

The Hub @ Media24 to expand Western Cape developer ecosystem

The Cape Innovation and Technology Initiative (CiTi) in partnership with Media24 has launched The Hub @ Media24, with the aim to develop a new generation of skilled coders for the media company. The Hub was officially launched on 1 June and is located in the Bandwidth Barn in Woodstock, CiTi's business accelerator and incubator.



The initial pilot programme, which is currently underway, will train 16 coders specifically for entry-level positions at two of Media24's businesses: 24.com and Spree. Over six months, the students will be trained in PHP, .NET, JavaScript and Android programming languages – all used by Media24. In addition to gaining practical coding experience, the students will be given support and training in the wider skills required to find a job as a coder, including professional skills such as interview techniques.

Customised for Media24

With both aspects of the course customised for Media24, the company benefits from employees who are both upskilled in the specific coding languages the company uses, as well as having six months of exposure to the Media24 business and culture. This both improves the students' chances of a successful first job, and fast tracks the impact they can have on the business they join.

"The skills shortage for young web development talent is well documented and through our new graduate programme we aim to close that gap by not only providing IT training, but also preparing young people for tech jobs ..." said Media24 chief executive Esmaré Weideman.

Media24 has large digital media platforms and applications in South Africa in its stable, with over 100 software developers working across web, mobile and OpenSource. "We snap up more software developers than the market can supply. And so we've taken to training the tech talent we need by partnering with CapaCiTi," said Weideman.



Bridging the gap

The Hub @ Media24 is modelled on CiTi's successful CapaCiTi programmes, which between 2011 and the end of 2016 will have trained and placed 900 candidates in IT jobs at more than 100 leading companies in the Western Cape. As part of the

partnership with Media24, CapaCiTi facilitated the recruitment of the candidates and training providers, the set up of the lab, monitoring the curriculum including the international certifications, as well as the corporate life skills programme customised for Media24.

“We are facing a tech skills shortage in South Africa for a range of reasons,” said Alethea Hagemann, head of the CapaCiTi skills development programme at CiTi. “From lack of awareness of IT as an exciting career prospect at school level, to the misperception that you need a university computer science degree to break into this field.

“What’s more, a lack of practical experience and little business behaviour modelling mean that too many graduates remain unemployed once completing their tertiary education. The CapaCiTi programmes were developed to bridge this gap by fast tracking candidates into their first IT jobs.”

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