

News story: Augmented Intelligence Infinity Awards: call for entries

Call for entries for BT Infinity Awards: Augmented Intelligence. Photo: all rights reserved

The partners are on the hunt for SMEs with expertise in machine learning, robotics and Artificial Intelligence. Focusing on the theme of 'Augmented Intelligence,' this year's judges want to see ideas that harness both the data processing powers of technology and the expertise of human manpower.

The initiative is the latest in a series of BT Infinity Lab competitions, with a £30,000 prize pot up for grabs for three winners.

There are 3 categories in this year's competition, with a focus on the areas of defence, public services and retail.

The judges are keen to see innovations that could help provide more insight to the military when planning an operation, humanitarian mission or disaster relief. They would also like to see how robotics could be used to make a retail experience more personalised, or improve a customers' experience when they contact a public service.

In addition to £10,000, the winning start-ups will have the chance to develop their idea with the support of industry experts and tech gurus from BT for 6 months. They will also receive membership to TechHub's global entrepreneur community, workspace and support programme.

To enter, the SMEs will need to submit a 3 minute video explaining why their solution could be the next big tech innovation to help transform public services, retail or defence.

Amongst a range of executive public sector, retail and innovation experts from BT, this year's judges also includes:

- Co-Op CIO Simon Bourne
- General Sir Chris Deverell, Commander, Joint Forces Command, Ministry of Defence,
- Alison Pritchard, COO, Government Digital Service,
- Elizabeth Varley, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of TechHub
- a range of executive public sector, retail and innovation experts from BT

Oliver Dowden, Minister for Implementation, said:

The government is committed to transforming public services, making them as efficient and effective as possible so that they deliver the best services for taxpayers.

Small businesses play a vital role in helping us do this by harnessing the latest digital technologies. I am delighted that we are partnering with BT to highlight and support innovative small businesses in the tech sector.

Margot James, Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries, said:

We want the UK to be the best place to grow a digital business and this partnership will give our dynamic, up-and-coming innovators the opportunity to develop the technology of tomorrow.

I look forward to seeing these ideas become reality and help improve our public services so everyone can benefit from the technological revolution as we build a Britain fit for the future.

General Sir Chris Deverell, Commander, Joint Forces Command, Ministry of Defence, said:

I am delighted to have this opportunity to champion a Defence Challenge as part of the BT Infinity Awards. We are looking for innovative ways in which we can fully embrace digital capabilities, and thereby improve our effectiveness.

There are a wealth of opportunities in the fields of artificial intelligence and machine learning, including robotics, simulation and modelling. We are keen to learn from FinTech and apply similar technologies in the military sector to modernise Defence and create a MilTech ecosystem.

We're therefore reaching out to SMEs who can bring their innovations to this Defence challenge. Colm O'Neill, managing director of BT Business and Public Sector, said: "Last year, our research found that AI had divided the opinions of IT decision makers over whether it would replace or create jobs.

With that in mind, we launched this year's Infinity Labs competition with the theme 'Augmented Intelligence,' as we believe that there's still work to do to demonstrate that automated technologies and business processes can play to the strengths of both people and machines.

I'm looking forward to seeing all the entrants to this year's Infinity Labs competition and to working together on the innovations that we could see transform defence, public sector services and retail businesses in years to come.

Entries close on 12 March 2018. To find out more, visit: [BT Infinity Lab Augmented Intelligence](#) or join in the conversation on Twitter:

#BTInfinityAwards

The winners will be announced after a judging event at the iconic BT Tower on the 24 April 2018.

Press release: Triple killer to spend longer behind bars

A man who murdered his ex-partner will spend more time in prison after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP referred his original sentence to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient.

Theodore Johnson, 64, was originally sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 26 years in January at the Central Criminal Court. The minimum term was increased today after the Solicitor's action, meaning Johnson will now serve at least 30 years behind bars.

Johnson, who had previously been convicted of the manslaughter of 2 former partners, attacked and killed his 51 year old ex-partner after she ended her relationship with him.

The Solicitor General presented the case personally to the Court of Appeal. Speaking after the hearing he said:

"This was a vicious and brutal attack which ended in the tragic death of a woman. The offender is a danger to women and his crimes deserved tougher sentencing. I am pleased the Court has now seen fit to increase the prison term."

Press release: Gibraltar and UK Government agree measures to ensure strong relationship continues

This was agreed during today's constructive Joint Ministerial Council (Gibraltar, European Negotiations) by Minister at the Department for Exiting the EU, Robin Walker and the Chief Minister for Gibraltar Fabian Picardo.

