

News story: From the first global TV broadcast to the future of satellite telecommunications

The Telstar 1 communications satellite revolutionised popular entertainment and represented a turning point that would see us become reliant on space in ways that were unimaginable in 1962. From weather forecasting to banking to communications and navigating in our cars, space is now part of our everyday lives.

The first 20-minute broadcast started a couple minutes ahead of schedule as soon as Telstar came into range and opened with footage of a baseball game between the Philadelphia Phillies and the Chicago Cubs before switching to President John F. Kennedy's press conference in Washington, D.C.

Although only operational for a few months and relaying brief television signals, Telstar captured the imagination of the world. The transmission in 1962, which was sent to the Goonhilly Satellite Earth Station in Cornwall, has evolved into the global communications network of today.

Space is now vital to our economy, security and well-being. In the UK the thriving space industry contributes over £13.7 billion to the economy and employs more than 38,000 workers. The UK is a global leader in satellite telecommunications, and in the growing commercial applications of space.

At the Council of Ministers in Lucerne, Switzerland, in December 2016, the UK pledged €319 million over the next four years to telecommunications projects with industry through ARTES, including partnerships with businesses on innovative telecoms services.

One of those partnerships, with UK company Inmarsat, saw €31 million invested in IRIS, which uses satellite communications to enable safer air traffic control across Europe while reducing CO2 emissions and airline costs.

Another €60 million was for developing the commercial use of space data through Integrated Applications. UK Space Agency funding will connect businesses across the economy with solutions for common problems that could benefit from the unique vantage point of space. UK companies have used IAP funding to develop telemedicine services to aircraft, to advise farmers on crop fertilization, and to guide energy providers to target waste collection in communities.

This investment ensures the UK remains at the forefront of new technologies and builds on the strength of the UK growing space industry.