

Winners announced in first phase of UK-U.S. privacy-enhancing technologies prize challenges

- 12 teams from across the U.S. and the UK were announced today as winners of Phase 1 of the PETs prize challenges
- Applications now open to join red teams, which will rigorously test the strength of privacy protections of the most promising solutions in the final phase of the challenges

Today, the UK and the U.S. governments have announced the winners of the first phase of the UK-U.S. privacy-enhancing technologies (PETs) prize challenges. Innovators on both sides of the Atlantic are participating across two challenge tracks – using PETs to improve detection of financial crime and forecasting an individual’s risk of infection during a pandemic – or designing a solution that would meet both scenarios.

The 12 prize-winning technical papers, selected from 76 entries, set out state-of-the-art approaches to privacy-preserving federated learning, winning a total of \$157,000 (£138,000) in prizes. They reflect the breadth and depth of technical talent in both nations and include teams from academic institutions, global technology companies, and privacy start-ups.

The second phase of the challenges, which began earlier this month, will see participating teams build the solutions envisioned in their technical papers. They will also have opportunities to engage with regulators and government agencies, to inform the development of solutions that uphold crucial regulatory principles. Innovators in the second phase will compete for prizes worth a combined \$915,000 (£803,000).

The UK and U.S. governments are also opening applications for red teams, who will participate in the third phase of the challenges. Red teams will rigorously test the privacy-preserving capacities of the top-scoring solutions from the second phase of the challenges to assess the final winners. Recruitment for red teams is open [here](#), with applications closing on 23 November. Top-scoring red teams will be awarded prizes from a combined pool of ~\$225,000 (£200,000).

The challenge problems being tackled by participants are based on artificially-generated, or synthetic, data sets that are representative of real world use cases, but contain no actual client information. Data being used for the financial crime track is based on synthetic banking data developed by global financial institutions BNY Mellon and Deutsche Bank and synthetic global transaction data created by SWIFT, the global provider of secure financial messaging services, using the MOSTLY AI synthetic data

platform. Innovators on the public health track are working with a synthetic dataset created by the University of Virginia's Biocomplexity Institute.

Winning solutions will be profiled at the second Summit for Democracy, to be convened by President Joe Biden in 2023.

Julia Lopez, Minister for Media, Data, and Digital Infrastructure at the UK Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, said:

Privacy-enhancing technologies have the potential to unlock the power of data to tackle major societal challenges – from international money laundering to responding to global pandemics – in a way that respects citizens' rights. That's why I'm delighted by the strength of the response to the UK-US prize challenges, with world class researchers on both sides of the Atlantic leaping to the challenge of innovating in a way that upholds our shared values.

John Edwards, UK Information Commissioner, said:

We are proud to be supporting the UK-US PETs prize challenge to help accelerate the development and use of PETs. PETs can help organisations share and use people's data responsibly, lawfully and securely. That's why we are offering advice to the organisations involved, building on our new PETs guidance which is out for consultation.

"AI is driving rapid technology change that is based on ever increasing amounts of disparate data, making privacy enhancing technologies increasingly important," said Under Secretary of Commerce for Standards and Technology and NIST Director Laurie E. Locascio. "The U.S. UK PET prize challenge provides a global venue to build and showcase cutting-edge and scalable solutions that respect human rights and civil liberties. I am excited by the solutions proposed by these scholars and look forward to their impact on enhancing privacy and bolstering trustworthy AI."

"These first-of-their-kind international prize challenges are focusing innovators from the US and UK on overcoming the challenge of maturing PETs for practical use cases," National Science Foundation Director Sethuraman Panchanathan said. "The level of participation and caliber of participants in the U.S.-UK PETs prize challenges promise to accelerate the translation of PETs to practice. I'm excited to see the strong start to the prize challenges across the transatlantic research community and look forward to the results in the next phases."

Contact:

Victoria Fell

Tel: +44 7785 382608

Email: victoria.fell@cdei.gov.uk

Notes to editors

In the UK, Prizes were awarded to the following organisations:

- Corvus Research Limited
- DeepMind and OpenMined*
- Diagonal Works
- GMV
- Faculty
- Featurespace Limited
- Privitar Limited
- University of Cambridge
- University of Liverpool

[In the United States, prizes were awarded to the following teams:](#)

- Team MusCAT: researchers from the Broad Institute, MIT, Harvard Business School, UT Austin, University of Toronto
- Team IBM Research
- Team Secret Computers: researchers from Inpher, Inc.

Across both countries, 76 teams entered the prize challenges. The total UK-U.S. prize pool across all three phases represents \$1.6 million (£1.3 million).

Planning for the challenges is being led by the U.K. Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation (CDEI) and Innovate UK, and the U.S. White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), the U.S. National Institute of

Standards and Technology (NIST), and the U.S. National Science Foundation (NSF). The U.S. challenge is funded and administered jointly by the U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology and the U.S. National Science Foundation.

