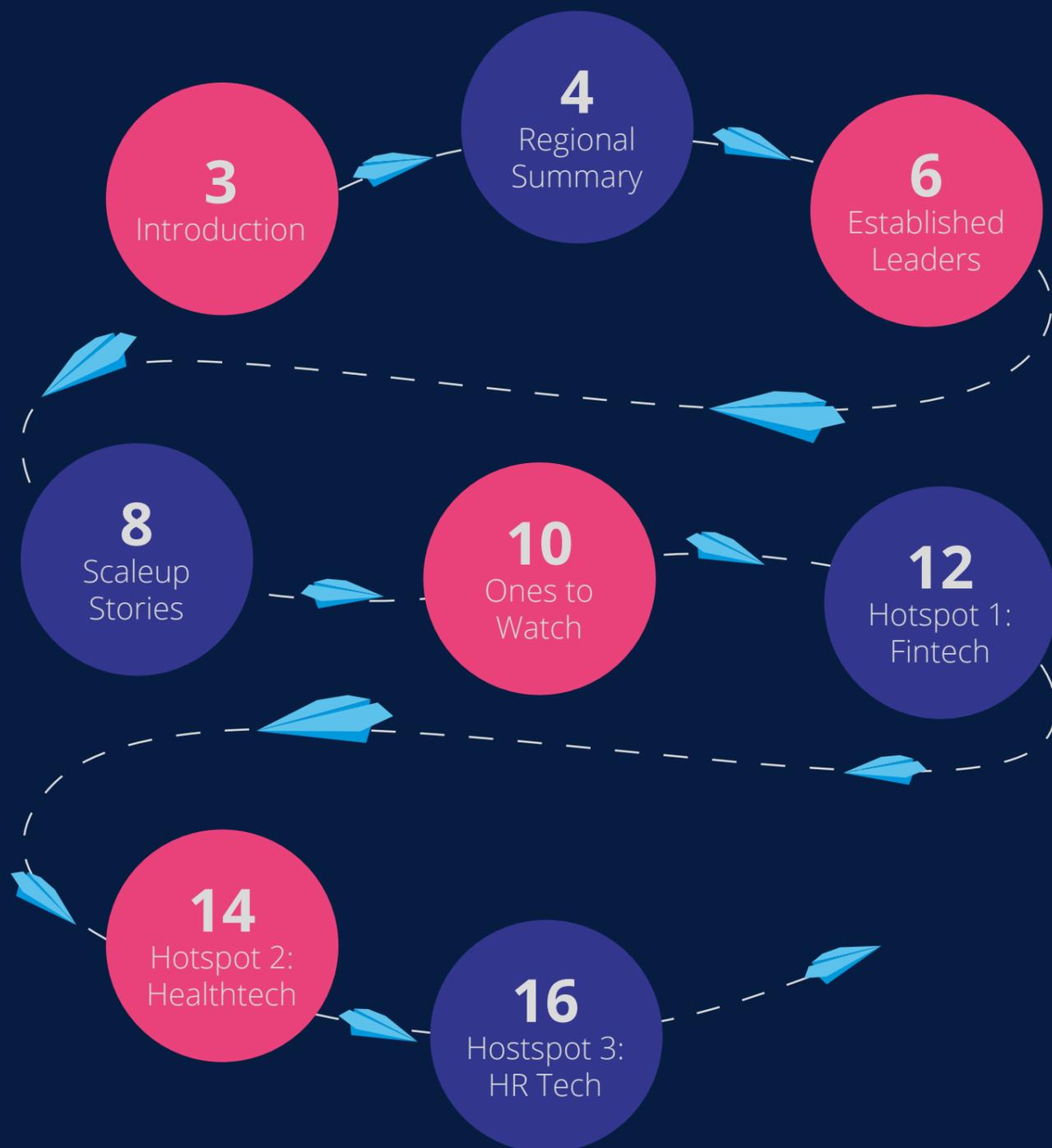


12 Clusters of Tech

East Midlands



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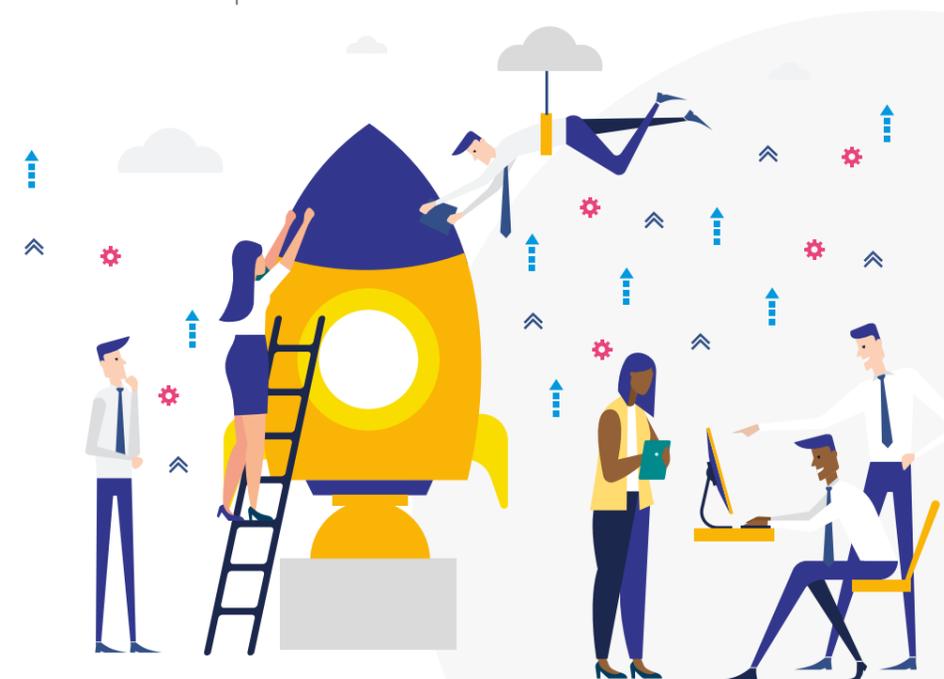


12 Clusters of Tech

September 2020 – August 2021

Introduction

This is the story of technology in the UK. Over 12 months, [London Tech Week](#) and [UK Tech Cluster Group](#) will explore the unique ecosystems and tech trends in every region of the UK. From space tech in the South West to cybersecurity in Northern Ireland, 12 Clusters of Tech charts the companies, sectors and case studies that make up the entire UK tech landscape.



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Summary



The East Midlands is establishing itself as an exciting region for technology, building on its history of innovation as an industrial powerhouse.

The East Midlands has an established place in history through its continued innovation. From being home to the world's first factory, the discovery of silicon and pioneering research into genetics and semiconductors, the region has a history of excellence from which to forge its future.

Today the region's robust engineering and manufacturing industry sits alongside a newer, growing cluster of technological excellence. Modern specialties in HealthTech, HRTech and FinTech are grounded in the region's roots, while pioneering new pathways for the future.

Home to some of the biggest name brands, with the likes of Rolls Royce, Toyota, Next, Experian, Boots and Specsavers all based in the region, the East Midlands power base employs a significant number of tech professionals on their own, underpinning an ecosystem of talent in the region.

With the relative closeness of its key cities in Nottingham, Derby, Lincoln and Leicester, there's a unique connectedness to the cluster that sees talent spread across the area regardless of a company's main office location. This provides opportunities for tech and digital business not just in the cities themselves, but throughout the surrounding area and places the East Midlands in a position of privilege as post-pandemic working trends are established.

