

A strong motor for innovation and growth

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Excellent framework conditions are boosting the variety and dynamism of the ICT sector in Saxony-Anhalt

Cloud computing, big data analyses, network security, E-health and augmented reality are the current keywords which stand for modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Supported by the government of the federal state, they are helping to strengthen companies' competitiveness and create future-proof jobs in Saxony-Anhalt.

As a key economic motor, Saxony-Anhalt relies on the innovative strength of new companies in the information and communication sector. The federal state is currently home to over 500 innovative ICT companies, some of which are international, and which account for around 14,600 permanent jobs. The majority of these companies operate in the area of software development and IT services for other companies. "The potential of our region in the field of ICT is growing all the time. Our expertise in this area will enable us to forge ahead with the process of digitalisation in Saxony-Anhalt and handle the tasks and the work of the future," explains Thomas Wunsch, State Secretary for the Ministry of Commerce, Science and Digitalisation of the federal state of Saxony-Anhalt.

In a survey of IT and internet start-up companies by the Association for the IT and Multimedia Industry Saxony-Anhalt e.V. (aka VITM), the majority of those questioned mentioned regional support programmes, the high quality of the education and training available locally, and the excellent infrastructure as the key reasons for their decision to start their business in Saxony-Anhalt. In the start-up phase, they are mostly financed through state funding programmes and the use of their own savings. Employee development is rated positively throughout. "Some IT companies from Saxony-Anhalt have become world leaders with their products and software solutions," highlights Marco Langhof, executive chairman of VITM.

Founded by a former student of the Martin Luther University Halle, Datameer is one such global IT company, and has successfully expanded into the world-famous Silicon Valley in California. Its core area of business is analysis programs which derive customer-relevant information from large volumes of data. Despite its global success, however, Datameer is continuing to invest in the expansion of its location in Halle, because it wants to take advantage of the highly trained, committed and team-oriented IT students from Halle and the surrounding region.

Cloud Computing: data security from Saxony-Anhalt

Further examples of globally active providers of services in the areas of IT security and anti-virus research are the Magdeburg company AV-TEST GmbH and DIGITRADE GmbH, which is based in Teutschenthal. Among other products and services, the latter offers a wide range of bug-proof smart cards as well as external hard disks and USB storage sticks with a 100% hardware encryption and authentication process.

E-Health: digital technology for the medicine of tomorrow

E-Health is the name of the optimised networking of all the participants in the healthcare system while respecting the patients' personal and data protection rights. At the STIMULATE medical research campus in Saxony-Anhalt, interdisciplinary teams are investigating and developing image-guided minimally invasive diagnostic and therapeutic methods for conditions such as dementia, heart disease, cancer and stroke. Around two dozen partners from industry, universities and research institutes are taking part. One example of a successful cooperation is a tissue-conserving diagnostic method for white skin cancer. The so-called 2PM VertiScan procedure penetrates into areas which cannot be reached with conventional optical skin microscopes and which have previously required the extraction of fine tissue and the use of laboratory diagnostics.

Augmented reality means added creativity

During the sale of houses and apartments, computer-simulated three-dimensional presentations are now a standard part of good customer service at modern architecture offices. A further enhancement is offered by "augmented reality". This involves the combination of real images with computer-generated objects. Examples of this can be found especially often in the computer games segment, in the tourism industry – with mobile phone apps with GPS and service information, for example, and in the medical sphere. "For some players in the creative economy in the state of Saxony-Anhalt, the technologies of augmented reality and virtual reality are already an important economic sector, and they are leading to expanding sales markets and turnover figures," explains Mirko Kisser, the executive chairman of *Kreativwirtschaft Sachsen-Anhalt e.V.*

The company Virtiv- Melzer & Mischner GbR from Halle develops modern websites of this kind for clients that include estate agencies, multi-brand retailers and an online trader from the field of horse riding apparel. The Magdeburg company VISUALIMPRESSION is also a specialist in the area of 3D visualisation and virtual reality. Its services include architectural visualisations of interior spaces and residential facades. Another example of a successful AR start-up in Magdeburg is the company "2tainment GmbH", which specialises in high-quality PC and video games with the use of its in-house VR & AR expertise.

These examples underscore the variety and dynamism of the ICT sector, for the further development of which Saxony-Anhalt offers excellent framework conditions. "A wide range of funding options are available to support this potential. The Ministry of Economic Affairs is supporting the Industry 4.0 network of partners to bring businesses, chambers of commerce and associations together for the work surrounding the Industry 4.0," explains Thomas Wunsch, State Secretary of the Ministry of Economics, Science and Digitalisation of the federal state of Saxony-Anhalt.

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