[The prize challenges were launched in July 2022](#). For more information, please visit the [PETs prize challenges website](#).

*DeepMind and OpenMined have chosen not to accept any prize funds for this challenge.

[Charity regulator issues Official Warning to Christ Church, Oxford](#)

[Christ Church](#) has been involved in long and costly disputes involving its former Dean, who left his role earlier this year following a mediation process. In 2020 the Commission had [told the parties](#) to the dispute to enter into formal mediation.

The Commission has found that trustees failed to act on its previous advice, given between 2019-2020, to continue to have “close oversight of costs” in the dispute. In December 2021, the Commission asked the trustees to provide information about the costs of the actions connected to the former Dean and how these costs were being managed. The trustees were unable to provide the information in a timely manner. The Commission was later informed that the trustees had not set a fixed budget for the costs associated with the dispute, and instead that the full trustee body agreed expenditure retrospectively. Between August 2018 and late January 2022 the college had spent over £6.6m on legal and public relations fees in various actions related to the former Dean, of which over £5.3m appears to have been approved retrospectively.

The regulator is also critical of the trustees’ failure to ensure the college was accountable for its expenditure on legal and public relations fees during the dispute. The Commission has found that the charity’s published accounts (for years ending 2018-21) categorised costs associated with the charity’s actions involving the former Dean as “other direct costs – teaching, research and residential”. The Commission says that this has the potential to mislead the readers of the accounts. The trustees had been advised by the charity’s auditors to consider reporting on actions related to the dispute specifically, and to seek advice on its reporting.

The regulator has determined that these failures and omissions amount to misconduct and/or mismanagement in the charity’s administration.

The Official Warning sets out the actions that the Commission considers

should be taken by the charity to rectify the misconduct and/or mismanagement and to address its concerns, including:

- Completing a full independent Governance Review and taking all reasonable steps to implement its recommendations. This work is already underway.
- Keeping the Commission informed of the progress and implementation of the Governance Review at key milestones.
- Ensuring that the charity's accounts and Trustee Annual Report for the year ending 31 July 2022 comply with the legal requirement to ensure the charity is accountable.

Failure to take steps to remedy the misconduct and/or mismanagement may lead to further regulatory action being taken against the charity's trustees.

Helen Earner, Director of Regulatory Services at the Charity Commission, said:

These long and protracted disputes risked undermining the reputation of Christ Church and harming wider trust in charities.

It is not for us as regulator to take sides in disputes. Our role is to ensure that charities are governed effectively and that charitable funds are properly accounted for. All trustees must demonstrate sound financial stewardship, regardless of the level of resources available to them.

We consider that the actions of the trustees at Christ Church amount to mismanagement and/or misconduct, after they failed to manage the charity's resources responsibly or ensure that the charity is accountable in the context of a costly dispute.

The Commission welcomes the fact that an independent governance review is now underway at the charity, led by the Rt Hon Dominic Grieve KC, and we expect the trustees to keep us updated on its progress.

Good governance should be a priority for all trustees, especially those involved in important national institutions such as Christ Church, Oxford".

Ends

Notes to editors

1. The Official Warning is issued under section 75A of the Charities Act 2011.

2. Information about this power can be found in an [online Q&A](#).
 3. The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.
-

[Appointment of Interim Member to the Senior Salaries Review Body](#)

News story

The Cabinet Office has appointed Philippa Hird as an interim member of the Senior Salaries Review Body.



The Cabinet Office has approved the appointment of Ms Philippa Hird as an interim member of the Senior Salaries Review Body, with immediate effect. The appointment is until 31 July 2023.

The Senior Salaries Review Body provides independent advice to the Prime Minister and senior ministers on the pay of many of the nation's top public servants.

Philippa is an independent director with a particular interest in governance, people strategy, recruitment, remuneration and the delivery of complex change. She is currently Chair of the NHS Pay Review Body, Senior Independent Director and Remuneration Committee Chair of Ordnance Survey and a member of the Board of the University of Manchester. Philippa is a Non-Executive Director of UK Strategic Command, and an independent member of the Remunerations Committee of St Edmund's College, Cambridge.

As Group Human Resources Director of ITV Plc until 2009, Philippa led the consolidation of the regional ITV companies. Prior to that she held general management and then HR roles in Granada Group Plc. She began her career in marketing with ICI and has an MA in Politics, Philosophy and Economics from

The Queen's College Oxford.

Philippa has been a non-executive director of HMRC, Deputy Chair of City, University of London and of AQA, a Board member of Opportunity Now and of Creative Skillset and Vice President of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). She is a Companion of the CIPD and a fellow of the RSA.

