

PRESS RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

September 17, 2024 || Page 1 | 3

New innovation impulse for Thuringia

Jena becomes de:hub for "Photonics & Digital Experience Platforms"

Jena / Berlin (Germany)

At the Startup Germany Summit 2024 in Berlin today, the innovation and digital location Jena was named the new de:hub of the Digital Hub Initiative of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK).

With the de:hub initiative, the BMWK is promoting a network between young start-ups and established commercial enterprises. By strengthening the exchange of technological and economic expertise, the aim is to enable new, disruptive innovations. The appointment of the new Jena hub is part of the expansion of the Germany-wide initiative from twelve to 25 de:hubs. The integration of the Jena hub into this network opens up completely new opportunities for the region to sustainably strengthen Thuringia as a location for innovation.

The new Thuringian hub was preceded by a joint application from Jena Digital e.V., the Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Optics and Precision Engineering IOF and OptoNet e.V. under the motto "Photonics & Digital Experience Platforms". With the support of the Free State of Thuringia, which is providing funding of one million euros for the pilot phase until 2027, as well as the city of Jena and many other partners in the Thuringian start-up ecosystem, the new de:hub is set to play a central role in the digital transformation and economic development of the region in the future.

A strong sign for the region

Andreas Tünnermann, Director of Fraunhofer IOF, states: "We are delighted that we were able to bring the new de:hub to Jena together with Jena Digital and OptoNet. The hub is a strong sign of the expertise in the region and at the same time a recognition of the work we have done here together with our partners in recent years: We have developed a unique ecosystem here that forms the basis for pioneering technological developments in the fields of photonics and e-commerce and will therefore provide fertile ground for the new de:hub."

Christian Otto Grötsch, Chairman of Jena Digital e.V., adds: "The Federal Government's Digital Summit last year already provided the necessary visibility for our digital location. With our inclusion in the de:hub initiative, we have now come full circle. This is because the necessary local structures are now being created to strengthen Jena and Thuringia in the long term and to take both the digital economy and the optics and photonics industry

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to the next level. Together with our partners and innovative start-ups, we will work to play a decisive role in shaping the digital transformation nationwide.”

PRESS RELEASE

September 17, 2024 || Page 2 | 3

New de:hub closes blank spots in Thuringia

The BMWK has been implementing the Digital Hub Initiative since 2017. There are already twelve de:hubs in Germany. They are distributed regionally across the country and are each dedicated to different key topics in sectors that are particularly relevant for the future. For example, there are hubs for artificial intelligence, mobility and cyber security.

One of the blank spots on the map of de:hubs has so far been the Free State of Thuringia. The new de:hub will change this with a focus on photonics and e-commerce. Over 140 digital companies and institutions in the region are actively working on e-commerce technologies, the digitalization of business and production processes as well as application-related solutions for artificial intelligence and cybersecurity. At the interface between photonics and the digital economy, young start-ups as well as established players in business and research are developing innovative high-tech solutions for industrial applications.

Ceremonial appointment at the Startup Germany Summit in Berlin

The new de:hubs were officially announced today at the Startup Germany Summit in Berlin by Dr. Anna Christmann, Federal Government Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Startups. Dr. Robert Kammel, Head of Strategy, Organization and Communication at Fraunhofer IOF, and Christian Otto Grötsch accepted the certificate on behalf of the de:hubs.

Further information

Official website of the Digital Hub Initiative: www.de-hub.de

About Fraunhofer IOF

The Fraunhofer Institute for Applied Optics and Precision Engineering IOF in Jena conducts application-oriented research in the field of photonics and develops innovative optical systems for controlling light - from its generation and manipulation to its application. The institute's range of services covers the entire photonic process chain from opto-mechanical and opto-electronic system design to the production of customer-specific solutions and prototypes. At Fraunhofer IOF, about 500 employees work on the annual research volume of 40 million euros.

Further information: www.iof.fraunhofer.de

About Jena Digital e.V.

Jena Digital e.V. is the innovation network for digital business & science in Jena. As a joint communication and cooperation platform with more than 50 members, Jena Digital offers important conditions for networking, knowledge transfer, innovation, start-ups and location development with the aim of establishing Jena as a beacon for the digital economy and science in Germany.

Further information: www.jena-digital.de

About OptoNet e.V.

OptoNet e.V. represents the interests of currently 129 players from industry, research and education who are active in the field of photonics. They all pursue the common goal of strengthening the internationally successful high-tech location in the heart of Germany and contributing to a better future with light-based technologies.

Further information: www.optonet-jena.de

PRESS RELEASE

September 17, 2024 || Page 3 | 3
