



NCSC For Startups: Everything you need to know

Mission | Community | Challenges | Solutions

Welcome



The NCSC For Startups mission

NCSC For Startups, a transformative initiative between the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and Plexal, was launched in partnership with Deloitte, CyNam, Hub8 and QA.

The programme has supported startups at all stages of maturity, from developing a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) to those with established solutions looking to expand into new markets.

Part of British intelligence, cyber and security agency GCHQ, the NCSC's mission is to help make the UK the safest place to live and work online, which has required working with the wider cyber ecosystem.

Collaboration may seem unusual for the traditionally closed intelligence space but defending against evolving nation state threats required fresh thinking, which the NCSC and Plexal unlocked alongside partners and the creative companies we discovered and supported.

Plexal, the innovation company solving society's challenges through collaboration with government, startups, industry and academia, has delivered the NCSC For Startups programme on behalf of the NCSC.

Developed to engage corporations, consultants, investors and national security agencies, NCSC For Startups supports businesses to take breakthrough technologies to market faster than possible in a purely commercial model.

Together, the NCSC and Plexal committed to closing the gap between innovative startups and NCSC technical expertise to solve some of the UK's most important cyber challenges by identifying market needs for solutions.

Digital is pervasive in modern society, presenting omnipresent cyber threats and technological leaps disrupting industries. This is why it's been so important for government and industry to look broadly for protective measures from non-traditional partners; from startups – which have been keys for unlocking new, diverse cyber ideas and solutions.

NCSC For Startups was designed to provide startups entering the programme with insights, support and access to help them shape their products and prepare for growth as they develop, adapt and pilot solutions.



Our alumni community

The National Cyber Security Strategy's first pillar is to strengthen the UK ecosystem, through partnerships, networks, skills and growth. In alignment with this, our programme graduates become part of the NCSC For Startups alumni community – our network of individuals working towards the same goal.

This powerful alumni network has seen peers address comparable challenges or experience similar scenarios, while scheduled meetups have allowed the founders to cover everything from raising capital and scaling internationally through to achieving a successful exit.

For example, Plexal's Jessica Moffatt-Owen led an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion session, during which Jessica detailed: "EDI should be an integral part to your business and not just a tick box exercise. EDI is sometimes deemed as a taboo subject but given the right tools and a safe space to speak openly, I think we can all make great strides to educate ourselves on EDI."

Having attended an alumni meetup before, NCSC For Startups alumnus, Vivian Dufour, CEO at Meterian, said: "This was a good chance to briefly step back out of the business – reconnecting with fellow cyber entrepreneurs as well as meeting new ones. The content on the agenda had a lot of variety, relevance to challenges in the business and I was pleased to gain some fresh new perspectives, share news of achievements and learn from others."

Our programme helped more than 70 tech companies and this strong alumni community has collectively raised over £526m in investment and created over 1,700 new jobs.

To date, our programme has helped more than 70 tech companies and this strong alumni community has collectively raised over £526m in investment and created over 1,700 new jobs.

Get in touch

Do you want to be a part of a growing cyber ecosystem? We're always looking for organisations and individuals that want to engage with our community.

Visit

ncsc.gov.uk/section/about-this-website/general-enquiries



National Cyber Security Centre | Plexal Cyber



@NCSC | @PlexalCyber

The NCSC For Startups Alumni Community

2017	Counter Craft	CYBEROWL	CyberSmart	ELEMENDAR.	SPHERICAL DEFENCE	StatusToday	verimuchme	2017				
2018	WARDEN	AQUILAI CYBERINTELLIGENCE	ELLIPTIC	ExactTrak	intruder	IOETEC	SECURE CODE WARRIOR	RazorSecure™	trustelevate	2018		
2019	BlackDice	Configured THINGS	nettoken	barac ⚡	iHackLabs Beyond Training	Mission Secure	luJam CYBER	2019				
2020	ANGOKA	INSURTECHNIX	IDEE	naq.	Kalgera	Fraud.net	OHALO	RAPIDSPIKE	Secure Schools	2020		
2021	THE CYBERFISH CYBERPSYCHOLOGY SOLUTIONS	TURGENSEC	vistalworks	PORGiESOFT Tech	awen COLLECTIVE	ENCLAVE	mèterian	rebellion defence	EXALENS® SENSE THREATS. STAY IN CONTROL.™	Cyber Defence Service	WATCHKEEPER INTERNATIONAL	2021
2022	LUPOVIS	cyntegra	Goldilock	traced	Ethicronics	fezzant	RankedRight	sos Intelligence	Validato SECURITY CONTROLS • VALIDATED	ESPROFILER	2022	
2023	ZORB	LEXVERIFY™	RoboShadow	visible	Redflags® from ThinkCyber	ROWDEN	cocoon	Cyber Tzar	2023			
2024	Salt Secure Communications	VAULT SENTINEL	MEMCRYPT	iathic	KURO	acubed.it Designing Secure Applications	RevEng.AI	Cynalytica	OrbiSky	2024		

Alumni stories >



Winning trust, and making powerful connections

It's October 2017 and Chris Wallis has his computer perched on his lap, on a packed Megabus as it hurtles down the M40 towards Cheltenham.

He's on his way to meet technical experts from the NCSC, having been selected to take part in their programme for startup organisations. Chris's startup, Intruder, was in its early days so he was saving as much money as possible, taking the bus instead of the train, and staying in a friend's shed rather than forking out for a hotel.

Chris would use much of the funding from the programme to fuel his business and recruit his first Chief Technical Officer. These early sacrifices have paid off. Intruder, an online vulnerability scanner that finds cyber security weaknesses in an organisation's digital infrastructure, has grown into a 31-strong startup with over 2,500 clients across the globe, and has secured £1.2m in seed investment since graduating from the NCSC's startup programme in 2018.

How did the NCSC scheme help Intruder?

Chris founded Intruder to help organisations spend less time detecting threats. Within two years of launch, it had a modest two-person team and 12 paying clients. Chris was also considering focusing on building an easy-to-use platform for the SME market, so when the NCSC revealed that 'protecting SMEs' was the focus of its next programme, he knew his startup was on the right path.

"We suspected it was a problem worth solving, so when the NCSC thought it was a problem too, it helped us to double down and commit to that market," Chris says. "The stars were aligning. If the NCSC hadn't put that challenge out there, I'm not sure we would have focused on SMEs."

The funding from the programme also helped Intruder make a game-changing addition to the team. Chris details: "That money helped us bring on our CTO, who we wouldn't have been able to hire otherwise. He helped us become a product-led business rather than a consultancy service, and that was a real turning point."

Beyond funding and an understanding of the market, the NCSC provided Intruder with introductions to potential clients, as well as unique access to experts from within the defence sector. "As a really small, early-stage startup, it helped us win trust and make really powerful connections" Chris says.

And long after the programme finished, Chris is active in a chat group where alumni from the scheme routinely share advice and problems, something he says is unlikely to have come about without the programme. "There's a real sense of community between cyber security founders, and people are really willing to take time out of their day to help each other out," he says.



How CyberFish's founder got hooked on Cheltenham

Possessing a dual background in organisational psychology and insider threat intelligence, CyberFish founder and CEO Berta Pappenheim spent a significant part of her career within a consultancy working with large organisations. Increasingly finding herself working with Latin American companies establishing themselves in the UK, US and Europe, threat intel analytics become a key focus during their entry into new markets.

After a career break for maternity leave, Berta decided she wanted to do something in the space between people and threats. "Incident response is the area I feel I can add the most value, because experiencing a crisis is a very stressful time," Berta says. "During those moments, a lot of people are involved in resolving the situation, and I realised it's a process that could be optimised through my understanding of how people behave and make decisions while under stress."

"There's a lot of talk about the human element in awareness, such as making sure people don't click on phishing links. But the bottom line is there will be a breach. It's not a question of if, but when."

The CyberFish team therefore designs scenarios that help organisations factor in how to be 'crisis ready'. Do they know the plan? Do they know what to say (and do)? If someone is absent, what's the chain of command? Is that person aware of the steps required? How do they influence stakeholders?

These are among the many questions customers are encouraged to ask themselves and prep for. "You have to practice so that's what our platform helps organisations to do," Berta explains.

From CYBERUK to NCSC For Startups

Berta was encouraged to apply to NCSC For Startups following a discussion with the NCSC's former Technical Director Ian Levy at CYBERUK 2019. "He gave me some product feedback and that convinced me to apply for the programme." That conversation led to a transformation of both the business and Berta's way of life.

Berta recalls how, on starting the programme, the NCSC encouraged her to transform CyberFish's offering. "We had a product and paying clients, but it was a manual tabletop exercise. Through the programme it became an online solution with marketable products. I really benefitted from the NCSC's mentoring because it prompted me to go back to basics and assess what the solution really is and what's important."

"It's easy to get tunnel vision operating on your own, so having another expert help you gain both business and technical perspective is valuable for success."

Today, CyberFish has developed technology that allows scenarios (such as ransomware attacks on banks or

manufacturer supply chain networks) to play out in a safe environment whilst providing feedback on decision-making to help clients improve their responses.

Since evolving the business format from manual to online, Berta has spent time in the UK and Malta, the latter of which is where the engineering teams are based, having been encouraged by Maltese government incentives. That's not the only spot of travelling Berta has done; she recently relocated (with her family) to Cheltenham to be closer to the programme. "Having initially commuted to and from Cheltenham for events, we eventually decided to make the move there as a family permanent. It was a great business decision to be closer to the NCSC activity but also a provided us a better quality of life away from a shoebox in Canary Wharf."

The NCSC has also been key for senior leadership at CyberFish. Their CTO is now John Davies, the previous mentor-in-residence for the NCSC For Startups programme. "He's been a huge positive addition to the team," says Berta. "To get someone with his expertise, experience and background was the dot on the i. This couldn't have happened if I'd not applied for the programme."

