



■ Working on projects at the Young Rewired State Festival of Code at Plymouth University. Right: Some of the YRS team, Kait Dunning, Kate McDonald and Ruth Nicholls have a go on a digital graffiti programme
Pictures by Lucy Blake



Cracking computer code to success

by EMILY SMITH

Herald Reporter

THOUSANDS of enthusiastic code breakers unlocked, hacked and experimented at Plymouth's Festival of Code 2014.

The international phenomenon came to the city, giving thousands of young computer coders aged between 11 and 18 the chance to experiment with creative technology.

The Festival of Code is run by Young Rewired State, an independent global network of young people aged 18 and under who have taught themselves to program computers.

Emma Mulqueeny, Chief Executive of Young Rewired State, said: "The digital world in which we live is crying out for a workforce with the right skills for the 21st century, and Britain is unfortunately lagging behind."

"The energy, imagination and innovation from these fresh, young brains inspires us deeply every year and it was brilliant to see over 1,000 entrants head for Plymouth for the 2014 culmination."

The coders were given government data and



■ Donald Mackay, 8, watches his design get printed on the 3D printer

challenged to develop digital solutions to real-life problems.

The coding festival was held in Plymouth after Plymouth University i-DAT, the Open Research Lab for playful experimentation with creative technology, successfully bid to host the international event.

The Let's Combined team won the Best

Example of Code category in front of an audience at Plymouth Pavilions. The group gained recognition for their competition entry utilising smart watch and apps, correlating the weather against crime statistics.

German teenagers Daniel Petri, 16, from Gostlar, Leander Berg, 17, from Stuttgart and Bjorn Ternes, 16, from Luxberg, were the first

international students to join i-DAT based within Plymouth University during the week-long build up to the competition finale last weekend.

Leander said: "Working with different students on coding and learning has been amazing. To cover front and back-end development while also having the freedom to go for coffee and relax has been great."

"We've all attended the Berlin Festival of Code opportunity before. However, being at i-DAT and Plymouth University has been a much bigger and more exciting event and we have been able to compete on a bigger scale."

Birgitte Aga, Creative Director at i-DAT, said: "i-DAT successfully bid to host the international event and welcomed competing tech entrepreneurs of the future from 58 venues across the UK and across the globe."

"This year was the first time we had invited international entrants to join us, as well as playing host to the major finale weekend."

"Congratulations to team Let's Combine who travelled to the South West from Germany and won an award in the process."

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