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£12M PROJECT TO TARGET EMOTIONS

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COVENTRY will lead the rest of the country in technology after a multi-million-pound investment at the University of Warwick to design products that target emotions.

A new £12 million programme has been announced to help small and medium sized firms access some of the world's leading product and service design technology.

Work on the new International Institute for Product and Service Innovation is set to begin in a couple of months – with plans to move academics into the new building by the summer of 2012.

The open plan environment will allow engineers and innovators from SMEs to see the technology for themselves and talk through their needs with experts co-located with the technology.

The Institute will be built alongside the Warwick Manufacturing Group at the university and is being jointly funded by the European Regional Development Fund and the University of Warwick.

This funding partnership has been brought together by the regional development agency Advantage West Midlands.

WMG director Professor Lord Kumar Bhattacharyya said: "Today even the most low-tech of products benefit enormously from the latest design technology in creating them and fitting them into the marketplace.

"The best product design technology will ensure that even the sound, feel and look of a product is

perfected and even tailored to the customer's desires.

"This new International Institute for Produce and Service Innovation will allow Midlands SMEs to find the technology they need to deliver that customer experience."

The Institute will bring into one place some of the world's leading products and service technologies including multifunctional polymers that enable advanced electronics and functionality to be embedded in three dimensional plastic moulded components, and

digital design tools that will allow the creation of virtual products that can be shared with production partners.

However, the very latest digital design tools that will be available to SMEs at the new Institute will go one step further than most in that they will also be designed to deliver the best emotional experience for customers.

The new Institute was announced on the same day as the visit to WMG by Mark Prisk MP, the Minister of State for Business and Enterprise and the European Commission vice-president Antonio Tajani, who both declared support for the economic importance of small and medium sized enterprises.

