

UK to help develop new tech to stop sharing of terrorist content

The Home Office is providing funding and support for a new project that will help to stop violent videos being shared online after terrorist attacks.

The new funding, announced by the Prime Minister at the UN General Assembly in New York, will support efforts to develop industry-wide technology that can automatically identify online videos which have been altered to avoid existing detection methods, and help prevent them from being shared online.

The announcement follows the Christchurch attack in New Zealand in March, in which 51 people were killed and which saw hundreds of different versions of the attacker's live-streamed video spread across online platforms, with Facebook removing over 1.5 million uploads of the video from their platform.

Many had been intentionally edited to evade current content filters and, in some cases, it took days for them to be removed.

UK data-science experts, supported by the Home Office, will use the new funding to create an algorithm which any technology company in the world can use, free of charge, to improve the way that they detect violent and harmful videos and prevent them being shared by their users.

Not only will this make it much harder for terrorist content to be shared online but the outcomes of the research could eventually also be used to help spot other types of harmful content such as child sexual abuse.

Home Secretary Priti Patel MP today added:

The sharing of images of terrorist attacks has a devastating effect on the families and loved ones of victims and plays into terrorists' hands by amplifying their twisted messages.

The UK has a track record of showing that state of the art technology can be developed, in partnership with industry, at relatively low cost and this is just the latest example of our commitment to working with industry to tackle our shared challenges and respond to the ever evolving threats which we face.

The announcement further demonstrates the UK's role as a world leader in online safety as it continues to build on the shared commitments to work with industry in the fight against terrorism online which were made at the Home Secretary hosted Five Country Ministerial meeting in London earlier this year.

This announcement also honours the commitments made in the Christchurch Call to Action to tackle terrorist use of the internet, which world leaders signed

up to at a summit in Paris in May.

Ghana: H.M The Queen recognises Ghanaian volunteer with POL Award

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has recognised Cordie Aziz, representing Ghana, as the 105th Commonwealth Point of Light Award recipient in honour of her exceptional voluntary service to the environment, training hundreds of people to become recycling entrepreneurs.

As part of the legacy of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London 2018, Her Majesty The Queen – as Head of the Commonwealth – is thanking inspirational volunteers across the 53 Commonwealth nations for the difference they are making in their communities and beyond, by recognising one volunteer from each Commonwealth country each week in the two years following the Summit.

By sharing these stories of service, the Commonwealth Points of Light awards celebrate inspirational acts of volunteering across the Commonwealth and help inspire others to make their own contribution to tackling some of the greatest social challenges of our time.

The award ceremony was hosted by the British High Commissioner; Ian Walker at the British High Commission, Accra on Tuesday, 17th September, 2019. The Mayor of Accra; Hon Mohammed Adjei Sowah and the Deputy Minister for Sanitation and Water Resources, Hon. Patrick Yaw Boamah (MP) attended the occasion to show their support of the tremendous contribution of Ms. Aziz towards waste management and recycling.

Ahead of the award ceremony Cordie Aziz said: “I am absolutely humbled and honoured to be the third recipient of the Points of Light Award in Ghana. It is such a great privilege to be recognised for doing something that I absolutely love. Through my work with informal waste sector workers, I seek to not only reduce the poverty gap among a vulnerable population, but also create waste collection systems that stop plastic waste from devastating our communities and waterways. I think that by empowering the vulnerable, we can create a ripple effect that will undoubtedly change the way the world works. Through my work, I envision creating greater social equity, inclusion and a cleaner Ghana that we all can enjoy. I thank everyone at the British High Commission in Ghana for championing these causes and recognising the importance of this work.”

British High Commissioner to Ghana H.E. Iain Walker said: “I am delighted to present the Commonwealth Point of Light award to Cordie Aziz of Environment 360 on behalf of HM The Queen. Cordie is bringing together communities and businesses to change the culture around recycling. Together with her

dedicated team at Environment360, Cordie has become a key partner to the British High Commission at our flagship events, helping us to reduce and recycle our waste. Her work has already led to the collection of 600 metric tonnes of waste paper. Cordie's innovative workshops in schools has resulted in 15,000 children setting up their own recycling programmes. The future looks green."

Presenting the award on behalf of the Her Majesty The Queen, the British High Commissioner H.E Iain Walker said the UK Government is now diverting much more of its money into environmental protection, waste management and recycling and recognised that it is a global effort, not just an issue for governments, communities and individuals can also make a difference. The Deputy Minister for Sanitation and Water Resources, Hon. Patrick Yaw Boamah (MP) said: "I want to encourage the youth of this country to emulate the shining example of Ms. Cordie Aziz so that not only would they find solutions to the myriad of challenges in the country but also they would be creating employment for themselves and others".

