

An artist's impression of MediaCityUK



CREATIVE Times newspaper



Manchester has the largest community of digital and creative businesses in the UK outside London and the sector is also central to the city region's knowledge economy employing an estimated 77,400 people. There is a continuous flow of talent into the sector from the city's universities, which specialise in creative subjects from art and design to film and television production, music and games development. Manchester is rapidly becoming one of the most successful and attractive locations for creative business and is generating interest across the UK and internationally. Some 12,000 new jobs are expected in the sector by 2017.

Over the last five years the digital and creative sector has been growing at a faster pace than the national economy and in Manchester it is outperforming the national average. In 2004 the sector in Manchester generated £2.8bn, which is two thirds of the economic output in the Northwest. Between 1999 and 2004 Gross Value Added (GVA) grew at twice the national average and is forecast to outperform the national average with an increase of £1.4bn between 2007 and 2017.

Looking to the future, by 2012 Manchester will be home to five departments of the BBC, to be located in MediaCityUK at the heart of a new international centre of digital, media and creative enterprise in Salford Quays. MediaCityUK is expected to generate growth well in excess of the current projections.

#### **The Creative Industries Development Service (CIDS)**

Founded in 2000 CIDS is an economic development agency for the creative industries in Greater Manchester. It has seen rapid growth in both the number and scale of creative businesses. Supported by the Northwest Development Agency, CIDS works to help new and

established creative businesses in Greater Manchester, whilst also taking a strategic overview of the sector and developing services in response to industry needs. Its objectives are:

- To encourage networking, information exchange and business to business links
- To promote the development of creative businesses
- To raise the profile of the creative sector

## Networks

Having the right contacts within the industry is essential. Business networks have formed that offer specialist support and networking opportunities in each of the many sub-sectors of the creative industries; Advertising, architecture, art, craft, design, fashion, film, TV and broadcast, gaming, literature and publishing, music, new media, performing arts, and photography. A number of national trade associations and industry bodies have a presence in Manchester and there are numerous events, exhibitions, talks and gatherings across the city all the year round.

CIDS offers a range of services which aim to build a community of creative enterprises with strong networks, multiple informal contacts and easy access to information about opportunities. For new businesses starting out, Focal Point offers regular networking events, providing an opportunity to meet other entrepreneurs and individuals working in the creative industries. For more established businesses, The Loop is a networking forum offering an 'audience' with successful creative entrepreneurs who share their knowledge and experience of topics such as managing people, how to encourage growth and value in a business and how to move into international markets.