



Inventing the Future: techUK Manifesto 2017

How Global Britain can Shape our Digital Future

Executive Summary

May 2017

#InventingTheFuture

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The EU referendum is a watershed in British history. The UK is now committed to forging a new future outside the European Union and the next Government will be tasked with inventing this new future. Brexit is a huge challenge but there is another, equally important economic and social imperative that cannot wait – how to create a modern and open digital economy that works for everyone in the 2020s. techUK's manifesto provides a comprehensive set of policy recommendations that techUK believes will help the next Government achieve this ambition. These are grouped under five headings:

1. Making Brexit a Success for Tech
2. Achieving Economic Renewal Through a Modern Industrial Strategy
3. Building the Smarter State
4. Nurturing the Skills for the Jobs of the Future
5. Creating a Safe and Secure Digital World

These recommendations will help the next Government deliver on four fundamental objectives that are vital to the wellbeing of people across the country: **boosting the UK's productivity; harnessing digital transformation to build a smarter state; creating new jobs and a new skilled, adaptable workforce; and protecting and empowering people in a digital age.**

1. Making Brexit a Success for Tech

The UK tech sector has been the outstanding success of the UK economy over the last decade and will be vital to the UK's success in a post-Brexit world. The next Government must secure a deal that puts the UK on the best possible footing to thrive outside the EU. This will require a tech-first trade deal; maintaining cross-border data flows; making the UK a hub for global tech talent; providing confidence, stability and certainty throughout the negotiations; and placing tech at the heart of Global Britain's new trade relationships.

2. Economic Renewal Through a Modern Industrial Strategy

Economic renewal can be delivered through a modern industrial strategy, which provides a long-term and evolutionary framework to build the capacity and capability for a truly innovation-led economy. In order to achieve this, the next Government will need to boost investment in the UK's R&D; harness the power of tech to solve the UK's "productivity puzzle"; make the UK the best place to startup and scale a high growth business; create an open and dynamic regulatory framework; and create the conditions for investment in world class digital and data infrastructure. These will be the successful elements of an economic renewal that creates an economy that works for everyone.

3. Building the Smarter State

The last decade has seen an increased understanding within Government of the importance of driving digital transformation. Digital transformation will be vital to protecting our public services amid rising public sector debt and demands on usage. The Smarter State will place tech at the heart of Government; unlock the next wave of digital transformation in government; develop expertise within the Civil Service; address

the barriers to digital innovation in health and social care; and innovate by instinct in the defence supply base.

4. Nurturing the Skills for the Jobs of the Future

The UK tech sector faces a triple hit on digital skills. Alongside the existing digital skills gap in the UK, significant uncertainty on the access to EU talent, and new restrictions to hiring non-EEA workers risk hindering growth. The dynamism of the sector means tech creates new jobs at nearly three times the rate of the rest of the economy, and demand far outstrips supply. To ensure the UK has the digital skills it needs to thrive, the next Government should equip future generations with world class digital skills from an early age; create an apprenticeship programme for the future; inspire and support girls and women to work in tech; develop a clear and ambitious policy on the future of work and lifelong learning; and open up to the pioneers and innovators of tomorrow.

5. Creating a Safe and Secure Digital World

As the world becomes more digital, ensuring safety and security for people, businesses and infrastructure is of critical importance. The May 2017 ransomware attack showed the substantial global cyber threat and the vulnerability of businesses and public services. The UK needs to build on its strong cyber security credentials by investing further in public sector cyber security; protecting end-to-end encryption; and enabling SME investment in cyber security.

The UK also needs to be the safest place for people to go online. Young people must be empowered to navigate the online world safely through a new “digital resilience” curriculum and a full, evidence-based review into current best practice should be conducted to underpin a comprehensive online safety strategy.

Working together to deliver a positive vision for Global Britain

techUK urges the next Government to consider these ideas closely as it embarks on this defining moment in modern British history. While these recommendations are focused on the things that government can do, the next administration will not be able to achieve these outcomes alone. Many of these recommendations are about creating a framework in which the private sector can work in collaboration with Government to meet joint objectives. The sector recognises that it must be an active partner in helping to invent and shape a new future for the UK. No other sector has quite the same potential for delivering economic and social transformation but as a sector, UK tech must acknowledge the policy challenges this entails. The sector commits to support Government in bold and forward-looking policy choices that can create a prosperous future for all those in the UK.