The Mayor of Accra; Hon Mohammed Adjei Sowah said: "Waste disposal has been a challenge in Accra. We need to be conscious of how we generate and dispose of waste to reduce its impact on the climate. It is not only the responsibility of the city management but all of us. We are thankful for what Ms. Cordie has done and we will continue to support her." -END

[UK creates global alliance to help protect the world's ocean](#)

The UK has today announced a new global alliance to help drive urgent action to safeguard the world's ocean and protect its precious wildlife.

Plastic pollution, warming sea temperatures and human impacts are having a significant impact on the world's marine environments and even putting certain species at risk of extinction.

The UK is leading the way on this issue, [having been the first country to call for a global 30 per cent target at the United Nations General Assembly last year](#). The UK has also taken action, protecting more than 50 per cent of UK and Overseas Territories waters by 2020, and tackling the scourge of plastic that often ends up there, by introducing the 5p plastic bag charge and banning the supply of plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds from next April.

So far, Belize, Costa Rica, Finland, Gabon, Kenya, Seychelles, Vanuatu, Portugal, Palau and Belgium have all signed up to the 30by30 initiative, which is pushing for at least 30 per cent of the global ocean to be protected in Marine Protected Areas by 2030. These protections help sensitive species

such as seahorses, turtles and corals to thrive, and can help fight climate change by protecting key carbon habitats such as mangrove forests and seagrass meadows.

The Global Ocean Alliance will push for the trebling of existing globally-agreed targets so at least a third of the ocean is safeguarded in Marine Protected Areas over the next decade. It will also call for the 30by30 ambition to be adopted at the next Convention on Biological Diversity conference in China and introduced into international law through the High Seas Treaty in 2020.

Last month [the Prime Minister announced plans to go even further with £7 million to extend the 'Blue Belt'](#) – over four million square kilometres of marine environment – across the UK Overseas Territories. The international coalition announced today will help to drive even greater international action to tackle these issues and safeguard the world's ocean for future generations.

Environment Secretary, Theresa Villiers said:

The UK is taking a world-leading approach to marine conservation and is on track to safeguard nearly 50 per cent of our precious marine habitats. But we are determined to go further.

The world's ocean is a shared resource, sustaining lives and livelihoods and supporting 80 per cent of our blue planet's biodiversity. Only by working together can we protect and restore our marine environment for future generations to come.

International Environment Minister Zac Goldsmith, in New York to attend UNGA, said:

We have all seen the damage that both climate change and human exploitation has had on our most pristine environments. Our ocean is under unprecedented pressure, with appalling effects on marine biodiversity and human livelihoods.

I am delighted to be in New York to press the case for an ambitious global network of marine protected areas which will be critically important in reversing the loss of biodiversity and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Less than 10 per cent of the world's ocean is currently designated as Marine Protected Areas. But science shows such areas are one of the most important ways to protect precious sea life and habitats from damaging activities – and evidence supports a target of at least 30 per cent to reverse existing

adverse impacts, preserve fish populations, increase resilience to climate change, and sustain long-term ocean health.

The international coalition announced today builds on the UK's world-leading efforts to increase Blue Belt protections. [The UK government designated 41 new Marine Conservation Zones in May](#), marking the most significant expansion of England's 'Blue Belt' to date. The UK now has a total of 355 marine protected areas in waters around Great Britain and Northern Ireland and an independent review is considering whether stronger protections should be introduced.

It also follows recently announced UK-backed plans for more than 150,000 square miles of a 'no take' zone around Ascension Island, closing the off-shore area to any fishing activity. This will support the protection of key species such as green turtles.

The government's commitment to marine protection forms a key part of the [25 Year Environment Plan](#). As part of this plan, the government has also introduced [one of the world's strongest bans on microbeads](#) to protect our ocean, in addition to the plastic bag charge and [ban on straws, stirrers and cotton buds](#).

[Government investing almost £1 million in transport tech start-ups](#)

- competition launched for new round of grants for UK transport technology start-ups
- celebrating its 10th round of funding, the Transport-Technology Research and Innovation Grant attracts £5 in investment for every £1 of grant allocated
- government looking for innovative projects to tackle carbon emissions, further improve air quality, increase infrastructure resilience and make the transport system more accessible for all

Innovative and tech-focused transport start-ups can, from today (Tuesday 24 September 2019), [bid for a share of almost £1 million](#) (£960,000) in Department for Transport funding.

The grant – called the Transport-Technology Research and Innovation Grant (T-TRIG) – is available for entrepreneurs and innovators pioneering new ways of creating a better transport system.

Issuing targeted investments of up to £30,000 for each project, the fund aims to help start-ups and academics propel their ideas to market quicker.

The Minister for the Future of Transport, George Freeman MP, will launch the

competition at a roundtable with UK transport technology businesses. George Freeman, said:

This government is committed to improving the UK's transport network, from tackling air pollution to fixing potholes for good.

We now have an exciting opportunity to stimulate the brightest thinkers in our universities and small business networks to try out novel solutions to fix legacy problems across our transport system and realise their visions for the future.

Schemes like this grant will ensure the UK retains its reputation as a world-leading innovator, and I encourage early-stage businesses in the transport sector to apply for the funds available.

Now in its 10th round of funding, government has provided £4.6 million via this grant over the past five years to more than 140 technology and innovation projects, with successful winners including [Wayfindr](#) and [Flit](#).

Alex Murray, Managing Director and Co-Founder of e-bike company FLIT, previous recipients of the T-TRIG, said:

Early support from the Department for Transport was crucial for getting our first e-bike off the ground. The grant allowed us to build our first prototype with a specialist in Essex. We learnt an enormous amount from this process, and these lessons have carried over to the FLIT-16, the first folding e-bike that we successfully launched through a crowdfunding campaign in the summer of 2019.

Investment from this fund has often been a precursor to funding from private investors, and over £25 million in additional investment, largely from the private sector, has been secured off the back of successful projects awarded funding since the scheme began.

Nicola Yates OBE, CEO of the [Connected Places Catapult](#), said:

We're excited to be using our expertise to manage the latest T-TRIG competition for one of our key partners the Department for Transport.

Early stage funding is a vital component to driving great solutions from the drawing board to reality and the areas covered in this competition, including decarbonisation and accessible transport, are key areas to tackle in the UK today. We're looking forward to working with the winners to ensure T-TRIG leads to tangible benefits for transport users.

The funding is a key part of the UK's [Future of Mobility Grand Challenge](#) strategy, which is taking advantage of the extraordinary innovation in UK engineering and technology happening today to help the government deliver better journeys for all.

Unique to this year's grant, the competition has 3 themed elements: Decarbonisation, Age-friendly and Accessible Transport, and Potholes and Resilient Infrastructure, reflecting the [Industrial Strategy Grand Challenges](#) and core issues facing the UK's transport network.

[Science Minister hails 'incredible strength' of UK space industry](#)

- New funding for UK business ideas to fly to the International Space Station
- UK Space Agency to support one million STEM interactions with young people.
- £20 million from government's [Strategic Priorities Fund](#) to upgrade UK capabilities in space weather modelling and measurement and £1.3 million for horizontal spaceport plans in England, Scotland and Wales.

A new package of space funding was unveiled by Science Minister Chris Skidmore at the [UK Space Conference](#) in Newport today (Tuesday 24 September).

The government is committed to developing the UK's national space capabilities while stepping up international collaborations, including through the European Space Agency.

The UK Space Agency will provide up to £1 million, matched by industry, for innovative new business ideas that could benefit from a flight to the International Space Station. These could be anything from medicines and innovative materials developed in the low gravity environment, to space-flown consumer products.

The Science Minister also announced a new STEM education programme which will see the UK Space Agency supporting the space sector to engage with one million young people each year. The new programme aims to recruit more professionals to enthuse and inspire young people, providing training and matching them up to opportunities in schools and colleges.

This follows the announcement earlier today that [the government is investing £20 million](#) to predict severe space weather events, improving systems at the [Met Office Space Weather Operations Centre](#) and building the UK's knowledge on how to forecast and better prepare for space weather.

The UK Space Agency will also award £1.3 million to help further develop

plans for horizontal spaceports in Wales, Scotland and England: * £499,811 to Snowdonia Aerospace for the Snowdonia Spaceport Development Plan, which aims to create a centre for space R&D, training and satellite launch. * £488,000 to Machrihanish Airbase Community Company for the spaceport cluster plan in Argyle, Scotland, centred on an aerodrome with the longest runway in Scotland. * £306,480 to Cornwall Council for an Accelerated Business Development and Research Project at Spaceport Cornwall, supporting its ambition to be a centre for future flight technologies.

Science Minister Chris Skidmore said:

I'm consistently blown away by the incredible strength of the UK space industry and the contribution it makes to life across the country, providing us with innovative solutions to complex problems and creating high-skilled jobs for more than 40,000 people.

There are huge opportunities as space becomes more commercial, and to meet them we must harness the inspirational effect space has on young people and bring even more people into this fast-growing sector.

It's also vital that we both build our national capability and forge new international partnerships, while strengthening our commitment to the European Space Agency, which delivers world-leading science and a significant return on investment, benefiting people and businesses across the country.

This morning, the UK Space Agency and [Australian Space Agency](#) signalled their intent to develop a 'SpaceBridge' agreement, which will unlock greater collaboration between the two nation's governments, regulators and space industries.

There are further opportunities to increase international space collaboration at the European Space Agency Council of Ministers meeting in November, where science, space weather and exploration will be key priorities for the UK.

The government has also confirmed it will establish the UK's first National Space Council, with further details of the chair and membership of the Council to follow in the coming weeks.

The Science Minister will meet key international partners such as the European Space Agency and NASA during the UK Space Conference, which is expected to attract up to 1,800 people to the new International Convention Centre Wales.

He will also engage with representatives from across the UK's thriving space sector to discuss a potential boost to national investments in key technologies and priority missions.