

AB Open Invites Calderdale Businesses to Participate in LPWAN Technology Programme

IoTUK Boost Partner Working to Push the Region's Technology Lead

Halifax, West Yorkshire, 31st January 2017—Open-source and technical communities consultancy AB Open has opened a call for businesses in the Calderdale area to participate in a free long-range wireless communications network testbed built with the Internet of Things (IoT) and machine-to-machine (M2M) applications in mind, as part of the IoTUK Boost project launched by the Digital and Future Cities Catapults.

Founded by Innovate UK, the government's official innovation agency, the Digital Catapult announced AB Open as a formal member of the IoTUK Boost programme late last year. Under the government-backed programme and in partnership with the Digital Catapult, RS Components, The Things Network and Calderdale Council, AB Open is launching a free initiative designed to support businesses working in the burgeoning Internet of Things sector within Calderdale through free connectivity to a testbed network using a proven low-power wide-area network (LPWAN) wireless communications standard called LoRaWAN, alongside ongoing development support. The goal: to help develop new and innovative IoT and M2M enabled applications, and to help lower the operating and maintenance costs associated with companies' current platforms.

Up to ten local businesses, ranging from individual entrepreneurs through to small and medium-sized enterprises, will be selected from those applying for the free programme. Successful applicants will be supplied with hardware for prototyping, trained during a two-day hands-on workshop, given a full 12 months of support, and given opportunities to showcase their LoRaWAN-enabled products and services upon completion.

"We're thrilled to be working with IoTUK, RS Components, The Things Network and Calderdale Council on introducing LPWAN technology to the region," says AB Open Managing Director Andrew Back, "and are excited to see how entrepreneurs and businesses will be able to build great new products and services using low-power, long-range communications."

"This fantastic initiative helps lower the barriers for local businesses to develop, experiment and deploy IoT applications", said Pete Wood, DesignSpark Community Manager at RS Components.

Companies most likely to benefit from inclusion in the programme may already be involved in the IoT and M2M industry — which market analyst IDC predicts will grow from its current £2.18 billion to £5.66 billion by 2020 — or have identified opportunities that the technology presents. Designed specifically for long-range communications over distances of up to 15km and with an extremely low power draw, LoRaWAN can vastly reduce the connectivity and maintenance costs associated with services ranging from environmental monitoring systems and next-generation consumer electronics, through to industrial equipment and digital signage systems which can be updated over-the-air without an in-person engineer visit. An individual LoRaWAN node can, depending on its purpose, run for up to 10 years on a single battery charge.

The innovation programme, known as Calderdale LPWAN Boost, is based on proven technology: the testbed network will act as a part of The Things Network, a global community-driven initiative which has successfully deployed LoRaWAN networks in more than 60 countries so far.

"LoRaWAN is a truly game changing technology, with a low barrier to access and presenting opportunities for organisations of every size", The Things Network initiator Wienke Giezeman said, adding "we can't wait to see what applications get built through participation in the Boost."

Cllr Lisa Lambert, Calderdale Council's Cabinet Member for Business Change and Customer Service, said: "We are delighted that AB Open is bringing this prestigious project to Calderdale. One of the Council's priorities is to use new technology to improve services, so we support the project as it will enable innovative approaches across the borough – for example, new ways to measure air quality and river levels. It will also help to boost local businesses."

More information on the Calderdale LPWAN Boost, including details of how local business can apply to participate, can be found on the official website at <https://thingscalderdale.com/boost/>

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About AB Open

AB Open is an open source and technical communities consultancy specialising in embedded and wireless systems, based in Halifax, West Yorkshire. AB Open's clients include semiconductor companies, component distributors, equipment vendors, and service providers. For more information, please visit the website at <http://abopen.com>.

About IoTUK

Powered by the Digital Catapult and the Future Cities Catapult, IoTUK is a programme of activities that seeks to advance the UK's global leadership in the Internet of Things (IoT) and increase the adoption of high quality IoT technologies and services throughout businesses and the public sector. The Digital Catapult's press release on the IoTUK Boost partnerships can be found at: <https://iotuk.org.uk/digital-catapult-announces-iotuk-boost-partners/>

About RS Components

RS Components and Allied Electronics are the trading brands of Electrocomponents plc, the global distributor for engineers. With operations in 32 countries, we offer more than 500,000 products through the internet, catalogues and at trade counters to over one million customers, shipping more than 44,000 parcels a day. Our products, sourced from 2,500 leading suppliers, include electronic components, electrical, automation and control, and test and measurement equipment, and engineering tools and consumables.

Electrocomponents is listed on the London Stock Exchange and in the last financial year ended 31 March 2016 had revenues of £1.29bn.

For more information, please visit the website at www.rs-online.com.

About The Things Network

The Things Network is on a mission to build an open, distributed and crowd sourced IoT data network, owned and operated by its users. IoT developers across the globe use its open source technology and documentation to build innovative use cases for smart cities, industry, offices, agri, health, etc. To find out more visit: <https://www.thethingsnetwork.org/>

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