Published 10 November 2022

[UK veterans get their say](#)

- A 12 week long UK-wide Veterans' Survey has been launched today (10 November)
- The survey is the first ever government funded survey for all veterans across the country to provide their views
- The survey launches alongside the Office for National Statistics' release of Census 2021 data on the veteran population.

The government has launched the first ever UK-wide survey, for veterans and their families.

Over the next 12 weeks, veterans across the country are able to complete the survey to shape the future of veteran services. Funded and commissioned by the Office of Veterans' Affairs, this is the first ever exercise to collect feedback from the entire veterans community across the UK.

This survey, in collaboration with the Office for National Statistics (ONS), will ask veterans to describe their experiences of being a veteran and of using government services. This will ensure that the government can adapt services to better meet the needs of veterans and their families.

Minister for Veterans' Affairs Johnny Mercer said:

Public services need to reflect the people they serve and so it's really important we hear from veterans on their experiences in accessing support.

No one knows better what it's like to be a veteran in Britain than ex-military themselves. So I urge all ex-service personnel to take the small amount of time to fill in the first ever Veterans Survey.

Your voice can help shape stepped-up services for veterans.

The launch of the survey comes alongside the release of the ONS's Census 2021

data on the veteran population in England and Wales. Last year was the first time a question about someone's military service was included in the Census.

The new ONS figures released today show that there were 1.85 million people in England and Wales who reported that they had previously served in the armed forces.

In England, regions with the highest proportion of veterans were the South West (5.6%) and the North East (5%). The proportion of UK veterans was higher in Wales (4.5%) of the population and in England (3.8%).

Sir Ian Diamond National Statistician at the Office for National Statistics said:

Responses to the survey will help us better understand the experiences, needs and wellbeing of our veteran community, and to guide future action. It is important we hear a wide range of views.

We are passionate about investing time and effort to produce high quality estimates that properly help us all understand how our veterans' needs can be best met.

The stats from the ONS released today, as well as the veterans survey, deliver on commitments under the Veterans Strategy Action Plan to improve the data and understanding of Britain's veteran population. This will help better target support and public services for those veterans who require help.

The ONS will be releasing further statistical information on the veterans population next year.

The survey can be completed online in under 30 minutes, and veterans can access tailored support to complete the survey through the Office for National Statistics' dedicated helpline.

Veterans can fill in the survey [here](#).

Ten years of Automatic Enrolment achieves over £114bn pension savings

In 2021, employees across the UK saved £114.6 billion into their pensions. This is a real terms increase of £32.9 billion compared to 2012, when Automatic Enrolment was introduced.

The figures reveal how the policy has transformed pensions saving over the last ten years for people from Sterling to Southend, by normalising workplace

pension saving, establishing a culture of retirement saving for a new generation, and helping foster a greater sense of security in later life.

More than 10.7 million employees were paying into a workplace pension in 2021, with the proportion of women saving into a workplace pension, be it public or private sector, jumping by about 50% since 2012. And young people too have benefitted, with those aged 22 to 29 saving into a workplace pension more than doubling in the same time period.

Minister for Pensions, Laura Trott, said:

Automatic Enrolment has completely transformed how people save – with staggering results. In the ten years since its introduction, 10.7 million people have started saving for their pensions with this easy to use scheme. We have also seen a huge and much needed increase in women and young people being enrolled into a pension.

Automatic Enrolment is doing its job – helping more people save more so they can do more in retirement.

Retail Entrepreneur and Dragons' Den investor Theo Paphitis said:

In the ten-years since I was involved in the launch of Automatic Enrolment, pension saving in the UK has gone from strength to strength with more than two million workplaces signed up – this is something to celebrate.

It is right that employees are given the chance and encouragement to save and I am proud for my businesses to be involved. The evidence is there that people are indeed saving more and benefitting immensely.

Nest's CEO, Helen Dean, CBE, said:

Over the past 10 years, Automatic Enrolment has completely changed the UK's saving landscape, bringing millions of new people into pensions saving, many for the first time. It's taken a lot of hard work and dedication, from the people who develop the policy, to schemes across the pensions industry, and employers up and down the country.

It's been a privilege for Nest to be part of this retirement revolution and we look forward to the innovations we will achieve together over the next 10 years

The anniversary was marked by a celebratory event, attended by those who have made Automatic Enrolment a success including businesses, employers, pension providers and regulatory bodies.

Following the success of the Automatic Enrolment, the government intends to continue its work with thousands of employers and pension providers to further boost the amount of people in a workplace pension.

It will also continue its work on empowering savers to know their pension options by introducing revolutionary products such as Pensions Dashboards and Mid Life MOTs, providing accessibility and innovation in how people save for their retirement.

And now that a record number of people are saving for retirement, the government is exploring how Automatic Enrolment can go even further to help more people save more, sooner – by abolishing the Lower Earnings Limit for contributions and reducing the eligible age to 18.

Media enquiries for this press release –

Follow DWP on: