

Sales soar for firms in booming UK safety tech sector

- Sector is a world leader with revenues up 40% and 500 new jobs
- Companies are creating innovative new technologies to protect children online which will help prepare big tech platforms for UK's Online Safety Bill
- Organisations using safety tech include Chelsea FC which is combatting racist abuse online

With more people than ever before going online during the pandemic, new research published today shows the safety tech sector is one of the fastest growing parts of the UK's tech industry, with a 40 per cent increase in revenues in the past year – reaching £314 million – and a 30 per cent increase in jobs, equating to more than 500 new roles.

More than half (58 per cent) of all safety tech jobs are based outside London, with high-performing hubs developing in tech savvy cities including Leeds, Cambridge and Edinburgh. The sector has seen overall growth of 43 per cent, with the number of safety tech companies surpassing 100.

The UK's safety tech companies make up a quarter of the international market and their reach is global – more than half of UK safety tech companies export to international markets.

Safety tech companies provide products and services to create safer online experiences for people. This includes products such as AI programmes which can block illegal content, identify underage users, disrupt the spread of harmful disinformation and help moderators detect abuse.

Last year ministers [committed](#) to developing the safety tech sector and recently published the [draft Online Safety Bill](#) to give online companies a new legal duty of care to protect their users, particularly children, from harm. UK safety tech providers are delivering innovative products that can help companies meet their new duties under the Bill.

Digital Minister Caroline Dinenage said:

The stellar growth we've seen shows how the UK is at the forefront of using technology to solve problems around how online companies protect their users.

Through our groundbreaking new laws, and with our safety tech sector going from strength to strength, we are paving the way for people to have a better relationship with the online world.

The independent report, [The UK Safety Tech Sector: 2021 Analysis](#), commissioned by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)

highlights startups such as Checkstep which uses AI to tackle disinformation and improve content moderation and SafeToNet which detects and filters risks to users such as cyberbullying and grooming online in real time.

Chelsea Football Club has recently adopted UK firm Crisp's technology to identify, report and remove hateful and discriminatory posts and is offering players support to identify and report abusive comments posted to their digital channels.

Many leading tech companies and global brands with large online communities, including the LEGO Group, Electronic Arts and Roblox, are using safety tech products to protect their users.

Andy Burrows, NSPCC Head of Child Safety Online Policy said:

This growth in the safety tech sector is a great opportunity for the UK to build a position as one of the leading centres of expertise on online harms, and in turn, to keep children safe from abuse.

Safety tech is so exciting because it delivers innovative new solutions to online harms. It's a crucial part of supporting companies large and small to meet their upcoming requirements under the Duty of Care regulatory regime.

Ian Stevenson, Chair of the Online Safety Technology Industry Association (OSTIA) and CEO of Cyan, added:

The report highlights that the UK Safety Tech sector is thriving. As the threat grows, innovators and determined tech creators are finding new ways to support organisations in their efforts to better protect children online, identify abuse and flag harmful content. The UK is already well ahead in the global safety tech sector.

At a time where the exponential growth of technology is seen as a problem, the UK safety tech sector provides solutions to limit online harm at pace and encourages more talented individuals to join the sector as they know that their work will effect change, benefiting and protecting countless people.

The sector saw the launch of the Online Safety Tech Industry Association (OSTIA) last year and of an innovation [network](#) designed to help companies share best practice. The UK also hosted [Safety Tech 2021](#), a world-first Expo event to showcase how technology can be used to support safer online communities. In March 2021, G7 countries announced a commitment to supporting safety tech growth and innovation as part of the [Internet Safety Principles](#).

The growth of the safety tech sector reflects the strength of the wider UK

tech industry where startups grew tenfold between 2010 and 2020. Earlier this year, the government announced its [Ten Tech priorities](#) which include a focus on keeping the UK safe online, fueling an era of startups and unleashing the transformational power of tech and AI.

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Notes to Editors:

- Read The UK Safety Tech Sector: 2021 Analysis report [here](#).
- A further report, 'Safety Tech in the UK: skills and capabilities', also [published](#) today, contains the first profile of skill and capability needs in the UK Safety Tech Sector. Government will hold a roundtable with sector stakeholders in June 2021 to review report recommendations and develop an action plan to respond to them.
- DCMS is working closely with DIT to grow safety tech international markets, including through the launch of a [providers directory](#) and a series of safety tech events in [Germany](#).
- The potential of the sector was recently recognised by G7 countries in their [commitment](#) to share research and best practice in safety technology.