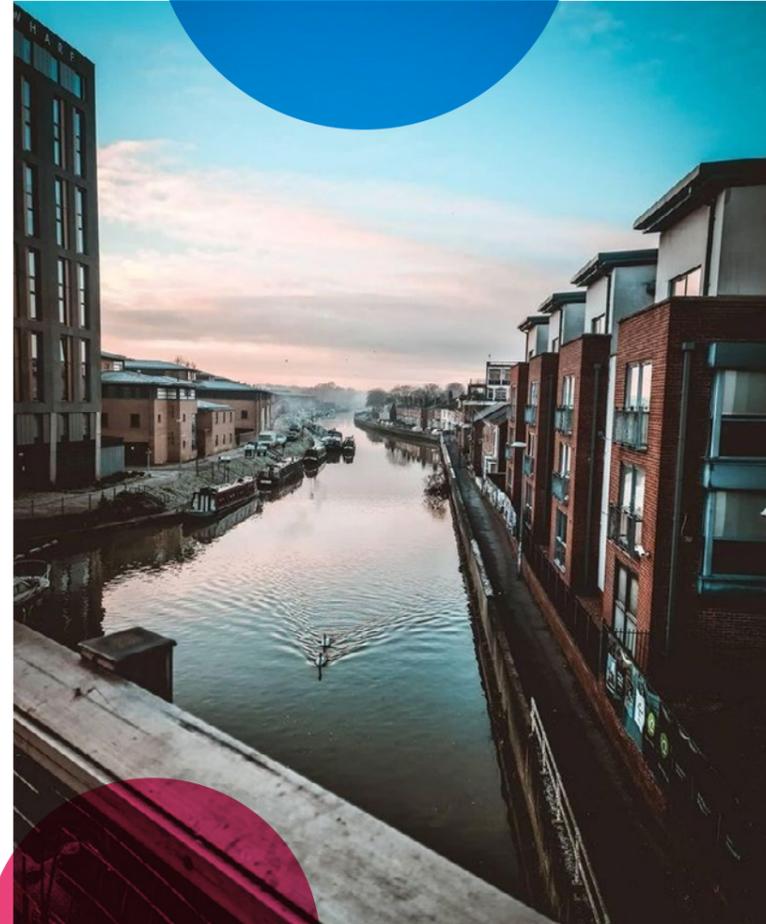
One of the main drivers of the region's talent pool are its lauded universities, with seven institutions across Leicester, Loughborough, Derby, Northampton and Nottingham

producing high-quality graduates and conducting relevant research. This means that there's a deep pool of new talent in the region to add to the experience of its more established global brands.

Universities also provide important access to a range of business support programs for newer companies such as the University of Leicester's Start-Up seed fund, Loughborough University's Global Disability Innovation Hub and Advanced Technology Innovation Centre, Nottingham Trent University's upcoming Dryden Enterprise Centre and the University of Nottingham's Ingenuity Lab and Technology Venture Fund which currently has 24 spin-outs in its portfolio.

While the wealth of support on offer to tech businesses is significant, it's in one area in particular that the East Midlands is positioned to lead. Across the broader disciplines of healthtech, be it wearables, biotech or medtech there's a marked specialisation in the region. Both Nottingham Universities partner on the BioCity incubator and accelerator, as well as with Boots on Medicity incubator, while the NHS-backed East Midlands Academic Health Science Network that provides innovation pathways through accelerator programs, grants and funding.

The East Midlands is a thriving mix of the new and established, and investor confidence in the region proves it. According to Beauheurst there have been 353 announced and 678 unannounced deals across the region since January 2011, with 2020 seeing a 300% increase in investment from the previous year.



Established Leaders

The East Midlands boasts some of the UK's leading tech companies, whose brands evoke 'quality' across the globe. They're connected into a region with a strong industrial and engineering heritage to build a highly skilled technical workforce.

It's hardly a surprise that the East Midlands appeals to so many organisations, with its strong links to the rest of the UK by road and rail, as well as East Midlands Airport cleverly situated at the centre of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham.

The interconnectedness of the region is one of the main reasons for its success, alongside the natural beauty of the area and the relative low cost of living there's no reason to look elsewhere!



Boots

www.boots.com

Location: Nottingham

Established: 1849

Boots has been a part of Nottinghamshire since 1849, and now employs hundreds of tech and digital professionals in the region. The retailer has also become a leader in East Midlands healthtech since then housing the MediCity incubator at its head office and announcing plans for a new £8m Medtech hub this year.



"Our vision is to create a UK centre in health, beauty and wellbeing in Nottingham... to create a vibrant business site that will improve the local economy and allow a number of start-ups and small and medium enterprises to develop and grow. (it's part of our ongoing commitment to innovation and being an incubator for young businesses in the East Midlands.)"

