

## **RS Components and IBM Cloud establish innovation partnership with DesignSpark Marketplace**

### **RS Components launches DesignSpark Marketplace with IBM Cloud to accelerate design and market testing for small businesses and makers**

**London, UK - 07 Jun 2018:** Created via an agile Design Thinking process in the IBM Cloud Garage in London, DesignSpark Marketplace enables makers, start-ups and small businesses to promote, test and sell their inventions to an online community of more than 650,000 members. Working with IBM, RS acted with the speed of a start-up and the industrial scale of an enterprise to combine key skills, technologies and agile innovation methods to build engagement both internally and with end users.

RS wanted to build on the success of its original platform, DesignSpark, to build a peer-to-peer marketplace. Working in the London IBM Cloud Garage, one of 12 physical hubs within IBM's global Garage network, RS brought together critical stakeholders to work alongside IBM design and technology experts to create a compelling, collaborative user experience, and delivered a beta, production-ready platform in just four weeks. The project was anchored by the IBM Cloud Garage Method, a unique and agile approach to building with IBM Cloud and the technologies it delivers.

Powered by IBM Cloud technologies such as the IBM Cloud Kubernetes Service, IBM Cloud Object Storage and data services such as MySQL and Elasticsearch, DesignSpark Marketplace connects makers with content to learn from their peers. It provides free CAD software to create new products and inventions such as Pi-Top, a laptop kit created to support STEM learning, and addresses a key challenge faced by inventors: getting products to market. The platform helps overcome this obstacle by enabling makers to sell products which can be used by other inventors and big thinkers to further build innovation.

"The launch of DesignSpark Marketplace marks a step-change in a promising and innovative journey for both IBM and RS Components," says Andy Stanford-Clark, IBM UKI CTO. "By combining the experience of two long-standing organisations, we can focus on using breakthrough technologies and design techniques to deliver the most compelling experience for RS' customers. DesignSpark Marketplace is an exciting landmark, and a platform built in the IBM Cloud Garage to foster collaborative innovation to truly allow makers to kickstart their inventions and ideas."

IBM is continuing to carve a unique position in the cloud by opening up access to capabilities that encourage innovation and collaboration. Deployed on the IBM Cloud Kubernetes Service, DesignSpark Marketplace utilises a broad suite of IBM Cloud services to easily integrate and run the new online community within RS' existing digital presence, as well as augment it with third party components through an open and agile architecture. Potential sellers can now list any product created, and users can register for free on the platform to buy and sell new creations, fostering a new way for makers to collaborate creatively. Whether a hobbyist or a business, the Marketplace supports projects related to electronics and 3-D printing – whether 'add-on boards' or kits to use

with popular Single Board computers like Raspberry Pi or Arduino, or other standalone creative projects.

“We are focusing on solving one of the biggest challenges today for makers, engineers and entrepreneurs - getting new products and creations in front of potential customers.” says Alex von Schirmeister, Chief Innovation Officer, RS Components. “In the long term, we look forward to innovation partnerships with many leading-edge technology partners and IBM in particular, expanding our work and combining our expertise and experience to drive even more compelling user experiences.”

The launch of DesignSpark Marketplace marks the latest milestone for the partnership between IBM and RS to intersect technology and agile development processes to build innovative new projects, encourage entrepreneurship and differentiate competitively.

### **About IBM Cloud Garage**

For every business and across any industry, the IBM Cloud Garage Method can be adopted to deliver ideas faster. The aim is to not only speed up the process, but to iteratively perfect it and make it repeatable. To do so, IBM Cloud Garage teams create personas to understand user pain points, define the right cloud strategy and tools, rank backlogs to deliver a minimum viable product, build user experience prototypes, and validate with users. As IBM expands its footprint, the IBM Cloud Garage in Munich, located inside the Watson IoT headquarters, opened in April and is the 12th Cloud Garage in our global network, bringing IBM's strengths in cloud, agile tools, blockchain, data and AI to the region.

### **About RS Components**

RS Components and Allied Electronics & Automation are the trading brands of Electrocomponents plc, a global multi-channel distributor. We offer more than 500,000 industrial and electronics products, sourced from over 2,500 leading suppliers, and provide a wide range of value-added services to over one million customers. With operations in 32 countries, we ship more than 50,000 parcels a day. Electrocomponents is listed on the London Stock Exchange and in the last financial year ended 31 March 2018 had revenues of £1.71bn. For more information, please visit the website at [www.rs-online.com](http://www.rs-online.com).

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