



Photo courtesy of Maura Boyle.

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER Q1 2021

Welcome to the Spring 2021 issue of MaynoothWorks' newsletter: a season in which we can start to see some light at the end of the tunnel, and in which we can begin to think about what our personal and professional lives will look like as the threat of COVID recedes.

Despite the restrictions of remote working, the MaynoothWorks team are available to help you develop the technological and business model innovations that will allow your company to not just survive the lockdown period, but to emerge strongly and well-positioned for the new market conditions we all face.

In this issue, we will celebrate the efforts of our John Scanlan Engagement Award winner, Justin Gleeson, whose team at the All-Island Research Observatory have made substantial contributions to public life over more than a decade, and who have led Maynooth's contribution to Ireland's Covid-19 data hub throughout the pandemic.

We are also excited to introduce you to a new programme launching at Maynooth University in April, which will offer invaluable business expertise to early-stage ventures, whilst developing a cohort of highly trained, entrepreneurial researchers who will become the industry leaders of tomorrow. If your company might benefit from such support, or if you'd like to know more about the training process, please contact us via the links below.

MaynoothWorks encompasses knowledge transfer, entrepreneurship innovation and enterprise partnership.
www.maynoothuniversity.ie/maynoothworks

JOHN SCANLAN INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT AWARD

The Annual John Scanlan Industry Engagement Award goes to Justin Gleeson, Director of the All-Island Research Observatory (AIRO). Under Justin's leadership, AIRO has pioneered the development of innovative mapping and visualisation tools for enhancing evidence-led civic planning and policy formation at the regional and national level.



Justin Gleeson

Each year MaynoothWorks recognises and celebrates members of staff who demonstrate a passion for putting their research to work through engagement with industry. Excellence in all aspects of commercialisation of research at Maynooth University are taken into consideration when choosing the winner of the John Scanlan Industry Engagement Award: from collaborations, to invention disclosures, to the creation of spin-out companies.

Over the last year, Justin and the team at AIRO have played a key role in the development of Ireland's COVID-19 Data Hub (<https://covid-19.geohive.ie/>). Under the Irish Epidemiological Modelling Advisory Group, AIRO and its strategic partners, (the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and Ordnance Survey Ireland), manage and analyse data related to how COVID-19 is spreading on behalf of the Department of Health and NPHET.

Justin has worked on numerous other key national projects including the National Planning Framework, and the recent Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies. In collaboration

with the CSO, AIRO developed a national Census mapping toolset aimed at improving evidence-informed planning that is widely used by government, educational institutions, private consultancies and the general public. Environmental projects include a Strategic Environmental Assessment analysis tool for the EPA and a new Local Authority Renewable Energy Strategy tool for the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland. Within the university, Justin works on a range of data and mapping infrastructure projects in collaboration with the Admissions Office, the Access Office and the Office for Equality and Diversity.

AIRO's remit is largely focused on the public and civic spheres. However, there is an ongoing and unmet need for such know-how amongst the private sector. Over the last 12 months, Justin has poured considerable energy into establishing a commercial service designed to provide this market with the expertise that is AIRO's stock-in-trade. It is expected that this new spin-out consultancy called People and Place will be launched in Q2 2021.

TRAINING TOMORROW'S ENTREPRENEURS BY TRANSFORMING THE TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES OF TODAY

Every early-stage technology company faces the same expertise gap: typical founding teams are technically adept, but the move from academia to start-up business thrusts them into unfamiliar territory – and one where mistakes can be expensive. What's needed is on-call access to business skills and savvy, but the cost of management consultancy effectively precludes its use when most critical. As a result, opportunities are missed and viable technologies can fail.

Entrepreneurial-minded researchers face a related problem. If you want to join or start an innovative company, how can you access real-world training to generate the experience and commercial track record that will make you stand out from the crowd? How do you take your first steps towards start-up?

April sees the launch of a new pilot programme at MaynoothWorks designed to solve both problems. Working with Spin-Up Science Ltd, one of the powerhouses behind the explosion of the technology sector in the UK's South-West, teams of multidisciplinary researchers will train with professional consultants to generate business models, strategies, and market assessments for early stage technology client companies from across Ireland.



Each week-long intensive programme will take the team through all the stages of building a successful start-up, working with their client company to provide a comprehensive strategic market, technology, and financial roadmap. Each day's ideas and findings are road-tested with an industry leader in the relevant sector, meaning that client companies receive comprehensive, critical business intelligence prepared to professional standards.

The training is just the start, however. This multidisciplinary cohort of engaged, business-savvy researchers will form the centre of industry-focused activity across the technology transfer consortium which spans, Maynooth University, Waterford, Athlone, and Carlow Institutes of Technology.



They will have opportunities for paid internships and consulting, alongside participation in community events around the consortium's incubators and early-stage technology events. They will become MaynoothWorks' eyes and ears amongst the research community, helping to highlight promising innovations and enabling advances that might otherwise have slipped through the net.

And over time, they will become entrepreneurs and industry leaders in their own right. The majority of those successfully completing the programme go on to strategic positions in the start-up ecosystem; around 1 in 10 will launch their own venture. The trainees of today will be the technologists of tomorrow.

If you'd like to know more about joining the programme, as a client company, a mentor, or a trainee, please contact maynoothworks@mu.ie