Possessing a passion for product development, John's career has involved developing technical capability and managing engineering teams within environments spanning secure government, tech startup and a defence prime.

Bigger phish to fry...

Looking to the future, Berta has her sights set on CyberFish becoming catch of the day overseas, with Europe and the US highlighted as a specific market of interest beyond the UK and Malta. This international growth will be supported by raising seed investment.

Reflecting on how important the programme has been (and continues to be) Berta enthuses. "The support is really amazing and I feel as though we've been cared for, which is so important. That continuity is almost a way of justifying the investment you've made as a founder and the fact you're not just disconnected by still having that ecosystem there. I'm still talking with a lot of companies that I've met over the past couple of years and there's always new opportunities and ideas."



Counter
Craft

Playing cyber criminals at their own game

A veteran of the NCSC For Startups alumni community, cyber security company CounterCraft graduated from the programme in March 2017.

Launched by Dan Brett and co-founder and CTO David Barroso, CounterCraft was intentionally created as an international operation from the get-go. "We have a UK subsidiary in Derby and a US subsidiary in New York, while our headquarters is in San Sebastian, northern Spain. The idea was always to have something of a double DNA going on inside the company," Dan tells us.

"You might ask: Why Spain? It's not very well known for cyber. And that's true. But on the other hand, with an R&D centre in northern Spain we can attract and recruit staff, and hopefully retain them by offering a really attractive work-life balance."

While Dan points to retaining members from the R&D team in London for anything beyond three years as a battle – because staff are commonly approached by nearby competitors – he and David sensed an opportunity. "We wanted to do something in this region of Spain," he says, talking to us from CounterCraft's San Sebastian office on a video call. "For example, you can surf in the morning on Saturday then drive up to the Pyrenees Mountains and ski that afternoon, or vice versa."

And when the team isn't hitting the waves or shredding fresh powder, CounterCraft's distributed threat deception platform offers clients

(which include government, banks, retailers and telcos) a real-time intel feed and managed service that helps organisations detect targeted attacks.

Asked whether it's fair to say CounterCraft is designed to play attackers at their own game, Dan concurs: "Even at a basic level, phishing emails are an attack method to get into places through lying to people about what you're doing, so most attacks depend on some form of deception.

"We recognised an ongoing cycle where organisations would get breached, call in a forensic team to clean up the system, only to then be at risk of getting breached again. We became frustrated with this continual breaching of network systems, so the goal was to build a very strong perimeter to any kind of network and keep the bad actors outside.

"If you accept the fact that adversaries' attacks are ongoing, you can engage with them over a long-term period and gather information while staying protected. It's a huge win for defenders. We try to turn the tables to apply social engineering back at the attackers. It's interesting because deception is a technique, not a technology. It's a way of thinking about how to prepare your defences, so organisations can easily detect and deal with very serious attacks at the right time."

Having worked with David and other members of CounterCraft in previous companies within the threat space between 2008 and 2012, the team saw an industry pattern that desperately needed disruption. Dan says developing the solution required a degree of acceptance that there will always be cyber criminals. However, that was balanced with the recognition there's a new way to deal with them.

CounterCraft's solution deploys a deceptive environment around a customer's technology systems, which (to attackers) appears like an inviting door asking to be opened. In reality, if the criminal penetrates CounterCraft's faux API, they'll discover the cupboard is bare. Meanwhile, for all the time the attacker has spent trying to access the meaningless domain, CounterCraft has been monitoring the attack, enabling the organisation to get advanced warning that they're under threat. It's a moat for the fort, so to speak.

"We watch and see who starts messing around to break into the underlying tech that supports the API, which gives you insight into how often you're attacked," Dan says, "allowing you to recognise what level of technical ability attackers possess, so you can gather information about the quality and quantity of attacks."

Being part of the NCSC for Startups was instrumental for CounterCraft to refine its art, and get the product suitable for market needs. "The programme gave us an awareness of the intelligence

community," Dan reasons. "David and I aren't from that background, so we were able to understand their mission set and problems to develop as a business and be of use to the intelligence community." This much is demonstrated with partnerships today that include organisations such as NATO and the US Department of Defense.

"Without being on the NCSC programme, we wouldn't have understood the challenges this group of people are facing, so that was a huge win for us," Dan adds.

The original expectation was that most of CounterCraft's work would be in the private sector but it's around a 50:50 split between private and public. "We were surprised how strong the demand is. For businesses, it's about saving money and protecting their operations, while law enforcement agencies want to find bad actors and make their lives more difficult, and that's a good thing for society."

At the time of joining NCSC for Startups, CounterCraft had around 12 members of staff. Fast forward to today and the business has 51 employees.

Looking to the future of the business and how he sees it evolving, Dan is optimistic: "Let's do just as well in the UK as we are in the US, and get our technology into as many of the FTSE 100 companies as we can to protect national infrastructure. The UK is uniquely placed to be proactive and forward-thinking about how the country approaches development of appropriate defences. I think the NCSC is leading that, and CounterCraft is prepared to be a part of it."



Giving identity verification the 'Trust Stamp' with AI

Gareth Genner is the Co-Founder and CEO of Trust Stamp, a global provider of AI-powered identity services and alumnus of 'NCSC For Startups', the programme delivered in collaboration with our innovation partner Plexal, alongside Deloitte, CyNam, Hub 8 and QA.

Having spoke with Gareth, he discussed graduating from (what was then) the NCSC's 'Cyber Accelerator', and Trust Stamp's plans for the future.

In the past, I have worked on the concept of trust and how we evaluate and communicate and share trust. Then in 2015, I was working on the concept of zero-knowledge trust, primarily between individuals. I was working on a patent application for a trust score.

During this time Gareth and his co-founder Andrew Gowsack, who shared similar entrepreneurial passions, were exploring several business ideas. Alongside their business relationship, Gareth and Andrew are close friends. When asked in an interview with Business Collective who his hero is, Andrew rather heart-warmingly stated. My business hero is my Co-Founder, Gareth. Before we started Trust Stamp, he was a friend and mentor to me and many of my peers, all while running an educational technology startup. He is a legal, business, and technological genius who has the rare quality of wanting to help and better everyone that he encounters.

In 2016, out of Gareth's intellectual property, his friendship with Andrew and their shared business acumen, Trust Stamp was born. The co-founders wasted no time, winning a global startup award and over \$110,000 in funding. Evidently, the key to Trust Stamp's success has been its innovative technology which has revolutionised verification of online identities across a variety of sectors such as banking, government, real estate and humanitarian services. The company's AI-powered solution makes use of data mining and biometric science to provide accurate identity and trust predictions while detecting and thwarting malicious attempts.

Since graduating the programme in March 2020, Trust Stamp has wasted no time, achieving \$3.68m in net sales in 2021, raising over \$30m in funding and possessing over 23 patents now issued, allowed, or pending.

Gareth recalls how the NCSC programme delivered "tremendous value" and noted the huge amount of NCSC expertise that was available to the team, which has led to their team remaining engaged within our NCSC For Startups alumni community.

Trust Stamp now boasts an impressive team of over 100 individuals across the globe in locations such as Malta, Warsaw, Copenhagen, the Philippines and Rwanda. They are a highly

educated group with seven doctoral-level team members and an additional 23 team members with masters and higher educational qualifications.

In September 2023, the business launched its new product, which is "a wrist-worn, tamper-resistant, hypoallergenic NFC band that facilitates discrete check-in by, and communication with, participants in community-based supervision programs."

On this launch, Gareth states: "The Tap-In Band is the result of three years of market discovery and development and is a game-changer. The band is battery-free and has a fitness band-styled design that provides secure authentication without imposing embarrassment or discomfort."

In terms of what's next for Gareth, as the self-proclaimed 'old man' of the Trust Stamp team, he now states proudly on his LinkedIn profile that he's looking forward to his "highly qualified and gifted" coworkers making him redundant in a few years' time as he transitions the business into their capable hands.

RSA 2023: Inside our San Francisco trade mission

As event topics go, the 2023 theme of RSA – “stronger together” – really couldn’t have fit the NCSC and Plexal any better, so inevitably we were like moths to a flame when it came to securing our place. We knew how much value could be derived from attending RSA and set about developing a trade mission.

We pride ourselves on those who graduate from the programme continuing to engage and interact with one another within the NCSC For Startups alumni. So as part of the trade mission, we travelled to the US alongside founders from our alumni community including:

- Peter Davies, Cyber Defence Service
- Giles Watkins, Cyntegra
- Al Lakhani, IDEE
- Ryan Heartfield, Exalens
- Stephen Kines, Goldilock
- Vivian Dufour, Meterian
- Nadia Kadhim, Naq Cyber

The purpose of our trip was to build relationships between alumni, help identify product-market fit, tap into new business opportunities and expand the network for collaborative opportunities that would help with closing the gap between UK and US security efforts. Here’s what some of our NCSC For Startups trade mission delegates said about RSA.

Nadia Khadim, CEO at Naq:

“Being part of the NCSC delegation to San Francisco was an amazing experience for Naq and me as CEO. Being part of the NCSC For Startups delegation opened so many doors to conversations with CISOs of potential partners, government officials and Silicon Valley investors and we’ll ensure that we reap the rewards in the weeks to come.”



Pete Davies, director at Cyber Defence Service:

“Attending the RSA 2023 event in San Francisco was an incredible experience. The entire event was filled with informative sessions, inspiring speakers, amazing networking opportunities, and not to mention an awesome cohort of inspiring businesses. I was particularly impressed by the level of thought leadership and industry insight that was shared by the keynote speakers and the NCSC-organised sidetrack events.

“I was also able to connect with many industry experts, learn about the latest technologies, and get valuable advice from the panel discussions. I came away from the event with a greater understanding of the cyber security landscape and the importance of keeping up with the latest developments.

