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## Microsoft kick-starts UK startups

**Microsoft will support and invest in a number of companies as it seeks to foster development**

Rosalie Marshall, [IT Week](#) 04 Oct 2007

Microsoft has launched its [Startup Accelerator Programme](#), which will offer technical and commercial support to UK software entrepreneurs. The scheme could help boost the UK's IT industry and encourage further investment.

Lars Lindstedt, who is in charge of the programme, said Microsoft will provide software development help, early access to new technologies and business training opportunities. Microsoft is working with venture capitalists to assess the commercial potential of candidates, and will then evaluate the most promising startups from a technological perspective.

Charlie Lass of ViaPost, one of the firms already in the programme, said, "Microsoft wants to help us grow and we want to help them innovate".

Christy Kulasingam, technology director at Consultancy Deloitte, said the Startup Accelerator Programme is part of a growing trend that is seeing vendors trying to nurture innovation to extend the ecosystem around their products. Vendors are tending to hire individual developers or use small companies to innovate, rather than do it themselves, she added.

Also looking to foster innovation, on-demand CRM firm Salesforce.com has announced that it had made a \$25m venture capital fund available to firms looking to develop software around its platform. Oracle launched its [Emerging Partner Programme](#) in July, providing UK startups with technology, consulting, technical advice and networking opportunities.

Martyn Buxton-Hoare of the UK's Research and Development Society welcomed any investment in UK businesses. "Many technology startups find it difficult to get the level of investment for large-scale development. So any new funding is welcome," he said. "If a corporate partner with muscle lends its name and reputation to the startup, that will help reassure investors, attract funding and deter copycats."

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