The package sets out how we will continue to collaborate closely in a range of important areas, such as on the environment, online gaming, financial

services market access, transport and the level of university tuition fees during our Brexit negotiations and beyond.

The measures include a commitment to continued market access for financial services, assurance that British Citizens resident in Gibraltar will continue to be eligible for higher education home fee status at English Institutions, enhanced liaison on environmental issues, and that Gibraltar can continue to refer an unlimited number of their patients to the UK for free elective treatment. The full details of the deal are available in the UK Government statement [here](#) [link].

Following the meeting, Minister Robin Walker said:

I'm delighted that the sixth meeting with Chief Minister Fabian Picardo and his team saw us agree this set of measures to ensure UK-Gibraltar ties will endure and strengthen.

Today we have agreed a positive package deal on issues surrounding our exit from the EU, once again demonstrating that we stand shoulder to shoulder with Gibraltarians in our unwavering commitment to the UK-Gibraltar relationship.

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury, John Glen said:

We know the people and businesses of Gibraltar have been asking for certainty, and we have heard them. We are ensuring that Gibraltar's access to UK markets will continue unchanged until 2020, even in the unlikely event of no deal being reached. This will give us the time we need to work with the Government of Gibraltar to design a new, modernised agreement, based on similar, high standards of regulation and enforcement.

Chief Minister of Gibraltar, Fabian Picardo said:

Today our bilateral relationship grows stronger and the terms for it to endure are further cemented as we realise the commitment to maintain and enhance market access for Gibraltar service providers into the UK post-Brexit.

There is a lot to celebrate in this and a lot of hard work to recognise on the part also of the team in Gibraltar, in particular the Deputy Chief Minister and the Attorney General, and in the UK FCO, DExEU, Treasury, DCMS, Cabinet Office and Downing Street. I extend the gratitude of Her Majesty's Government of Gibraltar and the people of Gibraltar to all involved.

Press release: A303 consultation events rearranged due to poor weather

The scheme to improve the A303 between Amesbury and Berwick Down includes plans for a 1.9-mile long tunnel past Stonehenge, a free-flowing dual carriageway and a much-needed bypass north of Winterbourne Stoke.

Consultation on the plans launched on 8 February but severe weather which swept across the region at the end of last week affected two public information events, at Mere and Salisbury.

They are due to rescheduled for later this month.

The news comes at the conclusion of a three-day fact-finding mission to Stonehenge of a delegation from the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation).

The aim of the mission was to explain how the designs of the proposed 1.9-mile long road tunnel will bring together the World Heritage Site landscape currently split by the A303.

Derek Parody, Project Director for Highways England, said:

We are grateful to the representatives from ICOMOS who have taken the time to be with us on a 3 day visit to understand the scheme we are proposing. It is been an excellent opportunity for us to explain how we have responded to their previous recommendations and how the scheme is developing.

We look forward to the panel's report in due course, which will help us further refine the scheme, as well as to all the feedback from all interested parties during the current public consultation.

The consultation events continue today at the Society of Antiquaries at London's Burlington House (12 noon-8pm).

Since the last ICOMOS visit early last year and the announcement of the tunnel route plan in September, Highways England has continued to work with heritage groups including the National Trust, Historic England, English Heritage, and experts in the field, including the Stonehenge Scientific Committee – a body of leading independent archaeologists – to ensure a new route is built sensitively to the World Heritage Site.

The route was carefully chosen to avoid monuments and barrow groups, and Highways England's modified plans also included moving the position of one of

the entrances to the tunnel to avoid conflicting with the Winter Solstice alignment.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

News story: International co-operation on the fight against illegal wildlife crime

The UK and China recently held a joint-workshop in South Africa to pass on best practice in the fight against illegal wildlife crime across national borders.

The workshop featured in the [Daily Mail](#) and on South African radio station, [702](#) and in other international media including: [Namibian Sun](#), and [AP](#).

Seminars on UK and China law enforcement structure, investigation practice, cybercrime and forensics were led by Border Force officials from the UK and the Chinese State Forestry.

Grant Miller, Head of National CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) Enforcement Team in the UK said:

We are committed to tackling wildlife crime globally and when one country develops best practice in tackling a problem, we share that quickly across nations so that we can all benefit. This means that ultimately people are confident that the government is taking action which is both transparent and robust against these criminals.

The positivity of all those turning up at the conference leaves me with great hope that we may be the generation who can turn the tide, and start to protect our environment and wildlife in the manner that it deserves.