

World-leading UK safety tech sector sees strong sales and job growth

- Safety tech sector's revenue is up 21 per cent in the last year, topping £381 million
- Jobs in the sector grew by 30 percent, to 2,850 people across the UK

British safety tech firms are leading the global fight against online harms and are one of the fastest-growing sectors of the UK tech industry, according to an independent report published by the government today.

More than one hundred companies spread across the UK are creating innovative products and services to make online platforms, apps and websites safer. They do this, for example, by helping spot illegal content – such as child sexual abuse and terrorist material – by countering online harassment and disinformation, and preventing underage access to inappropriate content.

[The UK Safety Tech Sector: 2022 Analysis](#) by Perspective Economics on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, reveals that the UK safety tech sector's revenues jumped by 21 per cent last year, hitting £381 million.

There was a 30 per cent boost to the number of safety tech jobs in 2021, with an additional 650 jobs bringing the total number of people employed in the sector to 2,850. Jobs in the sector include content moderators, policy professionals as well as research and tech developers.

The safety tech sector is on track to grow even further, raising a record-breaking £63 million of external equity investment last year.

Companies that adopt online safety technology also experience overall greater brand trust, higher user engagement and better staff and customer retention, according to a second report, [Trust, Safety and the Digital Economy](#), released today.

Digital Minister Damian Collins said:

Making the online world safer is not only the right thing to do, it's good for business.

UK tech firms are at the cutting-edge developing practical solutions to the risks posed by the internet so that it continues to be a benefit not a detriment to people's lives.

They have blazed a trail of growth, innovation and job creation to become world leaders in their field and we are committed to maintaining their upward trajectory.

There are now 117 safety tech firms operating across the UK, an increase of 17 on last year. More than half of these firms are located outside of London, with hotspots in Leeds, Edinburgh and Manchester.

These firms include GoBubble, based in Chester, which is partnering with Professional Footballers Australia and FTSE 250 companies to protect their social media channels from online hate and abuse. Cyacomb, based in Edinburgh, is working with law enforcement agencies in Germany, Canada and across the US to detect illegal child sexual abuse content. Dorset-based Image Analyzer, winner of the 2021 Computing award for Best Emerging AI Technology, provides AI-based content moderation technology for image and video, including live-streamed footage uploaded by users.

Professor Ciaran Martin, CB, Professor of Government at Oxford University, advisor to Paladin Capital Group and founding Chief Executive of the UK's National Cyber Security Centre, said:

Properly designed, safer technology is critical to everything about our future in an uncertain and sometimes dangerous world. As this report shows, the UK is well placed to help develop safety tech in some key areas. It's vital we take this opportunity".

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

The UK is well placed to become a global leader in developing innovative solutions that tackle online harms and keep children safe from preventable abuse. The growth of the safety tech market will boost child safety and deliver a significant economic return. As these reports make clear, upcoming regulation can stimulate innovation and deliver safer and better designed online services for children and young people.

Ian Stevenson, Chair of the Online Safety Tech Industry Association (OSTIA), said:

I'm delighted to see the Safety Tech Sector Analysis confirms there has been strong growth in sales, employment and investment in the sector and it remains one of the fastest growing parts of the economy. The new Trust, Safety and the Digital Economy report highlights how platforms benefit from safety tech by creating healthier and more resilient online environments, which have commercial value as well as benefiting their users. These new analyses will help OSTIA members and others in the sector continue these positive trends.

The Trust Safety and Digital Economy study, conducted by Ipsos, Perspective Economics and Careful Industries, looked at six different industries vital to

the UK economy, including gaming and entertainment; social media, apps and platforms; media and creative industries; retail and services; digital infrastructure; and the public sector, to understand the business case for investing in online trust and online safety.

These report findings support measures outlined in the [Online Safety Bill](#), and the government's commitment to ensuring the UK is the safest place in the world to be online.

ENDS

Notes for Editor

- Earlier this month, Minister for Tech and the Digital Economy, Damian Collins, held a roundtable with safety tech industry leaders to discuss new and emerging UK tech solutions that address a range of online harms, including fraud and child exploitation, and how the Government can better support the growing sector
- Since 2020, the UK Safety Tech Sector Analysis report has looked at the rise of this fast-growing sector in which the UK has become an emerging leader. Read the 2020 and 2021 reports [here](#).
- Interviews for the Trust, Safety and Digital Economy report were held with participants from 26 organisations between September 2021 and January 2022. Two stakeholder workshops were also conducted in Autumn 2021.
- The [UK Online Safety Tech Industry Association](#) (OSTIA) was established in April 2020, bringing together the UK's leading safety tech companies to promote online safety innovations and solutions in the UK and overseas
- The government has supported the safety tech sector through the creation of the [Safety Tech Challenge Fund](#), introduced to encourage UK tech firms to find innovative solutions to helping keep children safe in end-to-end encrypted environments, while upholding user privacy.
- In June, the government set out its support for the safety tech sector in the [UK Digital Strategy](#), including its vision for growing the digital economy, addressing tech sector skills, investment and infrastructure.