

# DRAFT Executive Summary Evaluation of the Digital Advantage Lancashire Programme.

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## **Executive Summary**

Digital Advantage is a digital skills and entrepreneurship programme designed to equip young people with the core digital and employability skills that they will need to succeed in the context of the ongoing digital revolution, and help bridge the gap between the classroom and the world of work. The programme is delivered through an innovative pop-up digital agency in schools/colleges. It brings industry practitioners and experts into the classroom to work with teams of young people to design, plan and develop a digital business proposition in the form of the 3 minute film, website, business model and marketing campaign.

The programme aims to:

- bridge the skills gap between school and college leavers and the employability requirements of industry
- improve the digital skills, capabilities and creative mindsets of young people
- develop a deeper awareness of the CDI sector and stimulate the talent pipeline for Creative and Digital Apprenticeships across Lancashire.

Digital Advantage Lancashire ran from October 2017 to March 2018 in 11 schools and colleges across Lancashire. This year it reached 220 students and worked with two SEND Groups. It was jointly funded by Lancashire LEP and Careers and Enterprise Company (CEF16).

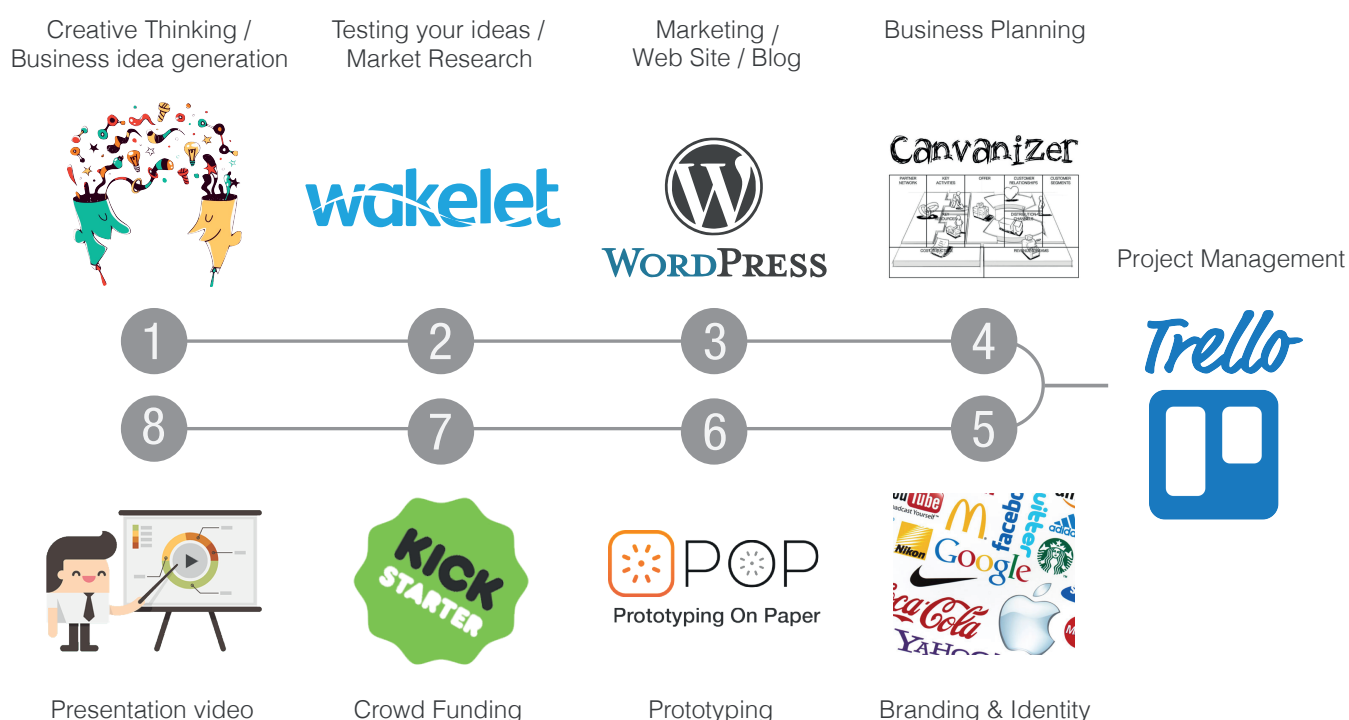
Through the establishment of an employer led pop up digital agency in school/college the programme significantly improves the digital, creative and general employability skills of young people, and is beginning to stimulate a talent pipeline for the sector and wider economy across the region.

