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**Editorial Feature**

## The Digital Revolution

[gazettelive.co.uk](http://www.gazettelive.co.uk)

**Led by the Evening Gazette's award-winning digital media exploits. Teesside is at the forefront of a global technological revolution that has sparked huge changes in consumer buying trends and working habits.**

Around 50,000 local staff work from home, while online stores such as [www.psyche.co.uk](http://www.psyche.co.uk) have enabled customers to buy goods from the comfort of their living rooms.

And Teesside's thriving digital infrastructure has created a cluster of world-leading companies, which are winning international contracts and putting the area on the global map.

Global digital technology has revolutionised the way we think, work and communicate. From mobile phones and broadband internet access to online auctions and clothes shops, digital media has grown exponentially across the world, even in some of the most under developed countries.

Nowhere is this growth more evident than in the Tees Valley, which is home to a burgeoning, world-leading digital technology centre. Innovation is at the heart of this hub, creating a string of thriving, indigenous businesses and attracting inward investment to boost the local economy.

According to Culture NorthEast, part of regional development agency One NorthEast, the commercial creative industries are a growing economic powerhouse for the region. They involve 2,200 businesses, are worth £800m to the economy and employ 30,000 people. It is estimated that new media, games and interactive software companies alone generate £256m in turnover regionally, with 14% of the valuable new media, video games and interactive software companies each turning over in excess of £1m per annum.

Teesside is home to several of these companies, which are taking their products and services to the world stage. Take, for example, 3rd Dimension Creations Ltd - a Middlesbrough-based computer games software firm that earlier this year struck a six-figure deal with one of the largest games developers in Europe. Based at Royal Middlehaven House, the company will develop the software, graphics and animation for what it describes as "a totally unique" live arcade game for produced Blitz Games. The deal represents the biggest contract so far for the three-year-old firm and could push turnover to around £250,000 this year.


Leading Teesside's digital revolution is DigitalCity and its commercial arm, DigitalCity Business. Its aim is to help the area realise its vast potential in digital technologies and build on its international reputation for creativity and innovation.

Digital City has been supported by the £12m Institute of Digital Innovation (IDI) at the university of Teesside, a major digital research and development environment that is helping to retain some of the country's best young graduates in the area.


Built on the former Evening Gazette car park on Stephenson Street in Middlesbrough, the IDI will create a hub for digital industries companies and ensure the university's academic excellence can be converted into business creation and growth. It builds on the university's success of internationally-recognised work in digital application and content development including animation, computer games, digital film and sound, visualisation and virtual reality.

As well as altering working practices, the digital revolution has also sparked a step-change in consumer buying trends. Fifteen years ago, the prospect of buying the weekly groceries from the comfort of the home would have been alien to most people. But in recent years it has become increasingly popular, with high street brands such as Tesco and Marks and Spencer offering the speedy delivery of goods at the click of a button.

According to UK payments association APACS the number of people shopping online has increased from 11m in 2001 to 28.3m in 2006 - a staggering rise of 157%. The research also showed that these people are buying in greater volumes of goods; the average number of purchases per shopper surged from 8 in 2001 to 24 in 2006.

 The Evening Gazette's website - [www.gazettelive.co.uk](http://www.gazettelive.co.uk) is now visited by more than 200,000 unique users every month

These figures are just one example of how the internet has become a part of everyday life, with consumers relying on it to manage their finances, pay the bills and buy their weekly supermarket shopping. And with the sophisticated technology having an increasing influence on the way we live and work, the digital revolution shows no sign of slowing.



who between them notch up a massive 2.5 million page impressions. 

The Evening Gazette is proud of its past - with almost 140 years of newspaper production on Teesside. But new technology and internet expansion means the Gazette is also powering ahead in the digital age. The Evening Gazette's website is now visited by around 200,000 unique users every month who between them notch up a massive 2.5 million page impressions. The site has already been singled out as the best in Britain - collecting a series of national awards. Named Website of the Year at the prestigious UK Press Gazette Awards 2007, this was soon followed by more success at the UK Association of Online Publishers Awards 2007.

gazettelive.co.uk was then named Consumer Website 2007 in a tough category, which featured BBC News Business, New Scientist and marieclaire.co.uk. The internet means the news and views of the local communities are represented better than ever. The Gazette has always aimed to be at the heart and soul of the community, and we are now taking that relationship to a new level with our community microsites.

www.gazettcommunities.com was also singled out for national praise, named AOP Online Community 2007 and beating off competition from the Telegraph Media Group and My Sun. There are now sites for all 23 of Teesside's core TS postcode areas, attracting 140,000 visitors a month, and enjoying 340,000 hits. gazettelive.co.uk and the community websites are driven from a multimedia newsroom, in which journalists produce content for both print and digital platforms.

