

Press release: Digital revolution to use the power of data to combat illegal wildlife trade and reduce food waste

- Jeremy Wright will also announce government's contribution to new fund, which will be up to £30 million, to spark a wave of tech innovation
- World-first 'data trust' could see conservationists sharing audio and image data to help tackle illegal wildlife trade
- This is part of Government's modern Industrial Strategy which will harness the power of technology to help make a real difference to people's lives

Pioneering digital technologies such as artificial intelligence could be used to crack down on global challenges as part of a world-first 'data trust' programme to be piloted in the UK.

More than £700,000 will be invested in the initiative to tackle issues such as illegal wildlife poaching and food waste mountains. The funding will help organisations such as [WILDLABS](#), [Tech Hub](#) and [WRAP](#) design the frameworks required to exchange data between organisations in a safe, fair and ethical way.

The aim of the scheme, which will be run by the Open Data Institute and the Government's Office for Artificial Intelligence, is to exploit the power of data exchange between organisations with the raw data and those with expertise to process it to tackle major global issues.

Exploring the potential of data trusts was a key commitment of the AI Sector Deal, a joint policy by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The Industrial Strategy sets out Grand Challenges to put the UK at the forefront of the industries of the future, ensuring that the UK takes advantage of major global changes, improving people's lives and the country's productivity.

The news comes ahead of a speech in which the Digital Secretary Jeremy Wright will announce a package of measures to spark a wave of innovation in tech for social good.

This includes the government's partnership with the [Social Tech Trust](#) to establish a fund of up to £30 million to provide access to finance and position the UK as a global leader in socially transformative tech. A further £1 million will be available to incentivise organisations to use tech to help tackle loneliness and bring communities together.

Digital Secretary, Jeremy Wright, said:

Technology is already making our lives easier in many ways but there is still so much untapped potential that we can deliver for social good.

As a world-leader in emerging technologies, the UK is best placed to foster these opportunities. The new policies announced today, backed by new funding, will encourage industry to deliver technological innovation to address issues as diverse as animal poaching, food waste and loneliness.

Business Secretary, Greg Clark, said:

From cutting food waste to tackling illegal wildlife crime, our innovators are working to harness the huge potential of data and artificial intelligence to solve international challenges.

Our modern Industrial Strategy identifies our unmatched heritage and strength in AI as a huge opportunity for the UK. We are leading the world in its development and use, benefitting from the highly skilled jobs and economic growth this technology creates.

The Open Data Institute defines data trusts as a legal structure which provides independent, third-party stewardship of data for the benefit of a group of organisations or people.

The new plans include:

A partnership between leading conservation charities , WILDLABS Tech Hub and technology experts to reduce the level of illegal trade of wildlife by sharing image data to assist border control officers around the world in identify illegal animal products from their smartphones.

Audio data could be used to train algorithms to detect gunshots or the underwater sound of illegal fishing vessels coming into protected areas then real-time alerts will be pinged to rangers.

WRAP will be working with food and drink businesses to track and measure food waste to develop solutions which could see savings passed on to consumers, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and water usage.

Royal Borough of Greenwich and Greater London Authority will be looking at how data collected through their Sharing Cities Programme, could help make certain data available in a data trust, including energy consumption data collected by sensors and devices in buildings; data about parking space occupancy and the availability of charging bays for electric vehicles. This third pilot is funded by Innovate UK through the ODI's R&D programme.

Jeni Tennison, CEO at the Open Data Institute said:

Increasing access to data can help people, communities and organisations make better and more timely decisions – such as which energy supplier to use, the route a bus should take, or whether to invest in creating a new product. But the people and organisations that have data, use it, and are affected by its use need to trust that it is stewarded well and shared equitably and for agreed purposes.

Data trusts are one potential way to increase sharing of data and unlock more social and economic benefits from data while protecting other interests such as people's privacy, corporate confidentiality or, as in the pilot we're doing on data about endangered animals, our environment. The ODI is also looking at other approaches to increased access to data, including data sharing models such as those adopted by the European innovation programme Data Pitch, where large organisations share data with startups in order to fuel innovation and answer specific challenges.

