificial intelligence, sustainable energy, healthcare, and more. Notably, University of Galway is among the eight higher education institutions participating, cementing the city's role at the heart of Ireland's knowledge economy.

Bridging academia and industry

"The IRDIF Programme exemplifies how academic research can be seamlessly integrated with industry expertise to address pressing challenges," said Minister Lawless. "These fellowships will not only advance critical research but also drive societal and economic growth through innovation."

The initiative fosters dynamic partnerships, with industry collaborators contributing over €1.7 million in co-funding. This synergy

ensures that researchers bring fresh academic insights to the table while gaining invaluable industry experience that enhances their professional development.

Celine Fitzgerald, interim CEO of Research Ireland, highlighted the programme's role in boosting Ireland's competitive edge, saying, "We are delighted to facilitate these collaborations, which are pivotal in translating academic excellence into tangible industry benefits."

Pioneering projects with global impact

Among the projects funded, several stand out for their innovative potential:

Smarter AI for Safer Digital Spaces: In partnership with Workday, researchers are developing AI systems capable of swiftly detecting harmful content, reducing reliance on human

moderation and enhancing online safety.

Eco-Friendly Solar Tech: Collaborating with Kastus Technologies, a project focuses on creating cost-effective, self-cleaning coatings for solar panels, improving energy efficiency and reducing maintenance costs.

Addressing Male Infertility: BD Research Centre Ireland is backing the development of a cutting-edge cell-sorting system to tackle male infertility, promising new hope for affected individuals.

Climate Resilience Tools: Climate Matters is working with researchers to create climate risk intelligence tools for safeguarding critical infrastructure against environmental threats.

Sustainable Dairy Innovations: A partnership with Arrabawn Co-Operative

Ltd. aims to convert dairy processing by-products into eco-friendly phosphate supplements, showcasing Ireland's leadership in sustainable agri-tech.

Galway's role in Ireland's tech ecosystem

Galway's vibrant tech ecosystem is well-represented among the programme's participants, with companies like Mirai Medical Limited and HT Materials Science leading projects in medical technology and advanced materials. The city's dynamic blend of academic prowess and entrepreneurial spirit makes it a fertile ground for such pioneering initiatives.

The fellowships, lasting between 12 and 24 months, are set to produce significant contributions not just to individual industries but to Ireland's broader research



and innovation landscape. As Research Ireland prepares to open new funding opportunities in 2025, the future looks bright for Galway's place on the global tech stage.

With this latest investment, Galway continues to solidify its status as a cornerstone of Ireland's digital business and tech innovation, bridging the gap between groundbreaking research and transformative real-world applications.

Galway's Nua Surgical secures €6.5M funding for 'groundbreaking' c-section device

BY RÓISÍN KILROY

Galway-based medical device company Nua Surgical has announced the closure of its €6.5 million funding round for its innovative SteriCISION® C-Section Retractor.

According to product designers, Nua Surgical, the funding will be used to support manufacturing, testing, regulatory clearance, and the initial market launch of the device, which is designed to address the unique challenges of Caesarean section surgery.

The financing round was led by EQT Life Sciences, one of Europe's largest venture capital investors, with support from Texas Medical Center Venture Fund, Kidron Capital, and existing backers including Enterprise Ireland and 'seasoned business figures from Ireland and the US'.

A game-changer in maternal health

Caesarean sections are the most common major surgical procedure globally, with over 30 million performed annually. Described as the



Nua Surgical Founders Padraig Maher, Marie-Therese Maher and Barry McCann.
Photo Credit: Andrew Downes/ XPOSURE.

first self-retaining surgical retractor specifically designed for the distinct demands of C-section procedures, the SteriCISION® C-Section Retractor has been labelled a 'game-changer' in maternal health.

Ergonomically designed, the patented device offers 'fast, adjustable and secure retraction', which allows doctors to deliver babies more efficiently, while also managing 'tissue repairs effectively and identifying

bleeds promptly'.

As a single-use sterile device, SteriCISION® aims to mitigate risks associated with surgical complications, ultimately benefiting patients, healthcare providers, and the broader

healthcare system. According to the company, this fresh investment will enable Nua Surgical to expand its team, establish manufacturing operations in Ireland, and navigate the regulatory pathways necessary to achieve FDA clearance.

Leadership and investor confidence

Following the announcement Barry McCann, CEO of Nua Surgical, said, "Securing this Series A financing is a crucial milestone for Nua Surgical. It not only provides the capital needed to advance our product but also brings on board a group of experienced investors who share our vision for transforming maternal health. We are eager to leverage their expertise as we move towards commercialising SteriCISION®."

Expressing confidence in the company's potential, Anne Portwich, partner at EQT Life Sciences, said, "Nua Surgical's SteriCISION® C-Section Retractor has the potential to significantly enhance outcomes for mothers undergoing

C-Section procedures.

"We are excited to support the company's journey towards market entry. This innovative device shows promise in potentially improving the quality of care and reducing healthcare costs, making it a perfect fit for our EQT Health Economics strategy."

Strengthening governance with female leadership

The new funding round also brings changes to Nua Surgical's board. Anne Portwich of EQT and Anula Jayasuriya, Co-Founder of Kidron Capital, will join as Board Directors, while Gabrielle Guttman from TMC Venture Fund and Prashanthi Ramesh of EQT will serve as Board Observers. Their expertise is expected to bolster the company's strategic direction as it moves towards commercialisation.

With this investment, Nua Surgical is set to play a pivotal role in advancing maternal health, positioning Galway as a key player in the global medtech landscape.