“I’m now more confident in my ability to protect my organisation and its customers from cyber threats, and I am excited to apply the knowledge I gained to future projects.”

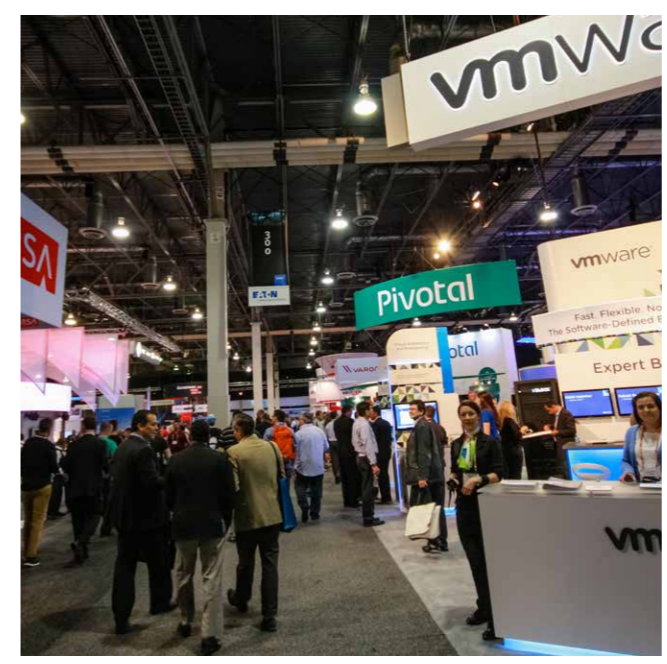


Ryan Heartfield, CTO and co-founder at Exalens, says:

“The RSA trip was an eye-opening experience where it became clear very early for us that what really defines RSA is not just a cyber security exhibition. But almost a festival of sorts that includes a plethora of open and inclusive business events and networking opportunities in and around the exhibition that follow and are directly generated because of the event.

“The Plexal and NCSC delegation of NCSC For Startups graduates, including myself, harnessed this opportunity to its full extent, such that we were provided with a rich exposure to the startup ecosystem in and around RSA. “A particular highlight for me was the visit to the Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) arranged by Plexal, which revealed an existing and innovative interface for cyber security startups to directly engage with the Department of Defence as a potential vendor/technology provider for US government national security requirements.

“We would certainly return next year and hope to link up with the next delegation to grow our US exposure, build further networking and collaboration opportunities for prospective partners and customers.”



Meet the companies who form our NCSC For Startups alumni >

2017

Counter Craft

Company: Countercraft
Founders: Daniel Brett, David Barroso
Elevator pitch: CounterCraft goes beyond detection and response to provide a distributed threat deception platform, real-time intel feed and managed service that helps clients to detect targeted attacks.
Graduated programme: 2017
Website: countercraftsec.com

CYBEROWL

Company: Cyber Owl
Founder: Siraj Ahmed Shaikh
Elevator pitch: Cyber Owl helps asset operators in the maritime and critical national infrastructure sectors gain visibility of systems on their remote assets, actively manage the cyber risks and gain assurance of cyber compliance.
Graduated programme: 2017
Website: cyberowl.io

CyberSmart

Company: CyberSmart
Founders: Jamie Akhtar, Mariella Rosa Al-Basha
Elevator pitch: CyberSmart aims to make cyber security simple and accessible to everyone, working to give every business, no matter how small, the tools to protect themselves easily and effectively.
Graduated programme: 2017
Website: cybersmart.co.uk

ELEMENDAR.

Company: Elemendar
Founders: Giorgos Georgopoulos, Syra Marshall, Devon Barrett
Elevator pitch: Elemendar's AI-powered tool READ. processes human-authored, unstructured cyber threat Intelligence and translates it into machine actionable data to be deployed directly into defensive systems.
Graduated programme: 2017
Website: elemendar.com

Programme experience

"Elemendar wouldn't exist without the programme – NCSC was critical for us to learn about the user need, secure our first government contract, and commit to the business at the earliest days. At the same time, being close to a national security apparatus making an unprecedented effort to become more culturally open towards startup ways of working helped us understand how to manage stakeholders in an area where traditional experiences of government procurement are less relevant. The mission focus imbued in the programme is part of Elemendar's DNA as much as technical innovation and the team's previous commercial experiences. Since graduating, Elemendar has added many talented people to the team; raised funding; launched our commercial READ product; and delivered for customers in the UK, EU and US, as well as being voted into the Top 20 scaleups in Europe 2022."



SPHERICAL DEFENCE

Company: Spherical Defense
Founders: Dishant Shah, Jack Hopkins
Elevator pitch: Spherical Defense offers an alternative approach to WAFs and first-generation API security tools. Instead of relying on an administrator to define rules and signatures to specify good or bad application traffic, Spherical uses Unsupervised Deep Learning to develop a positive security model of your application in real-time.
Graduated programme: 2017
Challenge: General
Website: sphericaldefence.com



CounterCraft Named One of the World's Most Innovative Companies + #2 Security Company of 2023

CounterCraft was selected by Fast Company as one of the World's Most Innovative Companies for 2023. In addition, CounterCraft has been ranked #2 of the 10 most innovative companies in security for 2023. The company was listed among security organisations that "have developed clever, intriguing approaches to fast moving threats... including software for helping security teams respond to attacks and exploits."

and society with ideas that are both fresh and new and here to stay.

Nina Kuhlman, CMO at Countercraft, said: "Being showcased in the same company as iconic brands like McDonalds, Ford, Tiffany & Co. and Walt Disney is certainly an honor. We are also just as proud to be recognised with companies making groundbreaking leaps in technology, healthcare and science such as OpenAI, Armis, Maven Clinic, Regrow Ag, HoldFast Collective and more."

These lists showcase inspiring, insightful organisations who are on the forefront of innovation, transforming business



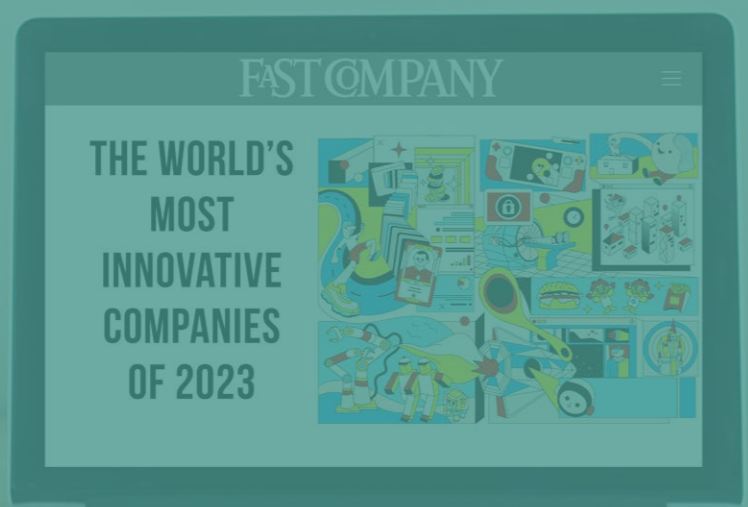
CyberOwl raises \$5.1m in funding to expand cyber security support in shipping industry

CyberOwl successfully secured £4m (\$5.1m) of investor funding to support the accelerated adoption of their Medulla cyber risk monitoring solution. The maritime sector has recently experienced one of the greatest periods of profitability in history and is heavily reinvesting these profits in digitalisation and the increased connectivity of their vessels. This makes shipping companies an attractive target for cyber-attacks. Therefore, there's an increasing urgency for improving the cyber security of shipboard systems.

growth, which to date has been limited to the UK, Singapore, and Greece. The investment will also fund product development for the next generation of the Medulla software and the creation of an associated family of products to ensure CyberOwl's proposition remains at the cutting edge and ahead of industry challenges.

Daniel Ng, CEO of CyberOwl, said: "Cyber-securing shipping systems has become mission critical. This funding round gives us the rocket fuel to continue being the sector's frontrunner."

The multi-million-pound investment will enable CyberOwl to expand service capability and build on international



2017 Milestone moments >



CyberSmart raises \$15m for an all-in-one cyber security and insurance solution targeting SMBs

In early 2023, CyberSmart closed a Series B of £12.75m (\$15.4m), led by Oxx – the European VC that focuses on growth rounds for SaaS startups – with strategic and other interesting backers participating.

CyberSmart currently has 4,000 customers in the UK, with 1,800 of them also taking the company’s insurance policies as well. The plan is to use the funding to continue developing its product, to potentially make some acquisitions, and to expand its channel partners, and customers, in its home market as well as further afield in Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

Phil Edmondson-Jones, partner at Oxx, said: “SMEs are notoriously under-protected from the rising cyber threat, and existing cyber security and insurance propositions are neither fit for purpose nor affordable. We have spent a long time searching for the right business model that can enact a step-change in this important & enormous market. CyberSmart’s category leading SME security product; combined with its unique ability to collect ‘inside-out’ data on real-time risk indicators, will propel the business to become a core part of the infrastructure for cyber protection and insurance.”



The story of Elemendar

With Elemendar turning six, CEO and co-founder Giorgos Georgopoulos reflects on the company’s path over the past several years. He says: “Our journey started in 2017 when the three Elemendar co-founders spent a few months in Cheltenham at the first NCSC and GCHQ startup accelerator in the UK. Momentum started to build for us by the end of the Accelerator.

With our first UK Government contract, this got us started with using

Machine Learning (ML) to further our initial mission: adding structure to unstructured CTI data. We doubled down on R&D in 2018, which taught us an important lesson – that any ML model is only as good as the data you train it on.

Bringing us to 2023, the year has started in good form. With revenues crossing the £1m mark, more developments are on the roadmap for our READ. and REASON capabilities developing towards commercialisation.”