Mark Chivers, Director of the Nottingham Enterprise Zone, Boots UK

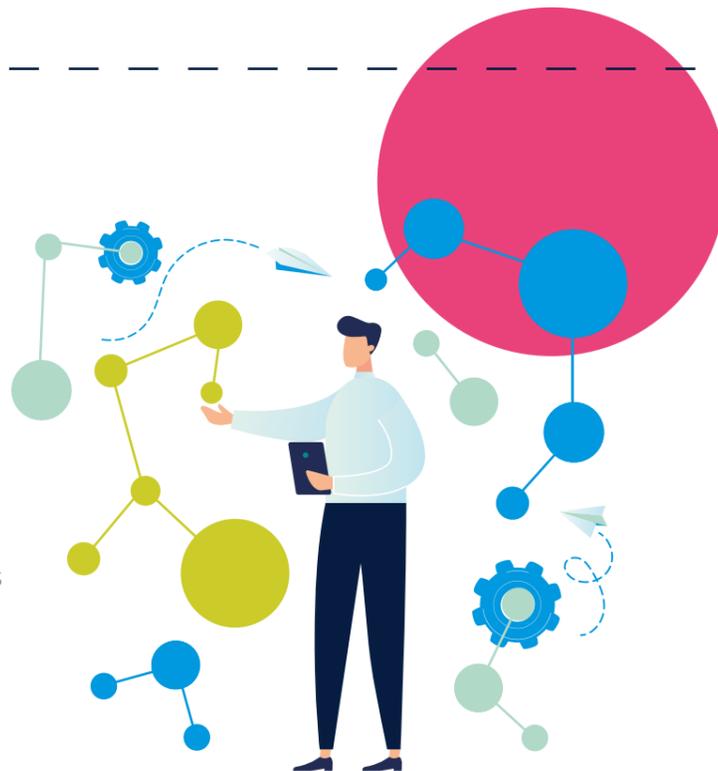
Experian

www.experian.co.uk

Location: Nottingham

Established: 1996

Experian's roots in Nottingham stretch back to 1980, long before the company we know today was formed in 1996. One of the 'big three' credit-reporting agencies, Experian collects and aggregates information for over 1 billion people and businesses worldwide and sits firmly on the FTSE 100 list.



"Nottingham is an ideal location ... At a time of change, the region needs to work harder to promote its strengths – its national significance in life sciences and a strength in tech could be developed into a Silicon Valley of the Midlands."

Sir John Peace, Founder, Experian.

MHR

www.mhrglobal.com/uk/en

Location: Nottingham

Established: 1984

MHR is another homegrown success story for the East Midlands. Founded in 1984, the Ruddington-based HRTech company provides software and services for HR, recruitment, payroll and business analytics. Working with more than 1000 companies worldwide, they practice what they preach with more than 50% of their employees working there over 10 years.



"We are completely committed to supporting our customers during this difficult time and have introduced support mechanisms for them to be able to continue to run their critical HR and payroll processes. This is in tandem with developing an exciting roadmap of innovative new services and products to support them in the future."

Rebecca Mills, Chair, MHR

Scaleup

Stories

The East Midlands' current generation of scaleups represent the diversity of the cluster's tech talent as they encompass sectors as disparate as Gaming, Biotech, HR Tech, HealthTech, InsurTech, AdTech and more. There's a strength in depth to the area's latest generation that's sure to spur the East Midlands on as a Tech Hub in the coming years.

Just the few included here represent over £40m in raised investment between them and have already achieved national and global recognition for their efforts.



Lockwood Publishing

www.lockwoodpublishing.com

Location: Nottingham

Established: 2009

Founded in 2009 Lockwood Publishing is the development studio behind Avakin Life, the hit 3D virtual and social world for mobile. Lockwood employs over 100 people in the region and raised almost £20m in the last year, meaning they're on their way to being the regions next great success story.



Nottingham has a fantastic human resource and some amazing people who come from Nottingham... The size of the city is fantastic, there's a really create balance of businesses so it's great."

Halli Bjornsson, CEO, Lockwood Publishing



DeadHappy

www.deadhappy.com

Location: Leicester

Established: 2012

DeadHappy have made the headlines thanks to its disruptive pay-as-you-go insurance tech and controversial adverts promoting its 'Death Wish' products. It doesn't seem to have put investors off though as the company secured £4.75m in the last 12 months, and over £10m since 2013 drawing on the strong talent in the region to build a somewhat scary scaleup.



"East Midlands has proved a supportive environment for Software developers. In Leicester alone, we have two universities with innovation hubs and Leicester Start-Ups developing talented individuals. This creates communities of talent that we have drawn on to build our engineering base."

Phil Zeidler, co-founder of DeadHappy



Adzooma

www.adzooma.com

Location: Nottingham

Established: 2015

Nottingham-based Adzooma raised £2.85m this year to add to their £9.35m total since they were established in 2015. The marketing platform allows users to track all their campaign analytics across multiple platforms like Microsoft, Google and Facebook Ads so that marketers only need one login to make real time changes.



