



Photo courtesy of Maura Boyle.

2021 has been a uniquely challenging year for many people, businesses, and institutions.

Lifestyles and business models have been upended, and despite the incredible efforts of the health and pharmaceutical sectors there remains no clear end in sight. From disruption, however, comes opportunity: new products and services have emerged in response to changes in circumstances, and MaynoothWorks' portfolio of client supports has evolved in response.

In this Winter issue of Connect + Innovate, we look at the launches of two of our latest innovations: our professional

multimedia studio available with expert guidance and tuition to help SMEs connect with remote customers and investors; and the full-scale roll-out of one of our most innovative ecosystem-development programmes, the Startup Experience. We also profile the career of Prof Gerry Lacy, a new and exciting arrival at Maynooth University who brings with him a wealth of experience in adaptive robotics and an unimpeachable pedigree of commercial success in start-up enterprise.

Finally, from all at MaynoothWorks we would like to wish you a very happy Christmas, and prosperous and healthy New Year. See you in 2022.

BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS FOR THE DIGITAL AGE

MaynoothWorks is continually developing support services for client companies. Our Media Studio was launched earlier this year to help start-up teams effectively reach out to customers and investors made distant by COVID restrictions. It has already enabled the development of marketing materials, instructional videos, explainer videos, and video pitch decks.

However, communicating effectively on camera is a skill few of us had to develop in pre-COVID times. This month, we have launched a bespoke Media Training Programme to help companies enhance their ability to articulate what they do and why it matters.



When it comes to promoting their business, founders are often so close to the coal face that they struggle to capture and communicate their key concepts. Businesses with a clear message are best placed to build networks, communities, and sales pipelines: securing precious early customers, and establishing long-term success in the marketplace.

Our new Media Training Programme enables entrepreneurs to craft a confident and inspiring business message aimed to resonate with their target audience. The practical workshops are focused on understanding the customer and the problem to be solved – then using the arts of storytelling, message-writing, and stage skills to connect. It also includes time in our professional-grade Media Studio to deliver and record their message live and/or capture it on video in an easy-to-share format.

Let us help reconnect you with your customer community. To learn more about becoming a member at MaynoothWorks BIC [contact us](#).

MaynoothWorks member MotoKlik produced how-to videos showing step-by-step methods to install their product on a motorbike. “We recently launched our new intelligent suspension product, and this video will obviate the need to answer queries from thousands of customers, freeing us up to secure more customers. FAQs on our website would not have worked”.



RESEARCHER PROFILE: GERRY LACEY

Prof Gerard (Gerry) Lacey joined Maynooth University in October to take up a position as Professor of Robotics in the Dept of Electronic Engineering. His work has primarily been in robotics and interactive systems for healthcare and large vehicles guidance with technical contributions in computer vision/image processing, robotics and human-computer Interaction. Prof Lacey has a track record of commercialising

academic research and has founded two successful university spin-out companies. Haptica (2000) developed mobile robots for the elderly and augmented reality surgical simulators for surgeons, and SureWash (2010) developed an interactive AI-based hand hygiene training system for hospitals.

Before joining Maynooth University, Prof Lacey was an associate professor in Computer Science at Trinity College Dublin and held several senior administrative and commercial roles: CEO/CTO of Haptica (2000-'05), Bursar & Director of Strategic Innovation (2012-'15), Director of NDRC (2015-'18), CEO SureWash (2015-'18), sponsor of the Trinity Business School construction project (2012-'19) and a director of the School of Computer Science (2018-'20).

Prof Lacey brings considerable research commercialisation and industry engagement experience to Maynooth University. He is currently involved in robots research with applications in eldercare, surgery, and agriculture. The main focus of this work is the design of Artificial Intelligence that support the relationship between the robot and human operators in semi-structured environments.

Prof Lacey is working with colleagues to create an industry-focused MSc programme in robotics and intelligent devices that will launch in September 2023. The Maynooth team is investigating how the MSc can be more accessible to industry. Specific initiatives under consideration are industry-led modules, industry placements as part of the dissertation projects and flexible teaching to make learning more accessible for people working in industry looking to upskill in robotics and AI. For further information, please contact gerry.lacey@mu.ie, 087 23 96 567.

MAYNOOTHWORKS AND SPIN-UP SCIENCE HIGHLY COMMENDED FOR INNOVATIVE ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT

MaynoothWorks flagship entrepreneurship programme, the Startup Entrepreneur Experience (SEE), was highly commended at November's national KTI Awards ceremony. The week-long SEE course has been designed to offer researchers direct, intensive immersion in the realities of building a business: working together in a small team to strip down and comprehensively re-engineer live business plans and projections for a technology-focused SME in the region. In this way, each multidisciplinary cohort sharpens their own entrepreneurial skills whilst providing game-changing (and often otherwise unaffordable) business intelligence to the community.

The SEE week training is just the first step on the road, however. Successful graduates of the course are added to our Innovation Community, whose curated content runs alongside their studies. The group's membership cuts across disciplines and career stages, united by their interest in pursuing a career in technology development and business creation. This network will be challenged and offered opportunities for professional follow-on consultancy roles, internships, job vacancies, and hackathon-style brainstorming events in a closely-mentored environment. Over time, these will coalesce into founding teams with the ideal mixture of research expertise and commercial credibility, ideally positioned to take emerging technologies out into the world.

If you would like to join the Startup Entrepreneur Experience, either as a trainee or as a business for study, **please contact Maynoothworks for more information.**



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