Leeds Digital Festival launches global programme of 300 events

Leeds Digital Festival, one of the UK's largest tech and digital events, is returning for the sixth year running.

A programme of 300 virtual and in-person events has been revealed, celebrating digital culture in all its forms, hosted by start-ups, leading tech businesses and government institutions.

Running from Monday, September 20 to Friday, October 1, Leeds Digital Festival will welcome tech firms from the city region, the likes of the Department for Culture Media and Sport, Ofcom and the G7, as well as a range of speakers from across the UK, Europe and the world, including Japan, The Philippines and Mongolia.

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Festival director Stuart Clarke said: "Having so many quality events is a real testament to the innovative tech firms in the Leeds City Region and we can't wait to show off the talent we have here to a global audience.

"The Leeds Digital Festival has become the largest tech event in the UK because of its open nature, and has now been endorsed by the government as an important agenda-setting festival, where anyone from the newest start-up to tech unicorns can take part to help shape the future of digital for the benefit of everyone."

Stuart Clarke, Leeds Digital Festival director.
(Image: Aberfield Communications)
Due to the pandemic, last year's festival was split into two virtual sets of programmes, seeing a total of 428 events with over 45,000 attendees, with eyes from more than 60 countries including Benin, Peru and Kazakhstan, taking it in.

Following this, the 2021 festival will take a hybrid approach, with a mixture of in-person and online events being held across the two weeks.

A range of high-profile companies and institutions have taken up positions as key sponsors, with BJSS, TPP, the University of Leeds and Crisp confirmed as lead partners.

Adam Hildreth, founder and chief executive of Crisp, said: "As a Leeds-born and bred tech firm, we're really pleased to be one of the Leeds Digital Festival's premier sponsors again, and also hosting our own events.

"The growth of the festival has shone a light on the growing tech firms in the city and its strength in areas such as healthtech and data, as well as fast becoming a driving force in the UK's online safety tech sector. We're looking forward to taking part in yet another successful festival."

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Billed as 'the tech event for everyone', the festival will celebrate everything that encompasses technology and digital, from coding, fintech and social media, to AI and healthcare. Keynote events will include an LGBTQ+ hackathon hosted by The Coders Guild and the launch of a report by Wild on the findings of its racial diversity in digital survey.

Matt Warman, Minister for Digital Infrastructure, added: "Leeds Digital Festival is a major moment in the UK's business calendar and I'm looking forward to taking part this year to celebrate the region's fantastic scene. It's great to see attendees from around the world joining the bill and highlighting the global importance of the event.

"We're working tirelessly in government to back digital businesses with pro-innovation policies so we can create jobs, wealth and boost people's skills in Leeds and across Yorkshire."

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