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PRESS RELEASE: **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

New website launched to tackle gender inequality at events and in leadership roles

The Women In Tech South West website has already attracted 50 new profiles within a month of being launched.

Summary

Cornwall Community Interest Company (CIC) TECwomen in collaboration with Software Cornwall and the team behind the annual Falmouth-based conference Agile on the Beach have created a new platform aimed at creating gender equality among speakers at tech events in the southwest. The website has already attracted 50 new profiles within a month of being launched.

The website; womenintechsouthwest.com, launched on this year's International Women's Day and designed in-house by Software Cornwall builds on the 500 Women project, originally developed by Women in STEM Plymouth several years ago. Users are invited to create their profiles on the platform using a simple form, which can then act as a searchable database for event organisers looking for speakers on specific topics. In addition, it can also act as a place to find mentors, mentees, advisors, board members and subject matter experts among women in the southwest.

Niki Davies, Director of Software Cornwall said "We wanted to mark International Women's Day this year, not just with a few celebratory words but with something that could tackle gender inequality for women in tech in the southwest and act as a tool to help raise their profile and provide them with speaking and leadership opportunities. This website aims to be a really simple way to do that and be something for us to build on so that equality can be achieved 365 days a year, not just on International Women's Day."

Caitlin Gould, Founder and Director of TECwomen CIC has extensive experience in speaking at tech conferences and in schools on STEM subjects and said "If young people only see men talking about tech then it creates a bias early on. When you do get a woman coming in to talk about tech it starts to change some of the perceptions they have. There are so many amazing and talented speakers locally who organisers don't know about, so a platform like this helps to raise their profile and bring in new speakers who are invited because of their subject matter expertise. This will help to challenge some of those biases."

Agile on the Beach, the conference now in its 12th year welcomes around 50 speakers and over 450 participants in July each year to explore the latest techniques in Agile methodologies. This year, the committee received 270 paper submissions from prospective

speakers and after an extensive review process, 46 speakers were chosen and a 50% split was achieved between self-identified male/female selected speakers. This split is not uncommon for Agile on the Beach, as the organising committee is deliberate about diversity with it being a key part of the ethos of the conference.

On attracting a diverse speaker line-up at conferences, Chris O'Dell, one of the members of the speaker committee for Agile on the Beach said "You have to build up trust. No woman wants to be the first one in the room. You have to build a network, you have to approach people directly for their skills and tell them you want to hear from them. We consistently work on it by letting them know we exist and showing them who has spoken in the past to show them they are welcome here. Diversity doesn't happen by accident."

The team has set a target of getting 500 new profiles added to the website and inviting submissions from any person who self-identified as a woman. Niki adds "Tech is such a broad term, that you may feel like an imposter if you don't think your role is specifically a 'tech' role. I invite you to join us! Whether you're in tech, digital, software and/or work for a company that is, or if you're in a supporting role for these industries you're still a woman in tech! So marketers, accountants, HR, designers, that also means you - pull up a chair and grab your seat at the table."

The platform is now live at https://womenintechsouthwest.com and is free to join and search.

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About Software Cornwall:

Software Cornwall is a not-for-profit membership organisation established in 2014 to support the growth of the software, tech and digital sectors in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. The organisation runs programmes and activities that help create career pathways into tech and promote jobs and news as well as hosting community networking events with its members and partners. Software Cornwall is especially known for its award-winning education outreach programme, including the Mission to Mars work experience week which helps young people learn to code and experience what it's like to work in a software company.

https://softwarecornwall.org/

About TECwomen:

TECwomen is a community interest company that provides support, training, and a community for women who work (or want to work) in Technology, Engineering and Creative digital industries. They also run the award-winning TECgirls Project, working with children as young as 4 to help ignite a love for all things TEC (Technology, Engineering and Creativity).
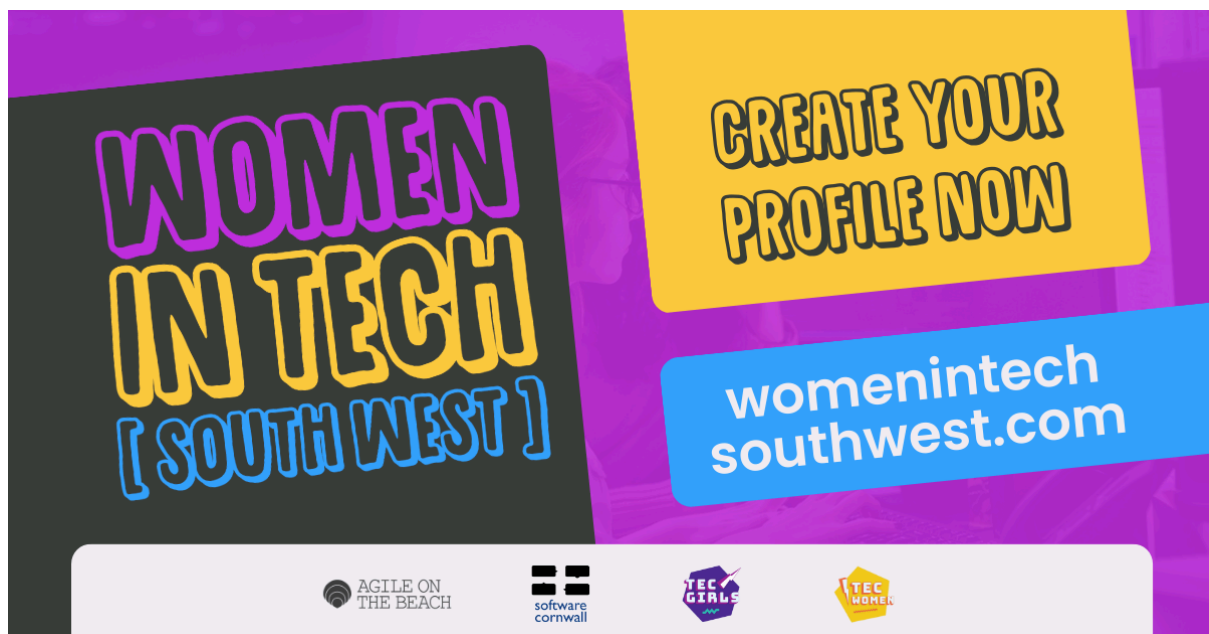
https://www.tecwomen.co.uk/
https://www.tecgirls.co.uk/

About Agile on the Beach:

Agile on the Beach is a conference devoted to delivering an environment for businesses and individuals at all stages of their digital transformation and Agile journey to thrive, grow and develop. They propagate innovative Agile methodologies through a community of thought leaders, visionaries and adopters, widening the Agile bubble and helping businesses and individuals to add meaningful value. The conference attracts attendees and speakers from all over the globe and includes two full days of talks, learning, workshops, networking and social events. We talk Software Delivery, Agility In Business, Team Working, Product Design & Management and run multiple workshops over both days.

https://agileonthebeach.com/

Supporting images:

Supporting links:

https://womenintechsouthwest.com