



The Regional  
Leader  
for Developing  
Economic  
Prosperity

News Release

---

**4 June 2007**

---

## **Groundbreaking collaboration brings West Midlands universities together to build a region of innovation**

In a major move to accelerate the region's technology sector, the West Midlands ICT Cluster is bringing together all ICT related West Midlands universities by launching a series of university based ICT Innovation Clubs. From Warwick to Keele, 75% of the region's universities are joining together to establish eight ICT Innovation Clubs. These Clubs will link up technology businesses, end users and academics to reach the common goal of encouraging technology innovation in the West Midlands.

Technology-based small to medium sized companies (SMEs) have traditionally achieved good results through collaboration with universities. With over 693 ICT academics who can potentially benefit 3000+ technology SMEs in the West Midlands, the ICT Innovation Clubs will give companies unprecedented access to the region's universities for innovation support, specialist facilities and expertise.

The ICT Innovation Clubs are part of a larger initiative to create successful technology companies which can operate on a national and global scale. Initially, the ICT Innovation Clubs will focus on developing products or services that will help to grow the regional technology sector with individual universities playing to their strengths.

Each club will cover a specific sector of expertise ranging from e-business to open source and hold two initial networking meetings from June 2007 – January 2008. Universities involved are Aston,

3 Priestley Wharf, Holt Street, Aston Science Park,  
Birmingham, United Kingdom, B7 4BN  
Tel +44 (0)121 380 3500 Fax +44 (0)121 380 3501  
[www.advantagewm.co.uk](http://www.advantagewm.co.uk)

Birmingham, Coventry, Keele, Stafford, University of Central England (UCE), Warwick, Wolverhampton and Worcester.

ICT Cluster Manager, Mike Musson said of the initiative: 'The ICT Innovation Clubs will unlock the assistance available to SMEs from their local universities and for the first time bring academics and business people from technology companies together on a region-wide scale.

'The ICT Cluster believes that stronger university-business links are essential to creating a thriving technology sector in the West Midlands. Technology and innovation are at the heart of our strategy and this initiative complements existing projects run by the ICT Cluster,' he added.

Bob Boyd, CEO of WMita, said: 'The ICT Innovation Clubs will exploit their close ties with the ICT Technology supplier network of the West Midlands IT Association (WMita). WMita branches are keen to participate in all the Innovation Clubs, and involve not only our SME membership, but also our extensive partner and affiliate members.'

Pat Costello, West Midlands ICT Cluster Innovation Manager said: 'Collaboration is already a natural and integral part of higher education and by extending our knowledge and resources to the region's budding enterprises, we are in a win-win situation: West Midlands businesses grow our regional economy by using the expertise of world class academics and our academics can put their knowledge to commercial use.

The eight ICT Innovation Clubs comprise:

The e-Business for Business (eB4B) Innovation Club facilitated by the National B2B Centre, based at The University of Warwick and the University of Worcester Business School. The Club's focus is on the business issues of marketing, knowledge management and business strategy, together with e-business disciplines of e-marketing, e-commerce, collaborative working and e-marketplaces.

Stafford University will host the Connectivity for Business ICT Innovation Club and focus on computer networks and interconnectivity.

The Medical Technologies ICT Innovation Club will focus on medical research and clinical applications. Aston University will promote technologies including medical imaging, bioinformatics,

and clinical decision support systems. The club will complement, and link with, the West Midlands i-Health Network led by MedilinkWM.

The Creativity, Media and Technology (CMT) ICT Innovation Club, which is facilitated by the University of Wolverhampton, will cover interests as diverse as advertising, film and video, interactive software, games and learning, electronic publishing, design and broadcast, television and radio design and production.

Club Wireless will work to create products or services which use wireless technology. Led by Coventry University, the club brings together both users and suppliers of wireless technologies. The key area of focus will be: Wireless Networks, Innovative Use of Mobile Technology, RFID, New Wireless Technology, WIMAX and Locations based systems.

UCE is hosting the Open Source Technologies Innovation Club, which highlights the university's expertise in one of the most widely used technology in the SME sector.

The Intelligent ICT Solutions Innovation Club is based at the University of Birmingham and will explore the use of ICT solutions for some of the West Midlands key industrial sectors including: transport and logistics, the creative industry and games, manufacturing and engineering, and forensics and security.

The Information Brokerage Software Innovation Club will be based at Keele University and its focus is the software engineering need of West Midlands companies.

For further information on the ICT Innovation Clubs, please visit the ICT Cluster website, [www.wmictcluster.org](http://www.wmictcluster.org) or contact Pat Costello, WM ICT Cluster Innovation Manager, 01902 321829 [p.costello@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:p.costello@wlv.ac.uk)

-END-

**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.

For more media information please contact Ranbir Sahota, Vitis PR on 0870 8965448 or 07815 090036