



DIGITAL
Dún
Laoghaire

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Rialtas
na hÉireann
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Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



DARGAN Forum 2023

A national discourse on
Digital First Communities

Forum Booklet sponsored by



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Welcome!

Our century will see major changes due to the digital and green transitions, changes that will have considerable socio-economic impacts on localities. Like the transition to electric power in the 20th century, places that organise themselves around the power of digital most enthusiastically stand to gain the most by increasing their capabilities, collaborating effectively and making the economic base of their locality sustainable in the long term.

The DARGAN Forum will share the latest ideas and technologies that can help empower people and places to make the most of digital in all its forms. A 'Digital First Community is one that works collaboratively to attract investment, knowledge workers, home buyers, shoppers and visitors by constantly improving the three pillars underpinning a vibrant, sustainable locality, namely the physical environment, digital empowerment and smart solutions.

Technology led advances have always been met with mixed feelings of excitement and trepidation. None more so than the technologies which were showcased in Dún Laoghaire in the 19th century when it was the location of the world's first suburban railway (1834), the building of the world's largest asylum harbour (1820) and the world's first vacuum railway (1844)!

Digital has the potential to be a great leveller and lever. While we face many challenges in the years ahead, we all have access to the tools and collaboration that can enable us to make a difference at the individual and group level.

We face a personal choice in this, on a beach strewn with drying out starfish do we take the time to bend down and throw one back in to the sea?

What is the one thing you can do differently starting today to help make a difference?



Eoin Costello
Project Director



Nada Pupovac
Digital Manager



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5 Thought Provoking Predictions for the Dargan Forum

- **Resilience and adaptability in the face of rapid social change** - As technological change accelerates the scale of Ireland's previous transition from an agricultural economy in the 70's and 80's now faces us. The next generation faces the likelihood that the reassurance of jobs for life will no longer be available - Mobility and increased competition for rolling short term contracts may lead to an existential crisis for our younger generation. Equally our older generation face a bewildering rate of change in their day to day lives. Can localities become the equivalent of the economic GAA, a community rallying point enabling people to support each other in multiple ways.
- **Localities as places to live, work and raise the next generation** - Beyond necessity (our daily coffee or snacks) and experiential (doing it for fun) shopping as an activity may be in terminal decline as people replace the current 2 or 3 hours chore of shopping for leisure activities. If retail ceases to be the main occupier of town centres can multi-function coworking spaces be the post office cum bank cum Carnegie Library on the high street of the 21st century and become the largest occupier of vacant high street retail space as drivers of collaboration, meaning and belonging in the 21st century.
- **Work - Where will future jobs come from** - Technology induced reductions in employment may lead to major social change as the fiscal base of the economy has to change from public finances being dependent on tax on employment (37% in 2022) at the same time as more people may depend on a new state 'living wage'. Can social enterprise become a major employer in this new reality turning 'quality of life' activities into meaningful jobs.
- **Climate Change** - At a time when the era of the marginal returns from agglomerating of cities may go into reverse (bigger cities need cooling, increasing personal dissatisfaction due to the need for self actualisation by citizens etc) can our sparsely populated rural towns help cool the pressure on Ireland's cities and cut thousands of commutes through whole hearted rural repopulation.
- **Ireland Inc** - As MNCs increase their investment in tech automation, the next iteration of tech may create fewer jobs in higher skilled areas. Some believe that the heyday of Ireland's large local multinational headcount may be behind us. Our state needs to make a big bet on the future, can resilient, agile Digital First Communities help play a role in future proofing our country.



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Running Order

	DARGAN Forum Themes & Speakers	TIME
	Venue opens to attendees for Tea & Coffee	8.30am
	Photos with speakers and organisers	8.30am
	Welcome from Eva Dowling - Leas Cathaoirleach, DLR County Council	9am
1	Jennifer Carroll MacNeill - T.D. & Minister of State at the Department of Finance	9.05am
2	Mark Henry - Author and speaker, communications and marketing lead at Technological University Dublin. Author "In Fact: An Optimist's Guide to Ireland at 100"	9.15am
	Topic 1 - Localities as platforms for sustainable jobs	
3	Speaker 1 Eoin Costello - Project director, Digital Dun Laoghaire	9.35am
4	Speaker 2 Allan Mulrooney - Interim CEO, the Western Development Commission	9.45am
5	Speaker 3 Bank of Ireland - Joann Hosey, Director of Bank of Ireland Life	10am
6	Pop up presentation of a new tech solution Michael Guerin - Founder of Imvizar, a provider of Immersive Storytelling Experiences with Augmented Reality.	10.15am
7	Panel Discussion on Topic 1 with 3 panel members: Maeve Lyons - Programme Manager at RDI Hub and NDRC. Alison Harvey - Heritage Council Planning Programmes and Policy Manager and DECC National SDG Champion for 2023-2024 at The Heritage Council. John Logue SERIHead of Social Enterprise Republic of Ireland (SERI).	10.20am
	Topic 2 - Digital First Communities - Uniting people around their place for prosperity	
8	Speaker 1 - Niamh Young - Management Consultant at Accenture	10.35am
9	Speaker 2 - Fintan Kennedy - GAA performance analyst	10.50am
10	Speaker 3 - Eamonn Donlyn & Gavin Duffy Eamonn - Programme lead at Trinity's SFI Research Centre on Smart Cities Gavin - CEO RealSim Ltd, digital twinning software	11.05am