Ones to Watch



The East Midlands tradition of industry is built on their willingness to embrace the latest pioneering trends and technologies. With established global brands investing in the region alongside the support from many quality academic institutions, startup culture is able to thrive here.

University and industry backed accelerators, incubators and coworking hubs sit alongside the independent and community organisations in the region to create an ideal environment to grow a company. The region that birthed Boots in 1849 is just as capable of growing a brand as it ever was.

BlueSkeye AI

www.blueskeye.com

Location: Asby de la zouchm

Established: 2019

BlueSkeye AI spun out of the University of Nottingham in 2019 as a healthtech startup using AI, machine learning and face analysis for behaviomedics. It provides solutions for clinical diagnostics, monitoring and treatment as well as health and wellbeing, OEM and software integration. BlueSkeye also takes on bespoke research for clients.



“Founded in April 2019 as a spinout from the University of Nottingham, BlueSkeye AI was born out of the desire of its founders for their research to do real good and have an impact in our world.”

Professor Michel Valstar, Founder & Co-CEO, BlueSkeye AI

Felloh!

www.felloh.org

Location: Grantham

Established: 2020

Felloh! Is a Fintech startup that's proud to be a part of the East Midlands tech community. Having developed a range of payment processing solutions for the travel industry, the young company has already secured £4.48m in investment in its first year, making them a certain one to watch.



“If you like fresh air, affordable houses, great schools, tech talent and easy access to the rest of the country check out the East Midlands, a great place to start a business.”

Will Bicknell, Founder & CEO, Felloh!



Did you know?

\$396M
INVESTED
IN THE LAST
5 YEARS
(DEALROOM)

StaffCircle

www.staffcircle.com

Location: Leicester

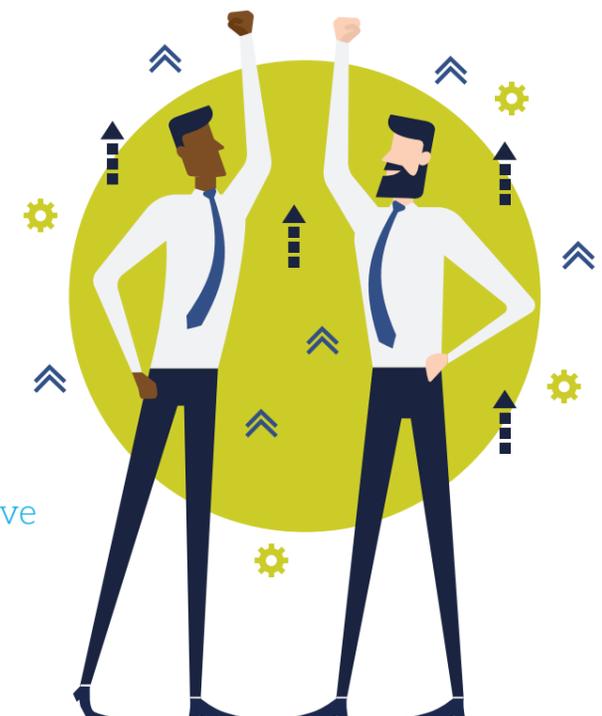
Established: 2016

StaffCircle are another of the region's successful raisers in the last 12 month, drawing just over £1.5m in investment. The HRTech startup, founded in 2016 by serial entrepreneur Mark Seeman, has created an all-in-one culture, comms and performance management software to streamline business.



“Over the last 20 years I've built 4 software businesses, 3 of which have been acquired. I've found Leicester to be a great place to start tech businesses because there is great access to talent and also funding.”