ELLIPTIC

Company: Elliptic

Founders: Adam Joyce, James Smith,
Tom Robinson

Elevator pitch: Elliptic delivers
blockchain analytics, assessing billions
of dollars' worth of crypto transaction
activity daily, helping customers
know how to stay ahead of crypto
compliance, reduce risk and shape the
future of finance.

Graduated programme: 2018

Website: elliptic.co

Programme experience

"Since graduating, Elliptic has grown a global presence setting up offices in the US, Japan and Singapore on top of its UK presence. The business now helps crypto businesses, financial institutions, regulators and law enforcement in over 60 countries managing, investigating and responding to financial crime risk and regulatory compliance. It's continued to build on the foundation from the NCSC programme and in 2022 it released the next generation of blockchain investigation tools with its global Law Enforcement partners. Its holistic screening capabilities enable faster case triage and prioritisation to better identify cross-asset and cross-chain crime. Elliptic continues to work in collaboration with agencies globally to proactively shared internal research whilst also providing training, education and webinars, like the "How to Catch a Crypto Thief" webinar with the IRS."

ExactTrak

Company: ExactTrak

Founder: Norman Shaw

Elevator pitch: ExactTrak provides
embedded mobile data and device
security across many platforms,
enabling devices to autonomously
change functionality based on location
or customer-generated security profiles.

Graduated programme: 2018

Website: exacttrak.com

Programme experience

"Over the past couple of years, ExactTrak has built upon the work done during the NCSC programme. ExactTrak is now a Dell OEM partner and our embedded technology is available as a special build via two of their trusted integrators. The outcome is a single ultra-secure mobile device (laptop) that can alter functionality to meet the requirements of multiple security levels without the need to have components physically removed. The ExactTrak technology is ubiquitous, and work is now being done to implement the technology across other devices from urban drones, medical equipment and agricultural machinery."

2018





intruder

Company: Intruder
 Founders: Chris Wallis, Patrick Craston
 Elevator pitch: Intruder gives you an actionable view of your attack surface combining continuous network monitoring, automated vulnerability scanning and proactive threat response prioritised by context in one platform.
 Graduated programme: 2018
 Website: intruder.io

Programme experience

“Trust is paramount in cyber security, especially when you are scanning for vulnerabilities and hold information on an organisation’s weaknesses. Working with the NCSC gave us confirmation that we were working on the right problem; and a reputational boost – if the government believed in what we were doing then prospective customers could too. We’ve taken our services from 12 customers back then to 2,500 now, in over 50 countries, while the team has grown more than tenfold.”



Company: Trust Elevate
 Founder: Rachel O’Connell
 Elevator pitch: TrustElevate is the world’s first privacy, security and trust technology platform for handling children and young people’s data, which enables companies to comply with hundreds of the world’s privacy and security laws.
 Graduated programme: 2018
 Website: trustelevate.com



Company: ioetec
 Founders: Mike Faulks, Mark Davies
 Elevator pitch: ioetec connects Internet of Things devices to authorised users securely, so the data they deliver can be trusted and the device is safe to use even with constrained power, memory and processing resources.
 Graduated programme: 2018
 Website: ioetec.com



Company: Razor Secure
 Founder: Alex Cowan
 Elevator pitch: RazorSecure enhances railway cyber security by protecting networks and monitoring key systems through products designed specifically for rolling stock, signalling and infrastructure systems.
 Graduated programme: 2018
 Website: razorsecure.com



Company: Secure Code Warrior
 Founders: Pieter Danhieux, Matias Madou, Fatemah Beydoun, Colin Wong, Jaap Karan Singh, Nathan Desmet
 Elevator pitch: Secure Code Warrior reduces vulnerabilities by upskilling developers with a flexible application security solution that integrates into their daily workflows and gives them the skills to code securely.
 Graduated programme: 2018
 Website: securecodewarrior.com

2018 Milestone moments



Elliptic Raises \$60m Series C Funding Round

J.P. Morgan became an additional investor as part of Elliptic’s \$60 million Series C funding round led by Evolution Equity Partners and including SoftBank Vision Fund 2, AlbionVC, Digital Currency Group, Wells Fargo Strategic Capital, SBI Group, Octopus Ventures, SignalFire and Paladin Capital Group.

Simone Maini, Elliptic CEO, said: “As an asset class, crypto has grown by more than 10x over the last five years and is now worth more than \$1 trillion. A potential further 10x of growth lies ahead – and will be driven by businesses keen to shape the future of finance. We are focused on enabling the opportunity to help organisations unlock the true value of crypto.

This investment is to help accelerate Elliptic’s global expansion and further enable financial services market institutions to embrace the crypto opportunity with increased trust and confidence.

“As more established financial institutions move into the sector, these companies need to understand when they can let transactions run – and when they should intervene. Stopping financial crime is not just a regulatory requirement but an ethical one, and a safe ecosystem is a healthy ecosystem.”



The ExactTrak journey

ExactTrak’s initial success came through selection onto the NCSC For Startups programme (previously the GCHQ Cyber Accelerator). This led to an initial UK Government contract to demonstrate the use of its embedded technology for future secure Government laptop purchases.

in 14 patents granted, covering UK, Europe, US, China and other international markets.

ExactTrak achieved this through deep design and development knowledge in communications and PCs with its founders having a long-term history with IBM and Ericsson. This has resulted

This technology has been commercially packaged into the SmartSafe range of products which can now be delivered through our integration partners as part of your overall Cyber security project. ExactTrak is a Dell OEM partner and in conjunction has implemented patented security technology directly into hardware across some of the tech firm’s commercial laptop products.



Secure Code Warrior secures \$50m Series C funding round

Secure Code Warrior has closed its Series C funding round, led by cyber and advanced technologies investor Paladin Capital Group. At \$50m, this marks the largest investment since the company’s inception, bringing its total funding to over \$100m.

Mourad Yesayan, Managing Director, Paladin Capital Group and Secure Code Warrior Board member, says: “Secure Code Warrior has proven they are at the forefront of enabling developers to remain agile while learning secure coding. The value they deliver to 600 enterprises and counting has never been more important in this dynamic, AI-influenced global economy where secure-aware developers and engineering teams are a massive asset.”

The new funding will accelerate Secure Code Warrior’s product innovation through its platform and go-to-market efforts, with a focus on increasing market share and further empowering developer and engineering teams to gain the skills needed to identify vulnerabilities and fix code faster using the latest AI technology.



Ioetec among ten companies to test next generation cyber security technologies

The UK authority on advanced digital technology, Digital Catapult, has given ten companies, including Ioetec, the opportunity to trial and experiment with potentially game-changing prototype cyber security technology through its Digital Security by Design Technology Access Programme. It's estimated that if implemented, this technology could help stop around two thirds of hacks, cyber attacks and data breaches.

The Technology Access Programme is part of Digital Security by Design: an initiative supported by the UK government to transform digital

technology and create a more resilient, and secure foundation for a safer future.

Ioetec has developed a full stack software solution to secure Internet of Things (IoT) devices. This ensures that the data collected from sensors is secure in transit through to the user where it is consumed. Ioetec will use the Morello hardware as a gateway solution for IoT.

Prof. John Goodacre, Challenge Director, Digital Security by Design, UK Research and Innovation, said: "Digital Security by Design will radically update the foundation of the insecure digital computing infrastructure by creating a new, more secure hardware and software ecosystem. The breadth of companies taking part in this technology access programme is a key step in building a security-first mindset amongst industry."



RazorSecure receives £1.3m funding

Railway cyber security firm RazorSecure has secured £1.3m of investment to support the UK firm's growth programme. Over the next five years, RazorSecure plans to expand into Europe and North America, creating at least 67 new jobs in the UK.

Founded in 2015, RazorSecure develops and deploys cyber security solutions designed to protect railway systems and critical infrastructure from malicious intrusion. The company's

clients include train manufacturers and operators such as Siemens, Northern Trains, and West Midlands Trains.

Alex Cowan, RazorSecure CEO, says: "From its inception, RazorSecure has continued to grow and develop, providing much-needed cyber security solutions for established leading train manufacturers and operators, protecting railways systems, and infrastructure."



Mighty Eagle of Angry Birds, Peter Vesterbacka, joins Trust Elevate's advisory board

TrustElevate has invited entrepreneurs and business angels Peter Vesterbacka and Kustaa Valtonen to join the TrustElevate strategic advisory team as the company moves into its growth phase.

Both Peter and Kustaa have very significant experience with online platforms and growing successful businesses via their investment company Random Ventures. Peter is especially famous for his legendary role as "The Mighty Eagle", CMO of Rovio, the Angry Birds mobile game creator. Both share a passion for education and gaming that are some of the core customer segments for TrustElevate.

Dr Rachel O'Connell, TrustElevate founder and CEO, says: "TrustElevate is benefitting from Peter and Kustaa's depth of experience and extraordinary network, which has afforded us access to customers for example in the gaming and edtech sector. These gaming platforms and companies will deploy TrustElevate to comply with regulations, build consumer trust, increase revenue and market share, and ultimately to create a safer internet for children and young people."



Company: BlackDice Cyber
Founder: Paul Hague
Elevator pitch: BlackDice Cyber offers enterprise-grade cyber defence to global telecom operators, specialising in cyber defence, anomaly detection and device management solutions that help to identify patterns, anticipate attacks and prevent them.
Graduated programme: 2019
Website: blackdice.io

Programme experience

“The programme enabled us to focus our vision and mission, reaffirming our offering in a complex cyber ecosystem. There are unique challenges being a startup founder and CEO, but the programme provided us with an opportunity to share these challenges and receive tailored support. As we work to scale the business, we’re keen to build our relationship with the NCSC alumni community and look for opportunities to further contribute to the UK cyber ecosystem.”

