



## Information & Communication Technologies

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The West Midlands is home to a strong entrepreneurial cluster of ICT companies. This vibrant high growth business base includes international renowned players such as Fujitsu, **IBM** and **Cap Gemini**, and expanding European enterprises such as Telsey Tele-communications.

**Operating costs** in the Coventry, Solihull, Warwickshire 'Software Triangle' are some **20–25% lower than those on M4 Corridor**; one third of **ICT companies in the West Midlands Region are growing at over 20% per annum** and over a third are exporting successfully to European markets (*source: PwC Survey Plant Location International 2002*). Industry-recognised pay scales also indicate companies pay less for equivalent ICT employees in the West Midlands than the national average. Add to all this that the region is home to the UK's largest computing school, Staffordshire University, and it's easy to see why the West Midlands Region is truly making its mark on the future of ICT.

**The sector employs some 53,000 people in over 8,000 firms, the majority of which are located in the south east of the region, delivering £4 billion turnover. This marks an increase of 45 % in ICT companies and 40% increase in employees since 2001.** (*Source: Annual Business Inquiry Employee Analysis, ONS Crown Copyright Reserved 2005*)

Sector Strengths:

- \* **Software** – Many leading software companies are based in the West Midlands Region including the world's largest enterprise software company, The Oracle Corporation. The expertise of software developers in the West Midlands attracts the interest of major international companies many of whom go on to form strategic partnerships, particularly in the creation of custom software solutions
- \* **Hardware** – Groundbreaking work that is taking place here is setting new standards in research and development. The new Computer Science building at the University of Warwick, for example, has been chosen by IBM as one of only a handful of sites dedicated to the development of a new worldwide computer 'Grid' and Wolverhampton University is the location of a new regional RFID centre
- \* **Telecommunications** – The region has one of the most advanced telecommunication networks in Europe. Birmingham is the only UK city with 100% coverage of a self-healing fibre optic network. That means any business – particularly those reliant on IT – enjoy more efficient, reliable communications

Business Support:

For ICT linked businesses in the West Midlands Region there is an unrivalled network of **specialist support available**. From expert advice, cutting edge facilities and training to new product development and excellent business support – the opportunities for growth in the West Midlands are endless.

- \* **Centre of Excellence for Research in Computational Intelligence and Applications (CERCIA)** – CERCIA works at the cutting-edge of Computational Intelligence (CI) research at the University of Birmingham. CI and nature inspired computer techniques are widely applicable with CERCIA's technology. Techniques, which in turn, feature heavily in the future growth of a number of business sectors including financial services, health and medical industries, manufacturing, logistics and transportation



- \* **iCentrum** – iCentrum provides members with access to the latest developments in new and emerging ICT related technologies, enabling members to improve productivity and help reduce development lead times. iCentrum also provides the latest test and quality assurance facilities for its members in the form of a Solution Development Laboratory based at Aston Science Park
- \* **OpenAdvantage** – The OpenAdvantage project provides the West Midlands Region with a centre of excellence focused entirely on open source software, the only one of its kind within the UK. The pioneering centre has helped many businesses across the region, through its free seminars, consultancy services and training
- \* **Photonics Cluster** – Photonics Cluster (UK) is the fastest growing business network dedicated to supporting the photonics industry in the UK. The overall aim of the Cluster is to establish a dynamic hub of activity within the supply chain of researchers, suppliers, manufacturers and sales distributors for the increased profitability of the sector and increased knowledge and wealth to its individual members
- \* **WMita** – WMita is a membership organisation with local branches representing small and medium-sized businesses in the ICT sector. Its purpose is to support the development and growth of the sector and to provide a voice for the ICT industry in the region
- \* **West Midlands Mobile and Wireless** – WMMW provides innovation, new product development and adoption support for companies wishing to develop their capabilities in the area of mobile and wireless technologies. The project is delivered by five of the region's leading universities (Staffordshire, Coventry, UCE, Warwick and Wolverhampton)

## Sector Research & Development:

- \* **QinetiQ** – QinetiQ has a wealth of RFID expertise and a track record of helping companies achieve 100% read rates in even the most challenging environments. QinetiQ provides a world leading RFID System Design, Development & Implementation Consultancy Service
- \* **Neural Computing Research Group** – NCRG, based at Aston University, has become one of the most influential research groups worldwide in the field of neural networks and pattern processing inference methods. The group has championed a principled approach to the theoretical development of neural network structures and training methods and developed significant expertise in the engineering applications of it work

If you'd like to speak to a sector specialist about the West Midlands Region as a potential location for your business, call the Inward Investment Team at Advantage West Midlands on +44 (0) 121 380 3500 or email [info@investwm.org](mailto:info@investwm.org)

To request a copy of the latest West Midlands business brochure, email [marketing@advantagewm.co.uk](mailto:marketing@advantagewm.co.uk)