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	COFFEE BREAK 15 minutes	11.15am
	Energiser by Nada	11.30am
11	Pop up presentation of a new tech solution Paul McCarthy - Founder Snapfix, Snapfix, a facilities & maintenance cloud platform	11.40am
12	Panel Discussion on Topic 2 with 3 panel members: Julian Perez Alzueta - Head of AI and Analytics at beqom, a Compensation Management Software company. Philip Doyle - MD Reerve Energy Ltd Ger Corbett - Sandyford Hub, CEO of Sandyford Business District (Sandyford.ie)	11.45am
	Topic 3 - Reimagining hubs as the power behind Digital First Communities	
13	Speaker 1 - Seamus Duffy - Chair, Ballinasloe Area Community Development Clg	12.00pm
14	Speaker 2 - Catherine Butler Weir & Dora Mac Elwain Catherine - SMC Technical Director at Microsoft for western Europe Dora - Digi Hub Manager at Enterprising Monaghan	12.15pm
15	Speaker 3 - Sebastiano Toffaletti, Secretary General of the European DIGITAL SME Alliance	12.30pm
16	Pop up presentation of a new tech solution Neil Mylet - Founder of the Rural Urban Center, Camden, Indiana	12.35pm
17	Panel Discussion on Topic 3 with 3 panel members: Brian Nerney - Founder The Spool Factory and BoyleToday.com Clayton Mooney - Founder of Clayton Farms, a direct-to-consumer indoor hydronic farm located in Edina, Minnesota Ann O'Brien - Researcher in Business Information Systems at University of Galway.	12.40pm
18	Closing Remarks - Chad Gilmer, Managing Director of The Glasshouses, Chair of Digital HQ clg	12.55pm
	FORMAL EVENT ENDS	1pm

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Keynote Speakers



Jennifer Carroll MacNeill T.D.

Minister of State at the Department of Finance; TD at the Houses of the Oireachtas. Former County Councillor and author of 'The Politics of Judicial Selection in Ireland' published by the Four Courts Press. Basil Chubb Prize Winner 2015 for best PhD Thesis on Politics in Ireland. Honorary patron to Digital HQ clg.



Allan Mulrooney

Allan Mulrooney is the Interim Chief Executive Officer at the Western Development Commission. In this role he is dedicated to building resilient communities across the West of Ireland by instigating change and connecting people. Allan and his team are focussed on projects delivered locally that can scale nationally, for example Connected Hubs. Prior to his current role, Allan served as Head of Communications and Atlantic Economic Corridor Development.



Joann Hosey

Joann Hosey is a director of Bank of Ireland Life. She is a career banker who has worked across many of the Bank's operations including managing the branch network as director of Area East as well as a period working directly with the former CEO Francesca McDonagh. Joann is passionate about people and communities. She plays a key role in the economic development of her home town Tubbercurry.



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Topic 1 - Localities as platforms for sustainable jobs



Eoin is the national director of DigitalHQ, the centre for Digital First Communities. He sits on the government's Enterprise Digital Advisory Forum, is Digital Champion to the Digital Ireland Network & is chair of the Dún Laoghaire Town Team. In 2022 he was named Ireland's 'Local Digital Hero' at the .IE Digital Town Awards.

Eoin Costello



Mark is an author and speaker, communications and marketing lead at Technological University Dublin. Mark, a trained psychologist, spent two decades at Fáilte Ireland telling people all over the world what a great country Ireland is he brought this passion to his book 'In Fact: An Optimist's Guide to Ireland at 100'

Mark Henry



Michael is the founder @ Imvizar a provider of Immersive Storytelling Experiences with Augmented Reality. Previously he was programme manager Smart Docklands and project leader for Ireland's inaugural national startup week, the Startup Gathering.

Michael Guerin



Maeve is Programme Manager at RDI Hub and NDRC. She has worked in the start-up space for 6 years. Her thesis on 'Creating Opportunities in Coastal Towns' underpins her work collaborating with local stakeholders to create a strong, connected community attracting top talent, employers and dwellers to the area.

Maeve Lyons



John is the new head of Social Enterprise Republic of Ireland (SERI), the representative body for Social Enterprises in Ireland. He was previously head of ops for the Donegal Local Development Company and head of Suas Educational Development.

