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# Computer coding is anything but basic for young experts

by EMILY SMITH

Herald Reporter

BRITAIN'S Ocean City is the venue of choice for thousands of young computer coders as they prepare to take over the university campus and Plymouth Pavilions.

The Festival of Code 2014, part of the Young Rewired State (YRS) programme, will take place in Plymouth from Friday 1 August until Sunday 3 August.

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

The Festival of Code will come to Plymouth after Plymouth University based i-DAT – the Open Research Lab for playful experimentation with creative technology – successfully bid to host the international event.

Birgitte Aga, Creative Director at i-DAT, said: "i-DAT is proud to be involved in the Festival of Code for the third year in a row, supporting the Plymouth contingent through their work. However this year, we've gone several steps further, inviting international entrants to join our crew for the first time as well as playing host to the major finale weekend."

The Festival of Code is an annual event that brings together the young coders and is said to fire their imagination, feed their creativity and challenge their competitiveness.

The talent among the coders is fierce and global head-hunters are closely following the competition and its winners, with jobs often being offered to the winners.

With over 1,000 young people from across the country and beyond booked in for the finale, Plymouth will come alive as a hyper-connected digital stage. Young coders between 11 and 18 years will reign the Plymouth University landmark Roland Levinsky building as they hack, confer and socialise.

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 Festival of Code is an opportunity for young innovators to develop their skills in a creative and collaborative environment and we can't wait to see the heats unfold every year. The energy, imagination and innovation from these fresh, young brains inspires us deeply every year and it's just brilliant to see over 1,000 entrants registered and ready to head for Plymouth for the 2014 culmination."

Throughout the Festival of Code, young programmers will work alongside peers on coding challenges, supported by profes-

sional mentors. They will be given government data, which has only become open source for the event, and challenged to develop digital solutions to real-life problems.

The coders will then present their ideas to an elite panel of judges. Heats will be held at Plymouth University and the final, held at Plymouth Pavilions on Sunday 3 August, will welcome an expected audience of 2,000 spectators. The festival finale weekend also features free talks, entertainment and experts and celebrities from the digital world.



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