Mark Seeman, Founder & CEO, StaffCircle

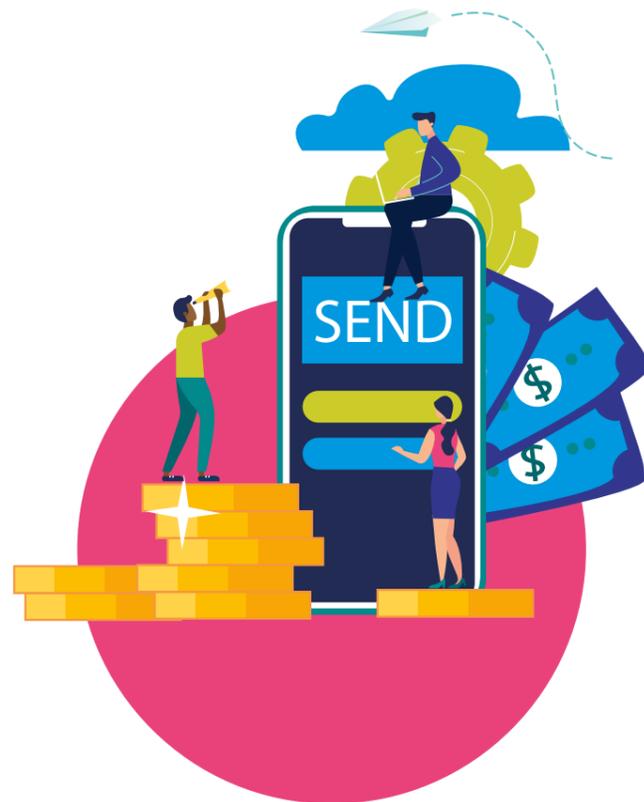


Hotspot 1

Fintech

With the likes of Experian and Capital One in the region, it's no surprise that there's a strong FinTech cluster in the East Midlands. These global giants sit alongside established SMEs and scaleups as well as startups and bootstrapped success stories.

The variety of specialisation within FinTech is a particularly interesting feature, taking in insurance, regulation and payment processing. It speaks to the depth of the skill base that can support such a specialised industry.



E-Bate

www.e-bate.io

Location: Charnwood

Established: 2018

Leicestershire-based E-Bate provides an end-to-end SaaS rebate management platform for companies. By combining strategic advice from rebate professionals with client focused processes and a digital rebate management solution, E-Bate has gone from strength to strength in the East Midlands.



"The East Midlands is a great place to start a business, bringing parity to the regions is important to sustain economic growth outside of the mega cities. You have great accessibility countrywide and international via road, rail and air. Attracting talent is becoming easier as remote / flexible working becomes the norm."

Leanne Bonner-Cooke MBE,
Founder & CEO, E-Bate

Ideagen

www.ideagen.com

Location: Ruddington

Established: 1993

Ideagen specialises in regulation, providing software and services to organisations operating within highly regulated industries. In just the past year the Ruddington-based company secured almost £50m in investment and acquired the highly-rated secure collaboration business Huddle.



"I am extremely grateful to the team at Ideagen for their dedication and support throughout this year. I am very proud of what we have all achieved this year and look forward to more success ahead."

Ben Dorks, CEO, Ideagen



Tebex

www.tebex.io

Location: Nottingham

Established: 2011

Tebex provides payment processing solutions for game developers and gamers, helping them to monetise their community-led servers. Founded by Lee McNeil from his bedroom at the age of 16, 10 years on Tebex has its own payment platform and has processed well over \$500m so far.



"We only launched Tebex Checkout at the start of September after strenuous testing and research but in that short time we have paid out just over \$2m to the creators on our platform."

Lee McNeil Founder & CEO, Tebex



Did you know?

300% INCREASE
IN INVESTMENT OVER
THE PREVIOUS YEAR
(DEALROOM)

Hotspot 2

Healthtech

The East Midlands has long had a robust healthtech hub to boast about, with the support of large corporations like Boots as well as from academia, with particular focus from the University of Nottingham and Nottingham Trent University, there is a production line of talent and exciting spin-outs in the region.

With incubators and accelerators geared towards the pharmaceutical industry, biotech and medtech the East Midlands plays host to a number of varied organisations that span wearables, software and clinical support. This is an area of deep focus that sees the region amongst the national leaders in the sector.



Did you know?

