

Top flight production studio launches at Gateshead's PROTO to bolster region's TV and film prowess

An industry-leading production studio has launched at Gateshead digital centre PROTO as part of a £2m investment by Innovate UK.

AMP at PROTO will provide filmmakers and games development firms with access to virtual production and 3D technology. The facility includes a curved LED screen on huge 8x3.5m scale, of the type used in global productions such as Disney's The Mandalorian and cutting edge virtual production equipment including tracking cameras and a motion capture system.

It is the work of a partnership between growth programme Digital Catapult and consultancy Target3D and aims to fuel the North East's growing reputation as a top film and TV production location. The Gateshead studio is the first of its kind in the region and will be part of a national network.

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Virtual production is a film-making technique that combines digital technologies, such as LED walls, games engines and motion capture, with live footage of actors to create scenes. The technology is designed to give greater flexibility to filmmakers, reducing the costs of transporting equipment and people, as well as shortening production times.

Sophie Craggs, studio manager at Digital Catapult North East Tees Valley, said: "We're delighted to launch this facility; it will provide a welcome boost to the brilliant creatives we

have here in the region. Up until now, businesses would have had to travel far and wide to access such cutting-edge virtual production technologies. We're incredibly lucky and proud to have this on our doorstep. We encourage anyone interested to get in touch and take advantage of the kit."

Jeremy Silver, CEO of Digital Catapult, said: "Screen industries in the North East have tremendous growth potential; local proposals could see the sector scale massively in the next few years. Digital Catapult, with Target3D and Gateshead City Council, and supported by InnovateUK, has invested in this leading studio in PR0T0 to act as a catalyst to that growth, to meet national and global demand. The new studio will drive up regional capabilities by increasing the North East's share of R&D and skills in the disruptive new field of advanced media production."

Coun Martin Gannon, leader of Gateshead Council, said: "The screen sector in Gateshead is thriving. The investment in AMP at PR0T0 is a fabulous boost for the region, unlocking huge potential to increase the scale of production. The investment will create a place where our SMEs can develop their capabilities and residents interested in the screen sector can learn new skills, providing a platform to showcase local talent through the production of new creative content made here in Gateshead."

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