

Ireland can think big as EU data road map has potential to provide employment

JJ WORRALL

A new €3 million EU project tasked with creating a clear strategy to build a “big data economy” in Europe could provide a jobs boost for Ireland over the next decade, according to Jason Ward, one of its lead researchers and EMC’s Irish country manager.

Researchers at the Digital Enterprise Research Institute (DERI) at NUI Galway are leading Ireland’s involvement in the project, entitled *Big Data Public Private Forum* (BIG), which will draw up a European level “requirements road map” on how to best use the increasing amounts of data created in “enterprises, governments, and our everyday lives”.

Ward says the project could

be the beginning of a “huge boost for job creation in Ireland”, adding that Irish involvement in BIG provides “a massive opportunity, both from a jobs perspective and a revenue perspective”.

The 11 companies, research institutions and community initiatives from six European countries joining forces for BIG hope to identify key requirements for building a big data economy within industry sectors including energy, transport, finance, manufacturing, retail and the public sector.

Prof Ed Curry of DERI says the big data economy refers to “looking at how we can build an economy of products and services that are driven by data as opposed to being driven by raw materials or anything

else”. The road maps will help business communities to understand the potential competitive advantages from big data technologies, says Curry, who adds that “overall what [BIG] is looking at is how non-ICT com-

€3m

The funds available to an EU project tasked with creating a clear strategy to build a ‘big data economy’ in Europe

panies can leverage these technologies to actually use big data within their operations in order to improve the way they actually run their business and how their business performs.”

With the project at the “ker-

nel stage”, as Curry puts it, he says it’s important Europe keeps pace with big data usage in the US, where there have been “many early adopters embracing the possibilities it provides”.

“Within BIG,” says Curry, “Ireland is at the heart of defining a big data strategy for Europe.”

The findings of BIG will be used as input for the EU’s framework programme for research and innovation, Horizon 2020.

Other organisations involved in BIG include Siemens, the University of Leipzig, the Press Association, the Open Knowledge Foundation and DFKI, the German research centre for artificial intelligence.