The Digital Secretary will also announce new measures to boost tech driven by social purpose during his speech at Doteveryone in London this morning.

This is part of his vision for 'tech for good' which will champion technology as a force to change lives for the better, increase engagement between the social and tech sectors and ensure charities understand how they can use technology to achieve their mission.

These include:

A [Social Tech Venture Fund](#), administered by the Social Tech Trust, which will see government and industry invest up to £30 million to support innovative solutions to encourage people to be healthier and help them to build connected communities. The Social Tech Venture Fund will increase access to finance and position the UK as a global leader in socially transformative tech;

£1 million to incentivise organisations to develop solutions to tackle loneliness and bring communities together; Government backing for a new [Digital Agenda Impact Awards](#) to showcase and celebrate tech for good innovations from across business, government and charity organisations;

A collaboration with the [Centre for Acceleration of Social Technology \(CAST\)](#) and its network of social sector partners to explore how best to support charities to embed digital in their strategy, services and culture;

Naming the organisations to benefit from a share of Government's £1 million Digital Leadership Fund, which aims to boost charity leaders' digital knowhow and how they can use technology to benefit their respective causes. Winners will include Age UK, Guide Dogs for the Blind Association and Cornwall Museums Partnership.

Charities are already using digital technologies to support their work. Breast Cancer Care developed the BECCA app, which gives patients information

and emotional support after their treatment has completed. More than 15,000 women have used the app in the first year and the creators hope to reach 20,000 more by 2020.

Today's announcement builds on work the Government has already done in supporting the use of tech for social good. This includes helping to bring together the private, charity and public sectors to embrace technological advances to improve people's lives and the country's productivity.

Notes to editors

Quotes from organisations involved in data trust pilots

Sophie Maxwell, from WILDLABS Tech Hub said:

AI has the potential to revolutionise wildlife conservation and strengthen the technological tools needed to end wildlife crime. In order to harness this opportunity, however, we need to be able to distribute large-scale, well-curated data sets to machine learning experts. WILDLABS partners are very excited about collaborating with the ODI and Office for AI to deliver simple mechanisms that make it easy and safe for the conservation community to share data. It's collaborative efforts like this that will help us save threatened species around the world.

Mike Falconer Hall, New Product Development Manager at WRAP said:

WRAP's work focuses on forging powerful partnerships and delivering ground-breaking initiatives to support more sustainable economies and society. Carefully building and understanding the evidence which galvanises action is at the heart of everything we do. These pilots will give us the opportunity to build on our experience and explore different ways to create an environment where organisations can confidently share their data.

The Open Data Institute (ODI) is using funding from the Office for Artificial Intelligence and InnovateUK to support its work on the data trust pilots. This is part of Government's modern Industrial Strategy, putting pioneering technologies at the heart of plans to build a Britain which is fit for the future.

Data trusts operate by allowing multiple individuals or organisations – such as supermarkets, conservation charities or local authorities – to give some control over data to a new institution – the trust – so that it can be used to create benefits, either for themselves or other people, or both. That benefit might be to create new businesses, help research a medical disease, or empower a community of workers, consumers or citizens.

The Office for Artificial Intelligence is based in central government and

responsible for overseeing implementation of the UK's AI strategy, policy.

About the Open Data Institute

The ODI was co-founded in 2012 by the inventor of the web Sir Tim Berners-Lee and artificial intelligence expert Sir Nigel Shadbolt to show the value of data, and to advocate for the innovative use of data to affect positive change across the globe. It is an independent, non-profit, non-partisan company headquartered in London, with an international reach. We work with companies and governments to build an open, trustworthy data ecosystem, where people can make better decisions using data and manage any harmful impacts.