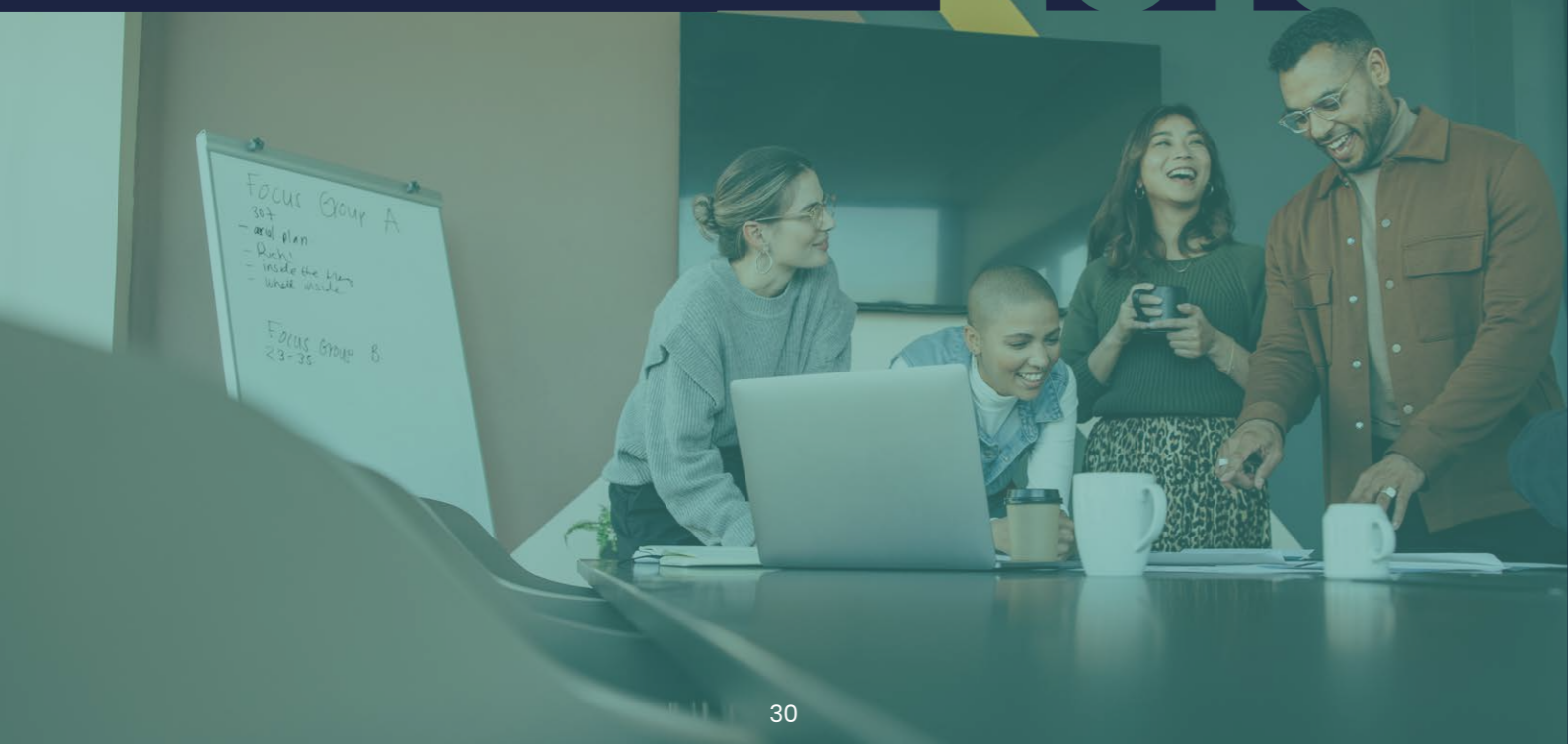


Company: Configured Things
Founders: Patrick Goldsack, Simon Arnell
Elevator pitch: Configured Things helps businesses to model, configure and co-ordinate their network equipment, servers, management content systems and more.
Graduated programme: 2019
Website: configuredthings.com

Programme experience

“We formed the company with ideas for how to improve the security of complex systems such as smart cities and connected places. A good idea as a startup is one thing, but having that vision understood by the national technical authority is something else entirely. We joined the NCSC programme with the desire that we could help continue to make the UK the safest place to live and work online even as it starts adopting new connected technologies that require new security models. Since graduating from the programme we’ve continued to maintain an active relationship; developed our platform as a cross-domain solution for managing systems across trust boundaries and continued growing organically. We’ve also been successful in developing the secure connected places market having won Innovate UK funding, working on NSTix projects and most recently collaborating with the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology to take the NCSC’s Connected Places guidance to local authorities.”

2019



2019



Company: LuJam
Founder: Tim Moran
Elevator pitch: LuJam provides SMEs with a level of cyber security enjoyed by major enterprises but delivered in a way that's easy for non-IT specialists to use.
Graduated programme: 2019
Website: lujam.com

Programme experience

"Located in Bristol, LuJam has significantly benefitted from its proximity to GCHQ and NCSC headquarters in Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. Whilst a member of the NCSC For Startups programme, LuJam was a startup-in-residence and this opportunity enabled us to develop a better product-market fit, aligning with NCSC's mission of making the UK the safest place to live and work online. In addition, LuJam's founder runs the Bristol and Bath Cyber cluster community, which provides networking opportunities in the Southwest – an innovation hub within the cyber industry."



Company: Mission Secure
Founders: Rick Jones, David Drescher
Elevator pitch: Mission Secure provides cybersecurity assessments, an OT cybersecurity platform and 24/7 managed services to the oil and gas industry to secure pipelines and terminals against advanced cyber threats.
Graduated programme: 2019
Website: missionsecure.com

nettoken

Company: Nettoken
Founders: Simonetta d'Ottaviano, Charlotte Slingsby
Elevator pitch: Nettoken is designed to create a simplified digital life for the household as the first password-less password manager for everyday internet users, enabling them to visualise all the accounts they've signed up to, in one place.
Graduated programme: 2019
Website: nettoken.io

Programme experience

"As an early-stage company, participating in the NCSC programme helped us build our business credibility as well as develop an exceptional network of experts in the sector, some of which became valuable advisors. Participating in the programme also gave us a great opportunity to raise awareness about the need for inclusive cyber security tools for consumers, beyond the enterprise environment."

2019

Milestone moments >



Secure Connected Places Playbook released by UK Government

Configured Things collaboratively worked on the Secure Connected Places research project with Plexal and Daintta on behalf of the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT). It required analysing the challenges local authorities faced in securing their connected places (smart cities).

Through structured interviews, workshops and iterative working, the team uncovered a set of key difficulties and needs. To enable local authorities

to overcome these challenges, DSIT has released its Secure Connected Places Playbook, a set of resources to help build internal capability to securely procure, develop and run connected places.

Minister for Cyber, AI, and Intellectual Property, Viscount Camrose, said: "Connected places offer enormous benefits for the entire country, not just through improved public services for our communities, but through new innovations which will unlock better-paid jobs and grow our economy."



Mission Secure releases Sentinel 5.0 platform and partners Verve Industrial

Mission Secure has released its Sentinel 5.0 platform, a milestone in enabling Zero Trust security architectures for critical infrastructure.

Jens Meggers, Executive Chairman of Mission Secure, says: "Zero Trust architectures are the most powerful and practical way to increase safety and reduce risk for industrial cyber-physical processes. With Sentinel 5.0, we are launching a game changer that allows granular implementation of access policies from the physical signal all the way to the cloud. It is whitelisting on steroids: industrial strength,

context-driven, intrusion prevention and mitigation."

Mission Secure also announced a technology partnership with Verve Industrial, the leading provider of IT-OT asset inventory and vulnerability management solutions.

John Livingston, CEO of Verve, adds: "Going beyond perimeter detection to protect the most vulnerable and critical OT assets at the endpoint level is a significant step forward toward securing the cyber-physical process."



Insider London interview: Nettoken – Accessible cyber security for everyone

In conversation with Insider London, Nettoken co-founder Simonetta d'Ottaviano, discusses households' digital challenges post-pandemic.

Insider London: Cybercrime and cyberbullying have increased dramatically during and after the pandemic, does Nettoken have any plan to combat the serious issues faced by all of us?

Simonetta: Certainly, the issues related to our fast-growing digital identity aren't limited to grown-up individuals. During lockdowns, there have been at least 100% more web and app visits

in UK families, creating a dramatic increase in digital exposure to dangers, particularly for children such as inappropriate content, predators, and cyberbullying.

Most parents are concerned and want to protect their children online, but don't know where to start. By providing a child-friendly version of Nettoken, our goal is to empower parents to support their children as they grow online by facilitating digital parenting, and at the same time, create a secure and even playful environment. Parents and children can therefore jointly manage access and safely store a child's account credentials.



BlackDice establishes new UK headquarters in Leeds, capitalising on the Yorkshire city's thriving tech scene

BlackDice has opened its new UK headquarters in Leeds, solidifying its presence in the heart of a flourishing tech hub in the North of England. By setting up its UK headquarters in Leeds, BlackDice aims to tap into the city's diverse tech ecosystem, access top-tier talent, and forge strategic partnerships that will propel the company forward.

Sarah Hague, COO at BlackDice, says: "We chose to establish our UK headquarters in Leeds because it's a city that truly embodies the spirit of industrial ingenuity and technological innovation.

"Leeds offers a fertile ground for our growth plans, with its exceptional talent pool, supportive business community, and vibrant atmosphere. We believe that our presence here will enable us to forge valuable connections, collaborate with industry leaders, and solidify our position as pioneers in AI-powered cyber security solutions."



Innovations of the World

LuJam was founded by Tim Moran, an ex-Submariner with 30 years' experience in Networks and Cyber Security. Before LuJam, Tim's work in Enterprise Sales for Cisco, Juniper and VeriSign and three UK security startups led him to realise that small businesses, the other 50% of the global economy, were poorly served with affordable cyber security solutions.

