



Growth of ICT sector key to economic strategy, says Collins

by John Daly

DRIVING growth through **innovation** and promoting Ireland as a gateway to China are amongst the key themes at the upcoming **it@cork Technology in Business Conference** taking place on May 5.

"The need to grow and enhance our indigenous ICT sector has never been more urgent," says **Denis Collins** of **IBM** and chairman of **it@cork**.

"This conference is unique in bringing together multinationals, government leaders, entrepreneurs and investors aimed at driving growth for Ireland Inc in a concise strategy."

it@cork represents 300 member companies in the IT sector, and includes executives from multi-nationals, the public sector, academia, entrepreneurs and the legal community. The opening keynote speech will be delivered by Mark Little, former RTE Prime Time presenter turned entrepreneur and founder of Storyful, an online news service. The closing address is by Brian Caulfield, venture capitalist and partner in DFJ Esprit, who was a previous recipient of the Irish Software Association's Technology Person of the Year as well as the 2010 Halo Business Angel of the Year award. Other speakers include: Nicola Mortimer, Head of ICT, O2 — Cloud Computing and driving opportunity for your business; Andy Dancer, CTO EMEA, Trend Micro — Securing your Journey to the Cloud; Declan O'Mahoney, CEO, Firecomms — Building a Business and M&A in China; and Dr Mary Keeling, manager, Centre for Economic Analysis, **IBM** Institute for Business Value — Getting Smarter after the Economic Crisis.

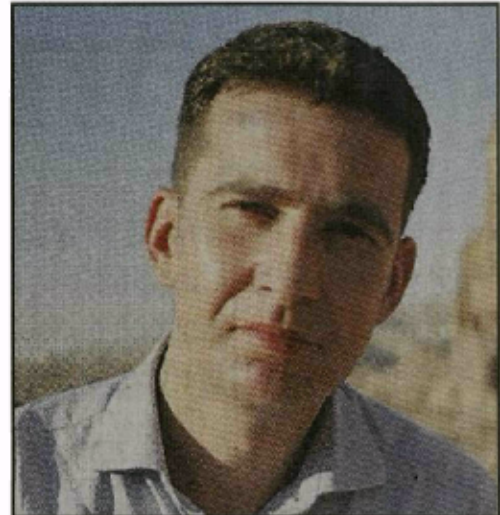
"There are great opportu-

nities for Irish early stage companies, we just have to go out there and look for them," says Declan O'Mahoney. "We have to play to our strengths and build the brand, that's where the value and opportunities are. Ireland is perfectly positioned as a gateway to China for technology companies." The Firecomms business model has product designs and R&D in Ireland, with adoption and growth in China. "We just have to think differently," he says.

"It is vital that Ireland Inc. is prepared to exploit the vast economic growth opportunities available from the IT industry," says **Denis Collins**. "In an increasingly competitive global economy, we must create the right environment for entrepreneurship, innovation, joined-up thinking and national branding, while taking advantage of the opportunities afforded by new technologies."

Many of the policies and initiatives outlined in the Programme for Government will deliver outcomes of value to industry and will create employment and export opportunities, if properly implemented, he added. Key strategic initiatives for **it@cork** include cloud computing which Collins believes has the potential to create thousands of new jobs in the areas of software and infrastructure development, and sales and marketing. "All of the latest reports on this area indicate that the pace and scale of adoption is key to future success," he says. "Ireland Inc has a real chance to leverage the talent of its IT community and take a major lead in this area but it needs to move quickly and decisively."

it@cork Technology in Business Conference, Thursday, May 5, Maryborough Hotel, Douglas, Cork. **it@cork** member rate €195, non-member €295.



Mark Little will give the opening speech at the it@cork 'technology in business' conference.