The AI and Data Grand Challenge

The Industrial Strategy sets out Grand Challenges to put the UK at the forefront of the industries of the future, ensuring that the UK takes advantage of major global changes, improving people's lives and the country's productivity. Artificial intelligence and data is one of the four Grand Challenges which will see AI used across a variety of industries and put the UK at the forefront of the AI and data revolution.

Further information on the winners of the Digital Leadership Fund

[Superhighways \(c/o Kingston Voluntary Action\)](#) Kingston Voluntary Action will partner with London Plus, National Association for Voluntary and Community Action and the Foundation for Social Improvement to support small local charities to expand existing training – from basic software skills through to helping leaders embed digital tools and services.

[Tech Trust](#) Tech Trust will expand its occasional Charity Digital Tech Conference webinars to be a regular programme and create a live stream of the events so up to 200 organisations can take part remotely, increasing accessibility of the service for charities.

[Social Enterprise Kent](#) Social Enterprise Kent will host two-day Digital Leadership workshops for local social enterprises centred around cyber security. This will help charities create a digital strategy, take advantage of online tools, and learn how to best utilise social media. They will fund 15 social sector courses, reaching 105 social enterprise leaders.

[Cosmic](#) Cosmic will host 10 three-day Digital Leadership workshops, produce an e-learning platform for South West charity leaders and host a Digital Charities Summit in March 2019 to share learning.

[Voscur](#) Voscur will expand their training programme to 110 organisations through five two-day workshops, supported by a webinar series and host virtual drop-ins.

[Cornwall Museums Partnership](#) Cornwall Museums Partnership will expand their Rural Proofing Digital Leadership Programme by subsidising 90 places on 4 new Digital Leadership Insights and Ideas Seminars, a two-day Digital Leadership Deep Dive Board Retreat and a new Digital Leadership e-learning module for

rural heritage organisations.

[Age UK, Midlands](#) Age UK Midland will expand their Be Digital programme and roll-out their face-to-face workshops to train leaders in teams rather than individually, to share learning throughout the Age UK network, embedding digital in their organisation.

[Age UK, South Lakeland](#) Age UK South Lakeland will expand their training beyond Cumbria to nearby districts with digital skills gaps by hosting 27 additional workshops for up to 30 people.

[The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association](#) Guide Dogs' will expand their Digital Transformation programme to digitally upskill their trustees and senior leadership on e-learning platforms and face to face workshops to enable them to provide meaningful digital services to 500,000 visually-impaired citizens.

[DotEveryone](#) DotEveryone will improve their existing training programme material and deliver five additional workshops.

[Media Trust](#) Media Trust will increase the reach, relevance and accessibility of their digital marketing strategy training workshops and target socially and economically disadvantaged areas that have a high level of charities.

[School for Social Entrepreneurs](#) The School for Social Entrepreneurs will expand the reach of their two-day workshops, benefitting more charity leaders

[Social Misfits Media](#) Social Misfits Media will expand their current training programme by partnering with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and Lightful to equip 360 leaders across 120 organisations in five regions.

Examples of 'tech for good' companies who have benefited from Government support:

Government helped to establish [Bethnal Green Ventures](#) an early-stage investor in companies and organisations that use technology to radically change people's lives for the better. It is best known for its 12-week accelerator programme, which provides investment, co-working space and intensive mentoring and support. To date, Bethnal Green Ventures has supported 95 ventures, investing £1.9 million and having a combined positive impact on 18 million lives.

[GoodGym](#) supports runners to get fit by doing 'good'. Its platform helps runners to help others by enabling them to come together to tackle problems as part of their run. Partner organisations like AgeUK refer isolated older people who are then matched with runners on regular visits. GoodGym is a charity and free to participate in though many runners donate £10 monthly.

[Nationwide's 'Open Banking for Good'](#) is a challenge fund calling on fintechs to use Open Banking technology to help address financial inclusion issues. Nationwide has made £3m available to fund solutions. This financial inclusion fintech fund was formed as part of Cabinet Office and DCMS's Inclusive

Economy Partnership.