John Logue



Ali is Planning Programmes and Policy Manager and DECC National SDG Champion for 2023-2024 at The Heritage Council. She is a Founder/Co-ordinator of the Collaborative Town Centre Health Check Programme with RGDATA and other partners.

Alison Harvey



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Topic 2 - Digital First Communities - Uniting people around their place for prosperity



accenture

Niamh Young

Niamh is a Management Consultant at Accenture with a demonstrated history of working in the financial services industry. Niamh played a key role in developing Accenture's most recent research on the digital divide and also leads their digital learning asset team in Ireland.



Fintan Kennedy

Fintan is an insurance consultant who is a GAA performance analyst. Fintan's Masters thesis explored the place of Vulnerability and Failure in High Performing Sports Teams'. He is a Sports Coach with Tourlestrane and Sligo working with both Female and Male Gaelic Football Athletes.



realSim
REALTIME 3D SIMULATION

Gavin Duffy

Gavin runs RealSim Ltd, providing highly realistic interactive and passive 3D simulations of the world around us. Gavin worked previously as a geophysicist in Australia and an exploration geologist at various locations around the world.



Eamonn Donlynn

Eamonn is a two-time Emmy award winner, challenging assumptions for 20 years in tech and media including 11 at ESPN Walt Disney. Eamonn is programme lead at Trinity's SFI Research Centre on Smart Cities where he is associated, amongst other initiatives, with the Smart Balbriggan project.



beqom

Julian Perez Alzueta

Julian is head of AI and Analytics at beqom, a Compensation Management Software company. Julian's previous roles include head of data science at Core Ltd, data lead at Telefónica. He holds a Masters in masters in theoretical physics.



Philip Doyle

Philip is MD of Reverse Energy Ltd, a provider of smart energy management in the Cloud. Philip develops commercial energy management and Renewable Heat strategies for clients across Ireland. He was also publisher of the Irish History Journal.



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Ger Corbett

Ger is CEO of Sandyford Business District which represents the 1000 companies, 26000 employees and 5000 residents located in the four business parks which form the District. Before that he was the financial controller at Eastland Engineering Supply Ltd and the Tech Department Ltd.



Paul McCarthy

Paul is the founder and CEO of Snapfix, a facilities & maintenance cloud platform which was an EI Award Winner for Innovation. Before that he had business interests in commercial and residential property developments as well as project management work with large national & international companies.

***How Digital First
Communities can unite
people around their
place for its prosperity.***



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Topic 3 - Reimagining hubs as the power behind Digital First Communities



Seamus Duffy

Seamus is chair of the Ballinasloe Area Community Development Clg for the last 13 years. He was the founder and main driver of the widely read Ballinasloe Life magazine. He is a financial advisor with New Ireland Assurance and was previously the AIB Ballinasloe branch manager. He is very involved in Ballinasloe GAA.



Catherine Butler Weir

Catherine is SMC Technical Director at Microsoft for western Europe leading the Technical Specialist teams for all Microsoft products. Previously she was Senior Product Engineer at Xilinx. She is a member of the advisory panel for Digital HQ clg.



Dora Mac Elwain

Dora is the Digi Hub Manager at Enterprising Monaghan. Before that she held a range of roles at Liberty Insurance. Dora was also a small business innovator having established a company recruiting post graduate students as English Teachers in Vietnam and China.



Brian Nerney

Founder The Spool Factory, a coworking hub in Boyle. He is Editor and Proprietor at BoyleToday.com. He is a board member of the Roscommon Integrated Development Company (Leader). Previously he was the proprietor and CEO Roscommon Herald.



Clayton Mooney

Clayton is founder of Clayton Farms, a direct-to-consumer indoor hydronic farm located in Edina, Minnesota. Clayton was Entrepreneur in Residence at Iowa State University. He was head of digital comms for Ireland's inaugural startup week, the Startup Gathering.



Ann O'Brien

Ann is a Researcher in Business Information Systems at University of Galway. Ann's recent research focuses on the social and community impact of rural hubs and community volunteer (Smart Villages).



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**Sebastiano
Toffaletti**

Sebastiano is the Secretary General of the European DIGITAL SME Alliance, the European association representing the interests of the SME community in the ICT sector. He is a board member of the European Cyber Security Organisation.



Neil Mylet

Neil is an inventor, farmer & humanitarian who is restoring an Opera House in Camden, Indiana to help unite rural and urban communities. He is a founder of the Rural Urban Center



Chad Gilmer

Chad is Managing Director of The Glasshouses with facilities in Dún Laoghaire, Blackrock and Sandyford. He also heads up the tech solution consultancy iPLANit. Previously he was a director at Vazumo and a consultant at Accenture. Chad is chair of Digital HQ clg.

***How hubs can become
drivers of a better, more
sustainable way of life.***



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The slogans of Digital First Communities

*Do what you can with what
you've got*

Keep going , you'll get there

*If it's not shared online, it never
happened*

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