

Press release: Powerful new forum to boost jobs and growth in UK digital economy

- First meeting of Digital Economy Council chaired by the Culture Secretary
- Council will see Government, academia and tech firms work together
- Aims to help increase value of sector already worth £118 billion a year

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport will chair the first meeting of the Digital Economy Council (DEC) on Monday 3rd July. It will bring together some of the most influential voices in the tech sector to stimulate new growth and deliver new jobs in the digital economy.

The Council has been set up to provide a forum for collaboration as Government works with leading industry figures on the implementation of the UK Digital Strategy and the development of a Digital Charter. Its members include TechUK, Google, Facebook, Cisco, Dotforge, Coadec, TV Squared, BT and Apple.

The Digital Strategy includes plans to boost the nation's digital skills, infrastructure and innovation, and aims to make the UK the best place to invest in tech. It will help to deliver the Government's ambition to make the UK the best place to start and run a digital business – creating more of the high-skilled, high-paid jobs of the future with the benefits felt in all four corners of the United Kingdom.

The Council will help ensure our tech sector's enormous potential is fulfilled as we leave the European Union. The UK is already home to more than 200,000 digital businesses supporting more than 1.4 million jobs – with the fastest growing-digital hubs from 2010-14 in Southampton, West Cornwall and Dundee. It will also help break down barriers so every individual and every business can seize the opportunities of digital technology.

Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport Karen Bradley said:

I'm delighted to be bringing together this powerful group of tech experts, industry leaders and global > innovators to spearhead new growth in our thriving digital economy.

The Digital Economy Council will play a vital part in helping us achieve our aim of making the UK the best place in the world to start and grow a digital business with the benefits enjoyed throughout society and in every part of our country.

The Secretary of State will use the first meeting to ask the tech community how Government can better work with them to take advantage of the

opportunities and overcome the challenges of digital technology, as well as set out the priorities for the council for year ahead.

This could include looking at new ways to improve small and medium businesses' digital transformation, how to boost the digital skills pipeline and assessing how the country can better commercialise its world-leading research.

She will also express her confidence in the UK's world-leading digital economy and commit to working with other Digital Economy Council members so technology delivers economic growth and prosperity across the whole of the UK, as we prepare to leave the European Union.

The Council, which will meet quarterly, includes leading UK digital businesses as well as global tech firms and representatives of the broader digital economy.

Jacqueline de Rojas, President of techUK, said:

Tech can be a powerful growth engine of the UK economy post-Brexit. For that to happen there is much that we need to get right. From the Digital Strategy to the proposed new Digital Charter, I'm happy Government is working with tech businesses to ensure that we unlock the next wave of digital growth.

As the President of techUK, I am delighted to serve on the Digital Economy Council to ensure a strong voice for the whole of the tech industry, from the largest employers through to the innovative SMEs and start-ups.

Government will also shortly convene the Digital Economy Advisory Group, which represents a variety of UK tech businesses, to focus on the specific challenges and opportunities of starting and growing a tech business.

Media enquiries – please contact the DCMS News and Communications team on 020 7211 2210 or out of hours on 07699 751153.

The seven pillars of the Digital Strategy are:

1. Connectivity – building world-class digital infrastructure for the UK
2. Digital skills and inclusion – giving everyone access to the digital skills they need
3. The digital sectors – making the UK the best place to start and grow a digital business
4. The wider economy – helping every British business become a digital business
5. A safe and secure cyberspace – making the UK the safest place in the world to live and work online
6. Digital government – maintaining the UK government as a world leader in serving its citizens online
7. Data – unlocking the power of data in the UK economy and improving

public confidence in its use