**£99M RAISED
BY TECH BUSINESSES
IN 2020
(DEALROOM)**

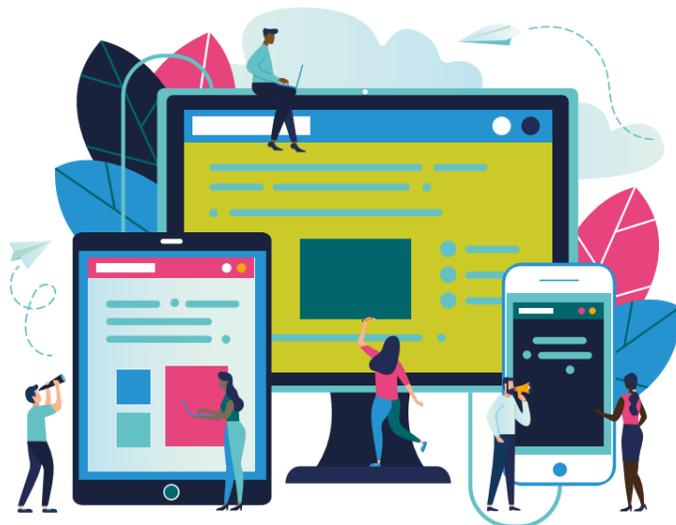
Streets Heaver

www.streets-heaver.com

Location: Lincoln

Established: 1986

Streets Heaver is an established presence in East Midlands Healthtech. The company's hospital management system, Compucare, is in use at 9 of the top 10 earning NHS Trusts as well as in private healthcare, with their staff focused on supporting healthcare in the past year.



"It's inspiring to see how well our staff have taken the current adversity in their stride and have adapted to the situation. This has given us great confidence to think bigger on how we can become even more employee centric."

Paul Heaver, Managing Director, Streets Heaver

Pharmaseal

www.pharmaseal.co

Location: Nottingham

Established: 2016

Pharmaseal sits at the intersection of the East Midlands overlapping HealthTech cluster, as the company's Engility platform provides clinical trial management and governance solutions for clinical trials. The community may well agree with that, as Pharmaseal raised over £500K in their crowdfunding campaign this year.



"We have the vision to create smarter technologies for the improvement of human health and we are excited to see what possibilities emerge from this collaboration for transforming the future of healthcare."

Daljit Cheema, Founder & CEO, Pharmaseal



Tended

www.tended.co.uk

Location: Lincoln

Established: 2016

Tended combines wearable technology with behavioural psychology to connect and protect workforces. Utilising AI alongside behavioural science, Tended's wearables deliver real time insights to employers while ensuring the mental and physical wellbeing of employees.



"We're proud to be part of the growing tech ecosystem in the East Midlands. The region is undergoing a huge transformation that is accelerating its economic growth and status as a prosperous place for people to work, study and live. In turn, this has helped us forge long-lasting relationships with investors and commercial partners."

Leo Scott Smith, Founder & CEO, Tended

Hotspot 3

HR Tech

HR Tech is a sector in which the East Midlands seems to consistently produce, and attract impressive companies. The established leader in the region, MHR, was this year officially joined by unicorn company The Access Group as they established their headquarters in Loughborough.

It's a cluster built the old fashioned way, by simply producing specialised tech businesses consistently over many years. HR Tech is a sector that the East Midlands isn't just primed for the future, but in which the region is already an established player.



The Access Group

www.theaccessgroup.com

Location: Leicester

Established: 1991

The Access Group provides business management software to mid-size companies. They're a major tech employer across the region and have established a new 109,000 sq ft HQ at the Loughborough and Leicester Science and Innovation Enterprise Zone.



"We're looking forward to being part of the future expansion and moving into our new office HQ in the early part of 2021. The Board and our teams are excited to make the building our new home."

Chris Marjara, Chief Marketing Officer, The Access Group



e-days

www.e-days.com

Location: Nottingham

Established: 2004

e-days provides an online system leave tracking & absence management that can be accessed directly through a web browser. With over 1,500 clients and more than 250,000 users globally.



Activ8 Intelligence

www.activ8intelligence.com

Location: Derby

Established: 2005

Activ8 Intelligence developed its Illumin8HR product to provide insight and analysis on disparate elements of HR practice to supply HR professionals with timely, relevant insights that need action.



"The East Midlands is a fantastic place for tech business. When we look at Nottingham in particular, which is where e-days is headquartered, there is a cohesive, growing tech community, a strong cultural identity and two world-class universities that are attracting STEM students from around the globe. HR tech has a strong presence in the area, but it's also home to all manner of innovative tech, and that's down to the strong tech community that is only continuing to grow."

Steve Arnold, Founder & CRO, e-days

Did you know?

55,000+
PEOPLE WORKING
IN THE TECH AND
DIGITAL SECTOR
(ONS)

2020 – 2021

12 months.

12 Clusters.

The whole of UK tech.