LuJam has previously secured more than £700,000 in funding including a £250,000 grant from Innovate UK. Having now monitored more than 800 networks, the company started revenue generating in January 2020 through 8 MSPs. By targeting office managers, one of LuJam's early MSP partners quickly brought 12 customers on board. Other IT support companies have deployed LuJam to provide transparency in new customer negotiations and subsequent rapid onboarding and service delivery. LuJam is also used by many in preparation for Cyber Essentials and Cyber Essentials Plus Certifications.

ANGOKA

Company: Angoka
Founders: Shadi A. Razak, Daniela Menzky

Elevator pitch: Angoka’s hardware-based solutions safeguard Smart Cities and Mobility critical machine-to-machine communication, integrity and data provenance, creating trusted connections, even in untrustworthy networks.

Graduated programme: 2020
Website: angoka.io



Company: CyberFish
Founder: Berta Pappenheim
Elevator pitch: CyberFish helps businesses and government teams prepare to better handle business disruptions like cyber incidents, with technology that allows scenarios such as ransomware attacks to play out in a safe environment.

Graduated programme: 2020
Website: thecyberfish.com

Programme experience

“We had a product and paying clients, but it was a manual tabletop exercise. Through the programme it became an online solution with marketable products. I really benefitted from the NCSC’s mentoring because it prompted me to go back to basics and assess what the solution really is and what’s important. It’s easy to get tunnel vision operating on your own, so having another expert help you gain both business and technical perspective is valuable for success. The support is really amazing and I feel as though

we’ve been cared for, which is so important. I’m still talking with lots of companies I’ve met over the past couple of years and there’s always new opportunities and ideas.”

Fraud.net

Company: Fraud.net
Founders: Whitney Anderson, Cathy Ross

Elevator pitch: Fraud.net provides a fraud detection platform that helps digital businesses quickly identify transactional anomalies and pinpoint fraud using AI, big data and live-streaming visualisations.

Graduated programme: 2020
Website: fraud.net

2020



2020



Company name: IDEE
 Founder: Al Lakhani
 Elevator pitch: AuthN by IDEE is a client-less, password-less multi-factor authentication that can be deployed in minutes across the entire estate and used with or without a phone. It prevents every single credential phishing and password-based attack including adversary-in-the-middle.
 Graduated programme: 2020
 Website: getidee.com

Programme experience

“We collaborated with the NCSC to develop a threat model for assessing authentication methods, as we suspected OTP, push and QR-code based methods were vulnerable to credential phishing attacks. With the NCSC’s help, we created a threat model that confirmed our concerns and have made it freely available on our website for anyone to access. Using this model, IDEE has systematically addressed the risks inherent in the entire identity lifecycle and we’re proud to be the only identity provider with a completely phish-proof multi-factor authentication solution that can be quickly deployed across thousands of users in just 15 minutes. Thanks to our work with the NCSC, we’re able to empirically prove to businesses how AuthN by IDEE is able to prevent credential phishing, password-based and adversary-in-the-middle (AiTM) attacks.”



Company: Kalgera
 Founder: Dexter Penn
 Elevator pitch: Kalgera is a fintech platform that uses machine learning and cutting-edge neuroscience to enable banks to identify, protect and monitor vulnerable customers who are using any payment or banking products and services.
 Graduated programme: 2020
 Website: kalgera.com



Company name: Naq Cyber
 Founders: Nadia Kadhim, Chris Clinton
 Elevator pitch: Naq Cyber aims to make cyber security and data compliance easy, accessible and cost-effective for everyone amidst increasing cyber threats, complex supply chains and an ever-changing data landscape.
 Graduated programme: 2020
 Website: naqcyber.com

Programme experience

“Working with the NCSC gave Naq credibility from the outset. Having access to the NCSC’s experts and network was invaluable to Naq’s growth. Since graduating, we’ve expanded our cyber and compliance capabilities to include endpoint detection, cloud integrations and compliance with global and regional standards such as ISO27001 and NHS DSPT. We’ve raised funding and have been recognised by industry-leading experts, most recently and notably by our CEO Nadia’s place on the Forbes 30 under 30 list.”



Company: Ohalo
 Founders: Kyle Dupont, Alistair Jones
 Elevator pitch: Ohalo help clients quickly and efficiently gain an understanding of their data privacy risk through their automated activity monitoring and mapping tool that automates file discovery and classification at a petabyte scale.
 Graduated programme: 2020
 Website: ohalo.co



Company: RapidSpike
 Founders: Robin Hill, Andrew Mason, Gav Winter
 Elevator pitch: RapidSpike enables users to monitor, protect and improve their websites and digital platforms with insights on digital experience, performance, uptime, security and Magecart.
 Graduated programme: 2020
 Website: rapidspike.com



Company: Trust Stamp
 Founders: Gareth Genner, Andrew Gowasack
 Elevator pitch: Trust Stamp is a global provider of AI-powered identity services for use in multiple sectors including banking and finance, regulatory compliance, government, real estate, communications, and humanitarian services.
 Graduated programme: 2020
 Website: truststamp.ai



Company: Vistalworks
 Founders: Vicky Brock, Stephen Budd, Alan Murray
 Elevator pitch: Vistalworks provides clients with tools, data feeds and intelligence that lets them focus their prevention, enforcement and protection efforts against online illicit trade.
 Graduated programme: 2020
 Website: vistalworks.eu

Programme experience

“The NCSC understood illicit trade is a real threat to our national security, societal wellbeing and economic stability. With values so closely aligned to ours, it was a real no-brainer to join the programme. It’s no exaggeration to say that the programme helped every single aspect of our business – from repositioning and better communicating our value proposition to providing hands-on key technical support and opening the doors to the vast UK cyber ecosystem. It really couldn’t have come at a better time. Without the benefits the programme provided, Vistalworks as we now know it would not be here – a credible national security enforcement solution targeting online illicit trade in the UK and beyond.”



Company: VIVIDA
 Founder: Simeon Quarrie
 Elevator pitch: VIVIDA is revolutionising team training through experiential storytelling. It allows businesses to conduct effective workplace training sessions using an intersection of media entertainment and traditional educational techniques.
 Graduated programme: 2020
 Website: vivida.io



2020 Milestone moments >



Angoka acquires leading ground and air transport security specialist R4dar technologies

Cambridge-based R4DAR Tech has created a geospatial awareness device, which is a credit card-sized technology. This enables drones to navigate and land safely without relying on communication networks or GPS location – a key challenge faced by drone operators, notably for Beyond Visual Line of Sight (BVLOS) operations.

ANGOKA chairman Steve Berry said the fusion of its technologies, which allow drones and ground vehicles to move freely and safely within unmanned traffic management (UTM) controlled airspace or other defined corridors,

will be greatly enhanced by the R4DAR Technologies products.

“R4DAR Technologies, led by Clem Robertson, is making a vital contribution to the drive towards autonomous transportation,” Steve said. “Both Clem and I are very excited by the prospect of taking forward new transport projects. We have both been collaborating in recent years on a variety of UK government-backed projects and this acquisition will accelerate our journey to safer, cleaner and more reliable transportation on the ground and in the air.”



CyberFish mentioned in the UK’s National Cyber Security Strategy

The UK’s National Cyber Security Strategy 2022 placed trustworthy and resilient technology at the heart of the nation’s cyber power: protecting and promoting the country’s strategic assets and interests in, and through, cyberspace.

Objective 3 within the strategy is to foster the growth of a sustainable, innovative and internationally competitive cyber and information security sector, delivering quality products and services, which meet the needs of government and the wider economy.

Sharing her experience in line with this, CyberFish CEO Berta Pappenheim said: “Our mission is to help businesses and government teams prepare to better handle business disruptions, like cyber incidents. Many advisors are good at either the technical side of incident response, or the behavioural side of leadership and decision-making. We do both, together, with expert knowledge from both sides. Our exercises have helped almost 500 industry leaders working in mission-critical teams across the globe to shift perspectives, improve their teamwork, leading to improved crisis response and decision-making.”



Inc.’s Female Founders list highlights entrepreneurs with world-changing companies

Cathy Ross, co-founder of [Fraud.net](https://www.fraud.net), has been honored in Inc.’s sixth annual Female Founders list, a group of 200 women whose innovations and ideas are shaping the world into a better place.

The list features women who have overcome challenges and lifted those around them, while leading impactful organisations across the country, and Cathy Ross joins the ranks of honorees including Hollywood actress Eva Longoria and screenwriter Shonda Rhimes of *Bridgerton* and *Grey’s Anatomy* fame.

Cathy says: “I am deeply honoured to be included in the Inc. Female Founders 200. This recognition is not just a personal achievement, but a reflection of the hard work and dedication of the entire team at my company. We are committed to making a positive impact on the world through our work, and I am excited to see what the future holds for us.”

Inc. editor-in-chief Scott Omelianuk, adds: “These 200 female founders have identified solutions to difficult problems and created valuable, industry-changing companies out of them.”



Kalgera unveils new advisory board as it seeks to support banks in protecting vulnerable customers

Kalgera unveiled its new advisory board as the company set its strategy for future growth through enabling banks and financial institutions to identify and protect vulnerable customers from financial harm.

The RegTech platform is bringing on a multi-disciplinary bench of new advisors from sectors including banking and fintech with expertise including fundraising and communications marketing.

Dr Dexter Penn, Kalgera founder and CEO, said: "It is crucial for us to find new ways of protecting vulnerable customers – especially as we begin to recover from the pandemic – in which banks and other financial institutions will have a key role to play.

"Kalgera's thoughtfully designed platform delivers the tools to enable this, bringing companies in line with regulatory guidance while delivering operational efficiency as well as protecting the customer. We are delighted to have assembled an advisory board of this calibre to guide us in the next phase of our growth."



