Irish companies 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 job boost for Ireland over the next decade, according to Jason Ward, one of its lead researchers and EMU’s Irish country manager.

Researchers at the Digital Enterprise Research Institute (DERI) at NUI Galway are leading Ireland’s involvement in the project, called Big Data Public Private Forum (BD-P3), which will draw up a European level “requirements road map” on how to best use the increasing amount 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 BD-P3 provides “a massive opportunity, both from a jobs perspective and a revenue perspective.”

The 22 companies, research institutions and community initiatives from 10 European countries joining forces for BD-P3 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 use 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 businesses understand the potential competitive advantages from big data technologies, says Curry, who adds that “overall what BD-P3 is looking at is non JIC project.”

€3m

The funds available on an EU project based on the clear strategy to build a big data economy in Europe will help companies leverage these technologies to actually use big data within their business in order to improve the way they actually run their business and how their business performs.

With the project at the “kernel 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 BD-P3”, says Curry, “we have been looking at how we can work with research foundations to start up a European strategy for big data.”

The findings of BD-P3 will be used as input for the EU’s programme framework for research and innovation, Horizon 2020.

Other organisations involved in BD-P3 include Siemens, the University of Leipzig, the Open Knowledge Foundation and IPK, the German research centre for artificial intelligence.

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