

# [News story: 'Brain' for driverless cars: Oxford spin-out wins FT award](#)

[Oxbotica: imagine the future](#)

A company spun out from the [University of Oxford](#) in 2014 to develop a 'brain' for driverless cars has won a Financial Times ArcelorMittal [Boldness in Business](#) award.

[Oxbotica](#) carried off the 'Smaller Company' award for its achievements in creating artificial intelligence software for the next generation of autonomous road vehicles.

## **Creating an autonomous control system**

With support from Innovate UK, Oxbotica has developed an autonomous control system called Selenium. It can work on any vehicle, including forklifts and cargo pods.

The software uses data from laser and camera sensors mounted on the vehicle to find out where it is, what's around it, and to calculate a safe and efficient route.

The technology is already running on Oxbotica's fleet of vehicles, including a last-mile delivery van, the ESA Mars Rover, and the £8 million [GATEway](#) (Greenwich Automated Transport Environment) project in London.

## **Creating value through intellectual property**

Originating from the university's [Oxford Robotics Institute](#) (ORI) research group, the company has spurned conventional financing through external investment.

Dr Graeme Smith, CEO of Oxbotica, said:

We didn't take the easy money. We've got very specific methodology to creating value through intellectual property and opportunities to license that. We stuck steadfastly to that approach. It's nice to have a big investor but we didn't want that to change our focus or direction.

Oxbotica began with 4 employees and has now grown to 30, with the intention of doubling that number this year.

Dr Smith added:

We've opened up a third office in Oxford, a full fleet of

autonomous vehicles, and a dedicated test track and workshop. Our customer base is expanding rapidly and we're growing fast to meet this demand. This award is a major deal to a small company like us.

Oxbotica's success was recognised alongside other winners, including Google's [Deepmind](#), [Dollar Shave Club](#), [Dong Energy](#) and [Preferred Networks](#).

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## **Consultation outcome: Bathing waters: removing Instow from the list of designated bathing waters**

*Updated:* Summary of responses added and decision made to remove Instow from the list of bathing waters.

We want to know what you think about removing Instow from the list of bathing waters designated under the Bathing Water Regulations 2013 (S.I. 2013/1675).

The bathing water was classified as poor in 2015 and 2016. It is unlikely that the water quality of this bathing water can be improved.

We welcome comments, based on evidence, about the technical feasibility of improving bathing water quality at the beach to meet at least the minimum standards.

This consultation will be of interest to the recreation sector, leisure and tourism industries, farmers, environmental campaigners and beach users.

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## **Press release: New agency to provide joined-up education and skills funding**

The Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency are to merge to become one body, the Secretary State for Education [announced today](#) (Tuesday 28 March).

The new, single funding agency – to be called the Education and Skills Funding Agency – will sit within the Department for Education and begin to operate from April 2017.

The new body will continue to carry out the roles of the Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency and will therefore be responsible for effectively and efficiently overseeing:

- the funding of education for pupils aged 5 to 16
- education and training for those aged 16 to 19
- apprenticeships and adult education
- managing school building programmes

Its responsibilities cover these functions in England.

Secretary of State for Education Justine Greening said:

Creating the Education and Skills Funding Agency will mean we are able to provide a more joined-up approach to funding and regulation of schools, colleges and other providers, with improved accountability and better service.

We will be working closely with our staff, unions, stakeholders and the education sector to finalise and deliver our plans for the new agency.

Current chief executive of both agencies, Peter Lauener, has announced that he intends to retire following the merger and plans to recruit a successor are under way. Mr Lauener will carry on as chief executive of the Education and Skills Funding Agency until a permanent replacement has been recruited and is in place.

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## **[News story: Academy event programme to May 2017](#)**

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## **[Press release: Change of Her Majesty's](#)**

## Ambassador to South Sudan

2012 – 2016 Kampala, High Commissioner 2011 – 2012 Washington, HM Consul General and Counsellor Corporate Services USA (Temporary Duty) 2011 Jakarta, Deputy Head of Mission (Temporary Duty) 2008 – 2010 Ministry of Justice, Principal Private Secretary to the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice 2006 – 2008 UK Permanent Representation to the European Union Brussels, Political Counsellor 2003 – 2006 Harare, Deputy Head of Mission 2000 – 2003 Stockholm, First Secretary Head of Political/Economic Section 1996 – 2000 UK Permanent Mission to the United Nations New York, First Secretary (Economic and Social) 1995 – 1996 FCO, Head of Russia, Ukraine and Moldova Section, Eastern Department 1994 – 1995 FCO, Head of Russia External/Commonwealth of Independent States Section, Eastern Department 1992 – 1994 FCO, Desk Officer for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) implementation, CFSP Unit 1989 – 1992 Warsaw, Third (then Second) Secretary Chancery 1987 – 1989 FCO, Assistant Desk Officer, Ethiopia, Somalia, Djibouti, East Africa Department 1987 Joined FCO