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How We See It

State boosts design and 'digital' sectors

By Mass High Tech staff

For years, we have called for the tech community to stand up, look around and realize that the parts need to work together to equal something more than their sum. And in fits and starts, there have been some successes — the biotech community rallied around the global BIO forum in 2007 and the state stepped up and pledged \$1 billion to build on the state's strengths (even as that billion is being whittled down in the legislative budget process, as we reported last week.) The clean energy sector has likewise done a good job of getting the word out about its wins — from the formation of the New England Clean Energy Council to ongoing efforts that continue to attract government ears (and, thus, funds and national attention).

On June 10, that level of interconnectivity comes to the state's graphic and product designers, not to mention its architects and CAD experts, who number more than 40,000 workers. The formation of the Design Industry Group of Massachusetts (DIGMA) at the behest of state's Housing and Economic Development Department is the latest example of the state putting its efforts where the skills are. On the same day, the IT community (soon to be called something more brandable, like the "digital" industry) is also having its coming-out party. Or perhaps its "coming back" party — after all, it's been the powerhouse of the state's overall tech community for years, but has fallen into an identity crisis in the past decade. The recent efforts by the state to bring the sector's discrete voices together for a larger purpose are commendable and appropriate. Individual factions are unlikely to coalesce otherwise.

There's no question that it's time for the parts to add up to something bigger than themselves.

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