IDEE breaks the US

IDEE's goal was to identify the right partner to support its launch in the US, where there's a significant growth opportunity due to market size and maturity, while still maintaining strong links to the UK.

The strong US culture of innovation and technology makes it an attractive target for cutting-edge solutions and emerging technologies. The timing coincides with demand, given the current US administration is tightening regulation as cyber threats continue to significantly increase the world-over.

Having spent 18 years investigating cyber crime and working in heavily regulated industries in New York, IDEE's founder and CEO, Al Lakhani, is armed with an intricate understanding of the complexities of the US market.

Alex Christophe, Sales Director, IDEE, says: "We are excited to be kicking off this collaboration with LiquidPC, which represents a significant milestone in IDEE's expansion. This new relationship agreement enables us to not only reach new territories, but to expand our reach with a partner that is perfectly aligned to our own values."



Naq raises £2.6m to revolutionise healthcare compliance across the UK and EU

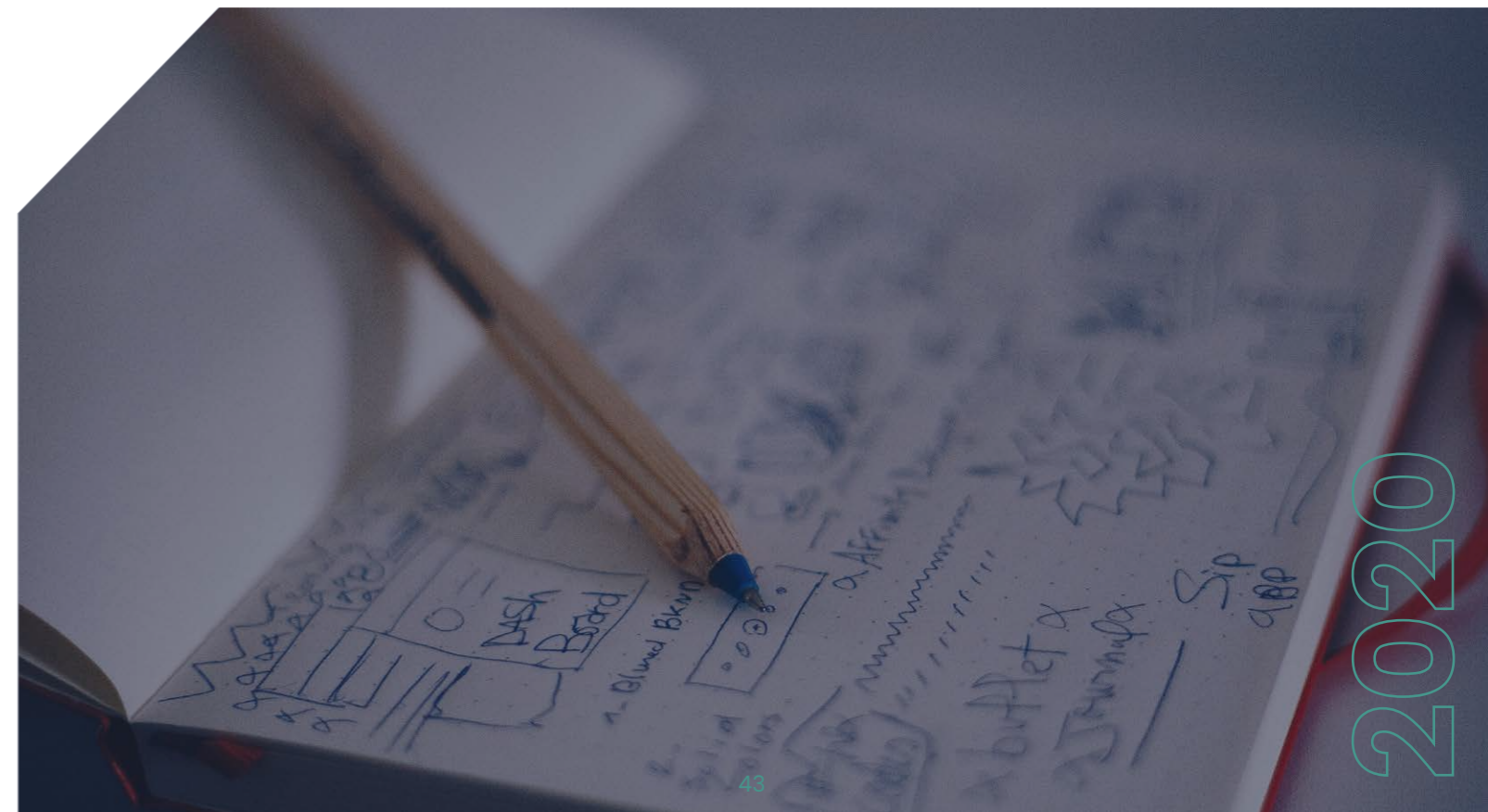
Naq has successfully raised £2.6m to revolutionise healthcare and medical compliance across the UK and the EU. The oversubscribed funding round gained investment from No Such Ventures plus additional support from existing investors. Less than 12 months after its pre-seed round, this reflects the market's confidence in this platform, which is seeing rapid growth across the UK digital health market.

The announcement of the new round of funding comes at a time when startups, particularly those led by female entrepreneurs, find it increasingly challenging to secure investment, with less than 2% of European venture capital funding going to female founders.

Nadia Kadhim, CEO and co-founder of Naq commented: "Nearly 50% of

healthcare solutions fail to make it to market due to the complex regulatory and compliance challenges they face. Those who choose to take on this complexity face overwhelming amounts of manual work and huge sums spent on consultants. That's why we built Naq: to empower innovators in the UK and Europe to bring their solutions to market by simplifying their compliance with the frameworks required to operate in the healthcare sector.

"We want to thank the team at No Such Ventures and our existing investors for their continued support and belief in Naq. This latest funding round will help us accelerate our growth across the UK and Europe and further the development of our category-defining automated compliance platform."





Unstructured data made usable for banks, governments and enterprises

Some of the world's largest and most secure organisations, including large banks and governments, use Ohalo's Data X-Ray to understand unstructured data across their hybrid environments, reduce risk and avoid penalties for non-compliance.

Data X-Ray empowers data privacy, security and compliance professionals with cutting-edge unstructured data analysis capabilities to:

- Locate sensitive unstructured data stored across on-prem and cloud
- Secure data migrations
- Assess unstructured data security risks
- Fulfill data subject access requests (DSARs) in hours, not days
- Operationalise compliance for privacy regulations like the GDPR
- Reduce data attack surface

Kyle DuPont, CEO and co-founder Ohalo, says: "Data X-Ray connects to any type of datasource, both on-prem and in the cloud, scans 100,000s of words per second, and maps data risk. The resulting metadata that is generated provides security and privacy professionals an enterprise-wide picture of their security and privacy data risks."

The Health and Safety Executive adds: "Data X-Ray successfully identifies and redacts personal, sensitive health and safety data from unstructured data sets to a very high degree of accuracy. Using the anonymised version of the data, we're able to share it with third party researchers for the furthering of HSE's mission to prevent death, injury and ill health to those at work and those affected by work activities."



Wellbeing team created at website performance and cyber security specialist

Leeds-based website performance and cybersecurity company RapidSpike has launched a dedicated wellbeing team to support its employee's mental health.

The young company has created a wellbeing team of five RapidSpike employees to put healthy high performance, resilience, and wellbeing at the heart of RapidSpike in a bid to enable each team member to excel and the business to thrive.

The business has also created a dedicated mental health guide to empower employees and give them the resources needed to stay mentally strong and healthy while helping develop RapidSpike's journey.

RapidSpike's CEO Gav Winter says: "People are the heart of every business and looking after them and their needs means you are looking after your business. We need to make sure everyone has the tools they need to be at their best but that they are supported when they have tough times be that in work or anything else."



Trust Stamp revenue increases 46.4% to \$5.38m

Trust Stamp CEO Gareth Genner comments: "2022 was a transformative year for Trust Stamp, as we transitioned to our new Orchestration Layer to deliver Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) products built on our innovative IP portfolio through no-code/low-code implementations.

"This implementation accelerates Trust Stamp's evolution from a custom solutions provider to a modular and highly scalable SaaS model. Since the platform's launch in February 2022, 29 users have contracted to implement Trust Stamp services through the Orchestration Layer, including 25 new financial institutions with over \$50 billion in assets that have enrolled through Fidelity Information Services' (FIS) Global KYC program.

"Our recognised revenue increased 46.4% to \$5.4m for the year ended December 31, 2022, which included contract wins from existing and new customers. Looking ahead, we have multiple shots on goal, including a ten-year technology service agreement with Mastercard International."



VIVIDA founder Simeon Quarrie nominated for The National Diversity Awards 2023

An astonishing 90,000 people were nominated and voted, with the results for the 12th National Diversity Awards (NDA) whittled down to just 120 nominees recognised for their various achievements nationwide.

As in previous years, the nominees were extraordinarily diverse. Group nominations ranged from a safe space transgender network to an inclusive yoga app. Meanwhile, individual nominees include a mother raising awareness of knife crime following the murder of her son and a 15-year-old disability role model who handwrites 1,500 Christmas cards to spread a little happiness in her hometown.

VIVIDA founder Simeon Quarrie was nominated in the Entrepreneur of Excellence category. As the founder of VIVIDA, he has developed unique approaches to building empathy within organisations, Simeon says: "I thought it was spam! But then I realised my nomination for The National Diversity Awards was real! I logged in and saw so many of you took the time to vote.

"I don't know WHO you are – it's anonymous. But reading the 'Why' statements you've typed is a real gift to me. I can tell that votes are from clients, colleagues and those of you who continuously encourage me to keep going. Even if I don't get another single vote. Even if I don't win. You have all reinvigorated my sense of purpose! THANK YOU, humbly. If you are curious, take a look and support the other amazing nominees."