Video reports, blogs and picture galleries can all be found online and we also now provide hourly news bulletins from 8am to 5pm to allow us to break news later than ever before. Plus all latest business news from the Evening Gazette can be accessed via [www.nebusiness.co.uk](http://www.nebusiness.co.uk). News teams at the Gazette and its sister title on Tyneside, The Journal, feed into this single site, providing a comprehensive digital location for business and financial news.



 Our online Photosales service means you can order your prints at the click of a button. 

New technology also helps increase community interaction. If a reader captures a breaking news story on their mobile phone, camera or video camera they can send it to the Gazette for our website. The increasing popularity of the likes of YouTube on the internet - where web-users post their own videos - has also provided a new and fertile source for stories.

The internet also enables the Gazette to extend its coverage outside the pages of the paper to a global audience.

Videos are a massive hit with viewers, and among those to attract the most was sports editor Philip Tallentire's reaction to Boro's game against Reading, which was watched more than 60,000 times, and an exercise video by the Gazette's fitness guru Davey Veitch, watched more than 40,000 times. Our online picture galleries have also proved extremely popular. While we can cover the highlights in the newspaper, we can upload an entire gallery of photographs online, and visitors can return again and again to their favourites.

You can also have your own memento to keep and buy one of the Gazette's photographs. Our online Photosales service means you can order your prints at the click of a button. You can even book a holiday online thanks to our reader travel service - [www.gazettelive.co.uk/lifestyle/travel-offers/](http://www.gazettelive.co.uk/lifestyle/travel-offers/) - or check out our shopping channel at [www.gazettelive.co.uk/shopping-channel](http://www.gazettelive.co.uk/shopping-channel)

 Interaction with the community continues to develop and readers can now give their feedback. 

And development never stops. We've recently launched a Remember When blog - [www.gazettelive.co.uk/rememberwhen](http://www.gazettelive.co.uk/rememberwhen) - which is written by the Evening Gazette's very own resident historian Paul Delplanque. The Evening Gazette has long been the chosen place for people to pay their condolences to loved ones. Now, in addition to placing a death notice or tribute in print, you are able to share your memories with family and friends, not only in Teesside but anywhere in the world via our online memorial service, [www.gazettelive.co.uk/remembrance](http://www.gazettelive.co.uk/remembrance). This sensitive and unique tribute service offers you the opportunity to truly celebrate the life of your loved ones, and share your treasured memories and photographs at the touch of a button. You can also invite friends and family to publish their own personal messages on the tribute page, created specially for your loved one.

Interaction with the community continues to develop and readers can now give their own feedback by rating stories. Plus they can voice their own opinions or highlight the issues which are important to them through our forums [www.gazettelive.co.uk/forums](http://www.gazettelive.co.uk/forums). Our daily online poll question is a great gauge of local opinion on everything from hard news issues to the latest Boro signing.

And web users are kept up to date with all the Gazette's campaigning - from Tees Pride, the Environmental Campaign to Get A Better Life - with each having a dedicated online channel. Julie Martin, Assistant Editor (multimedia) at the Evening Gazette said: "Our aim is to foster a culture of collaboration with our core communities. Only by working in partnership with readers and online

users can we provide a product that truly reflects Teesside, its people and its values. We try to ensure our sites are user-friendly and easy to navigate, and we are constantly striving to develop new and exciting content."

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A promotional banner for online bingo. It features a purple background with white stars. On the left, there is a logo for 'BINGO' with three numbered balls (2, 11, and another) in red, white, and blue. The main text reads 'FREE £5 for all new members' in a large, pink, outlined font. Below this, it says 'Play live with 100s of other players at' in a smaller white font, followed by the URL 'www.gazettelive.co.uk/bingo' in a large, white, outlined font.

**BINGO** FREE £5 for all new members  
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gazettelive, the Evening Gazette newspaper online. Latest local news from Teesside, Middlesbrough and the North East. Born procedure, [click here](#).