

# News story: Digital Charter will set new online standards for years to come

The Prime Minister has given [further details](#) of the [Government's Digital Charter](#) which has been published today. The Charter sets the direction for the UK to become the best place to start and grow a digital business and the safest place in the world to be online.

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Davos, the Prime Minister set out how, through the Charter, the UK will ensure that innovative businesses in the tech sector can thrive and the public can have the confidence and trust in the development of new technologies.

The internet has changed the way people behave and interact online. Combined with new technology such as artificial intelligence (AI), it is set to change society – growing the economy, making us more productive and raising living standards.

Alongside these new opportunities come new challenges and risks. The internet can be used to spread terrorist material, can be a tool for abuse and bullying, and be used to undermine civil discourse, objective news and intellectual property.

The Digital Charter is the Government's response to this. Its core purpose is to make the internet work for everyone. Through it the Government will agree new norms and rules for the online world and put them into practice.

DCMS Secretary of State Matt Hancock said:

The internet is a powerful force for good with the potential to benefit everyone's lives. Not only does it make it easier to shop or check the weather, but it also underpins revolutionary technologies which allow new robotics to make difficult medical procedures easier.

But there are clear challenges and we need to protect people from the potential harms. Our Digital Charter responds to this challenge and through it we will agree new standards for online behaviour to make sure the UK continues to be an innovation friendly digital economy and haven for tech investment.

The Digital Charter will follow key principles, such as ensuring the internet remains free, open and accessible, that personal data should be respected and used appropriately, and the rights people have offline should be protected online.

It will not be developed by Government alone. It will look to the tech sector, businesses and civil society to own these challenges with Government.

Priorities for the Government include protecting people from harmful content and behaviour through our Internet Safety Strategy, ensuring data is used in a safe and ethical way, looking at the legal liability that social media companies have for the content shared on their sites, limiting the spread of disinformation and making sure that companies have suitable cyber security.

Julian David, CEO of techUK, said:

The tech sector fully supports the objectives of the Charter. There is much that we can achieve working together with Government on shared problems. Rapid and effective progress will depend upon genuine and open dialogue.

We have to ensure that proposed solutions are practical and deliverable and never lose sight of the twin objectives to have the world's safest and most successful digital economy. The economic and social potential to the UK is huge and as a sector we are committed to helping deliver that promise.

Rachel Coldicutt, CEO of Doteveryone, a think tank for digital society said:

Doteveryone is glad to see the government responding to the dramatic transformations technology has brought to society through the Digital Charter announced today. Regulation of digital technologies must be not only good for business, but good for everyone.

It is vital that the digital technologies we all rely on are made responsible, fair and inclusive and serve the needs of everyone in our society. This is an important opportunity for a public debate on how we shape our digital society and Doteveryone will continue to champion responsible technology that is good for everyone as the Digital Charter develops.

The Digital Charter aims to boost our digital economy and follows other Government work where regulation done right unlocks growth and supports business. The Financial Conduct Authority's Regulatory Sandbox scheme, for example, allows businesses to test innovative products, services and business models in a live market environment, while making sure appropriate safeguards are in place.