

12 July 2007

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## **High-tech companies in the West Midlands are urged to join the region's technological revolution**

INNOVATIVE high-tech companies in the West Midlands are being urged by industry leaders to step forward and take part in the prestigious 2007 West Midlands ICT Excellence Awards.

The ICT Cluster is especially pinning its hopes on Birmingham's high-tech hotbed such as Aston Science Park to bring success to the borough in this year's competition.

The awards are designed to recognise the talents of the region's growing ICT (Information Communication Technology) sector, and will be presented during an evening drinks reception at the National Motorcycle Museum on 22 November 2007.

A showcase for the industry's high-fliers, the 2007 awards are expected to attract a record number of companies eager to be crowned regional champion.

Open to any West Midlands technology SME company, a £2,000 prize fund and handmade trophy is up for grabs.

Hosted by Scott Dodds, General Director of Microsoft Small Business Division, the awards are considered as the calendar event for the region's ICT industry and coincide with the West Midlands ICT Annual Conference.

Categories in this year's awards include ICT Excellence in Innovation (Product), ICT Excellence in Innovation (Service), ICT Excellence in Public Sector ICT Projects, ICT Excellence in Skills and

ICT Excellence in Creative Partnerships, with an overall champion being selected from the winners of each of the five categories.

Since the launch of the event in 2005, the winners of previous ICT Cluster award ceremonies have benefited from an increased portfolio of clients, improved marketing exposure, recognition from peers in the industry and offers of funding.

Fledgling and successful small to medium sized businesses looking to expand and promote their products and services are being urged to submit an application and put their business in contention for regional recognition before the end of summer.

The deadline for entries is 28 September 2007.

Mike Musson, ICT Cluster Manager urged competitors not to leave it too late.

"The competition this year promises to be stiff as our region's technology sector develops and innovative companies spring up in all sectors including wireless, software, e-business, photonics and open source. We welcome all entrants and encourage all technology based SMEs to participate to gain valuable recognition for the incredible work done in this region."

To take part in these prestigious awards, companies must register as soon as possible and can do so by completing an award application form at [www.wmictcluster.org](http://www.wmictcluster.org), or for more information on how to enter please contact [mike.musson@advantagewm.co.uk](mailto:mike.musson@advantagewm.co.uk).

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#### **Notes to Editors:**

#### **About ICT Cluster**

The ICT Cluster is one of ten clusters established by Advantage West Midlands as part of its economic development strategy. These clusters have been chosen on the basis of their current strength in the region and their potential to create jobs and economic growth.

The ICT Cluster will be hosting the Annual West Midlands ICT Conference and ICT Excellence Awards on 22 November 2007.

Advantage West Midlands is one of nine Regional Development Agencies in England whose role is to provide leadership and action to create more, better jobs and in improve the quality of life for all in the West Midlands.

### **About the 2007 ICT Conference**

The ICT Conference is orchestrated by Advantage West Midlands to give SMEs the opportunity to better understand the benefits ICT can make to a business.

The conference programme will provide access to technology partners, thought leaders and business innovators and opportunities to hear from organisations from the West Midlands SME sector sharing their successes and failures. There will also be a practical session focusing on Business Innovation through ICT which will look at real technology application for business success.

Other sessions will be held on marketing, funding, networking, sales, digital and creative media, RFID and mobile computing.

Sponsorship packages are available for this conference, for further information please contact [kylie.smith@ncc.co.uk](mailto:kylie.smith@ncc.co.uk).

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