In total 220 young people and 20 teachers/facilitators participated in the programme, and over 330 hours of curriculum delivery took place across participating institutions, including informal CPD for staff. Participating Schools/Colleges.

1. Nelson and Colne College
2. Lancaster and Morecambe College
3. Heysham High School
4. Prestons College
5. Burnley College
6. Primet Academy HS
7. Marsden Heights Community College (Nelson)
8. a) Pendle Com College (SEN) b) Pendle Com College (SEN)
9. Runshaw College
10. Accrington and Rossendale College
11. Ashton College

This year Digital Advantage had been augmented to a 5-day programme that now includes the development of a website, digital marketing campaign and a 3-minute film pitch to an industry panel. This years delivery also allowed schools to vote on their favourite pitch from other schools and has established an LinkedIn group for alumni of the programme. The Filmed pitches and websites were judged by an industry panel provided by local trade organisation Digital Lancashire. The Graduation and Prize event was held at County Hall, Preston and was attended by 240 students, staff and business. The Pitch Showreel and digital assets can be viewed: <http://digivantage.co.uk/> . The winners were Witt from Heysham High School. They receive £2000 and ongoing business support. A film of the event is being edited.

## 2017-18 Programme Outline



Evidence for this evaluation was collected via detailed student surveys of participants at the beginning and end of the programme; pre and post delivery questionnaires with staff; and also phone interviews with three of the Digital Advantage trainers.

Overall, the evaluation highlighted that participation in the programme was linked to:

- Significant improvements in the use of digital platforms 92%,
- Improved confidence and motivation of young people 83%,
- Increased awareness of and appetite for Enterprise creation and business skills 71%,
- Enhanced understanding of career opportunities in the creative and digital sector, and improved career awareness linked to business, enterprise and self employment 89%.

Outcomes were particularly strong in:

- Developing specific and general employability and transferable skills such as creativity, problem solving, presenting/communication, and team working 84.5%,
- Improved self knowledge and self esteem 63%.

Similarly, participating teachers reported improvements in:

- their confidence in engaging with external professionals from the sector 98%
- desire to engage more with employers 100%
- to enhance and improve their curriculum 84%.

100% of teachers participating said they would recommend the programme to other schools and colleges and be keen to offer it again in their own setting.

**Initial feedback includes** - On the overall experience:

Good experience learnt the principles of starting a digital business.

It was really interesting and enjoyable and a good look at work life

it really helped my confidence because I was treated like an adult

it is a very good experience and I would strongly advise it to other schools

I HAD SOME GREAT EXPERIENCE. THE TEAM LEADER WHO HELPED OUR GROUP WAS A REALLY GOOD PERSON AND ALL THE ADVICE GIVEN WAS USEFUL

It was good, I enjoyed myself, it was stressful at times but it was good working with a different group

I actually had a great experience, it was in fun than what I thought, I learnt so many things

My experience of working with Digital Advantage was amazing i really enjoyed working with Simon & Steve

I had a fun time and found out what it's like in the real world. I had close deadlines and with hard work and a positive attitude I was successful with matching the deadlines.

It was great since I went to the digital advantage course I've kind of changed

As a team we liked the concept of working with others to develop our ideas. In hindsight as a college with special needs we would liked to have visualised the end product at the beginning of the course rather than in the middle as it is hard for us to visualize concepts in advance

it was kind of tiring, some bits were kind of fun to do and overall i guess i was happy to go because it improved my creative, communication and confidence skills

Digital Advantage has been a fun and helpful experience. It has helped me develop skills I was weak at and to give me more confidence in general.

Digital Advantage was a daunting concept when my tutor first told me about it. The idea of creating a business/company and competing with other schools was not unheard of. Last year I, along with some good friends, entered the Young Enterprise (YE) competition which, unfortunately, we lost. YE was fun, but it made me realise that maybe I'm not much of a team

player (Except in videogames). However, I decided to sign up for Digital Advantage (DA) anyway. And I'm glad I did. I was given a role that gave me the opportunity to use skills from one of my hobbies - writing. This, of course, gave me a huge boost of confidence when it came to doing the job as I knew I would love doing it. That wasn't the only thing that was enjoyable, however. Meeting new people and working with them was amazing. You don't realise the talent people have when you first meet them, but as the weeks went on, they started showing. It's great to work with people who are eager to win, eager to succeed and eager to enjoy. Thanks DA