DSIT names Vistalworks among the UK's Most Innovative Cyber SMEs

The Department of Science, Information and Technology (DSIT) in partnership with Infosecurity Europe, the most influential information security event, have unveiled the shortlist for the UK's Most Innovative Cyber SME 2023 contest, which includes Vistalworks.

Commenting on being a finalist, Vicky Brock, CEO and Co-Founder at Vistalworks, says: "We are thrilled to be finalists, not just because it celebrates the progress we have made as a young company tackling a meaningful problem, but because it increases our visibility and credibility at a time when we are looking to grow our solution globally.

"It is important for our team, our amazing stakeholders and customers, and the people who look to us for inspiration to know that the good guys can get ahead too. The area we work in can destroy your faith in humanity, but every aspect of what we do is aimed at delivering a positive social impact, as well as commercial innovation."



Company: Awen Collective
Founders: Jules Farrow-Lesnianski,
Daniel Lewis
Elevator pitch: Awen's innovative
software enables industrial
organisations to take a deep dive
into the control systems in place,
and uncovers their vulnerabilities in a
safety-critical manner.
Graduated programme: 2021
Website: awencollective.com

Programme experience

"Being part of NCSC For Startups has given us great insight into how we can best support the UK to increase our national security, whilst working in the private sector but contribute to the NCSC mission. The programme content introduced us to relevant contacts within NCSC, provided valuable guidance on both our technical and commercial direction and connected us to an invaluable peer community of cyber companies to share knowledge with. Since graduating from the programme, Awen has continued to grow with new hires, further investment and international expansion."

ENCLAVE

Company: Enclave
Founders: Founders: David Notley,
Marc Barry
Elevator pitch: Enclave helps
organisations take a Zero Trust
approach by using overlaying networks
that make private systems invisible to
the public internet until defined trust
standards have been met.
Graduated programme: 2021
Website: enclave.io



Cyber Defence
Service

Company: Cyber Defence Service
Founders: Peter Davies, Ian Strachan
Elevator pitch: Cyber Defence Service
specialises in cyber, radio frequency
and electromagnetic environments,
providing real-time analysis and
exposure of the invisible battlespace
for public and private sectors.
Graduated programme: 2021
Website: cyberdefenceservice.co.uk

Programme experience

"We chose to join the NCSC programme to access the resources and support that would enable us to grow our business. The programme was instrumental in helping us develop a business plan, understand the legal and financial aspects of running a business and network with other entrepreneurs. Since graduating from the programme, Cyber Defence Service has evolved significantly as we've secured funding, built a strong team and created a successful marketing strategy. We've also expanded our customer base, launched new products and services and developed an online marketplace. We're now in a much better position to scale our business and make it more profitable."

2021

2021



Company: Exalens
 Founders: George Alexopoulos,
 Ryan Heartfield
 Elevator pitch: Exalens supports
 businesses through digital
 transformation with an automated
 platform that monitors, enhances and
 unifies cyber and physical security.
 Graduated programme: 2021
 Website: exalens.com

Programme experience

“As a first-time founder of a revolutionary cyber security solution based in the UK, NCSC For Startups proved to be the perfect fit for the company. Time is a valuable asset for a startup and joining the programme helped us avoid costly mistakes through guidance from wonderful mentors. Furthermore, it enabled us to accelerate our market entry through networking opportunities and established relationships that helped us showcase our solution to the right people. The programme also served as an excellent platform to validate our product with industry experts and to connect with a wider community of cyber security startups who share a similar journey. In my opinion, programmes like the NCSC For Startups provide critical support that reinforces the UK cyber security ecosystem and results in a stronger and more resilient UK as a whole.”



Company: Meterian
 Founders: Vivian Dufour, Bruno Bossola
 Elevator pitch: Meterian gives
 continuous protection from cyber
 and IP breaches caused by software
 vulnerabilities in the open-source
 supply chain and infrastructure code
 used by enterprises.
 Graduated programme: 2021
 Website: meterian.io

Programme experience

“It’s been a thrill working with a formidable institution like the NCSC. The NCSC For Startups programme with Plexal has connected us to technologists in government and the private sector, as well as researchers and academics within cyber security. Bringing Meterian into the crossroads of industry, public sector and academia, where we can collaborate and push the boundaries of innovation and security, is a privilege and a rewarding endeavour. We’ve received help accessing mentors and champions, which led us to technical and commercial advisors, presenting opportunities to run trials with over 50 participants that resulted in new product development ideas. We also gained direct and indirect access to funding. Since graduating, our team has grown by 33%, we’ve completed an investment round and have run three government trials. The connections from the programme foster a very welcoming, diverse and growing professional community of experts.”



Company: PORGiESOFT
 Founders: George Brown
 Elevator pitch: PORGiESOFT focuses on
 anti-fraud and SMS-phishing cyber
 security solutions. It combines research
 data, threat intelligence, OSINT,
 transaction analytics and artificial
 intelligence to help consumers and
 businesses prevent fraud and stay safe
 online.
 Graduated programme: 2021
 Website: porgiesoft.com

Programme experience

“We chose to join NCSC For Startups to get guidance and useful feedback from a variety of industry experts on our product and technology roadmap. Additionally, we wanted to better understand the scope, scale and complexity of the cyber-fraud problem we were solving from a national security perspective. Joining the programme was very beneficial for us since we originally started out in edtech, before pivoting to cyber security in 2020. The programme helped us to get a deeper understanding of cyber security, gain access to the supportive cyber ecosystem and we were able to take away several recommendations that helped us to adapt our roadmap. The programme surprisingly wasn’t all tech-focused but helped us to better articulate our value proposition and develop our go-to-market strategy which addressed our blindspots. Since graduation, we’ve evolved from an anti-fraud phishing security company to an anti-fraud smishing security company, providing threat intelligence around SMS fraud and smishing.”



Company: Rebellion Defense
 Founders: Chris Lynch, Nicole Camarillo,
 Oliver Lewis
 Elevator pitch: Rebellion Defense is a
 British-American software company
 building AI products exclusively for the
 defence sector and national security
 purposes. Its SECURE solution helps
 organisations look ahead, focus their
 resources and proactively defend their
 systems and networks.
 Graduated programme: 2021
 Website: rebelliondefense.com

2021 Milestone moments >



Recognition from United States Department of Defense achieved

The U.S. Army, in partnership with U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy, launched its first international tri-service competition in the form of the xTechGlobal Artificial Intelligence Challenge in 2021.

Cyber Defence Service was a finalist, coming in third place. The business was amongst driven minds that had amazing ideas and innovations, all using machine learning at the core of their products.

The United States Department of Defense commissioned the xTechGlobal Artificial Intelligence Challenge to find

innovative AI-driven enhancements to enable their future “War Fighters” – the end-goal being to make impactful advances to the DoD’s multi-domain capabilities.

Cyber Defence Service’s product, Overt AI, is designed to provide real-time and recorded situational awareness of wireless heterogeneous networks and was of particular interest given its applicability to SIGINT.



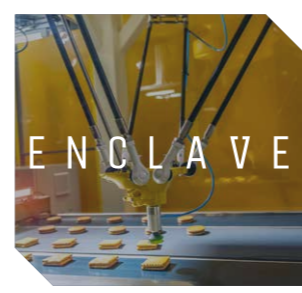
Sapphire acquires Awen to expand IT/OT services portfolio

Sapphire, the cyber security solutions provider, has acquired Awen Collective. The acquisition enables Sapphire to expand its service offering and provide support to UK organisations seeking to converge their IT and OT infrastructures and secure them from cyber threats.

With the global OT security market predicted to be worth \$38.2bn by 2028 and targeted cyber attacks on OT environments continuing to rise, organisations are seeking guidance and support how to identify and mitigate cyber security threats on their converged environments. To address this under-served market, Sapphire sought to expand its portfolio and bring in-house the expansive knowledge and experience of the OT cyber domain that Awen has amassed.

Paul Dennis, Chairman of Awen, comments: “As both an investor and board member, the growth and development of Awen from an initial research idea to a fully functional, best in class solution, for OT asset discovery and risk management, has been an incredible journey.

“With increased legislation coming to the fore and organisations facing heightened risks from cyber attackers seeking to cause disruption to society, it is time to look at how organisations can be effectively guided to secure both their IT and OT environments for maximum security. Sapphire is undoubtedly the best fit for Awen as we work together to reach exciting new clients and sectors, while continuing to deliver on our mission to make society safer.”



Enclave and Weeve join forces to deliver secure connectivity

Enclave and Weeve partnered to offer a powerful solution for businesses looking to securely access their edge devices and gain valuable insights from their machinery.

Customers now can securely access their edge devices and gain insights from the data generated by their machinery, even when the devices are outside the boundaries of their private network. This is, for example, of interest to manufacturing companies: they can

securely monitor devices on the factory floor in real-time from anywhere, at any time, better plan maintenance, and quickly identify and fix issues before they become significant problems.

Tom Davis , Enclave’s Chief Revenue Officer, says: “This partnership is exciting news for all organisations with IoT infrastructure, collectively Enclave and weeve can provide secure access to their IoT implementations and improve ROI to complement their business transformation.”



Meterian CEO Vivian Dufour named among women helping shape Gloucestershire's cyber sector

As Gloucestershire races to claim the title of 'UK Cyber Central', SoGlos has highlighted some of the women at the heart of helping shape the fast-growing county sector – whose epicentre is in the shadow of GCHQ in Cheltenham.

And while career drives to encourage more women into the broadly labeled cyber industry might give the impression of a male-dominated sector, as this list shows, significant female talent is already leading from the front in Gloucestershire.

Dufour's company Meterian, was one of five in an intake of the NCSC For Startups programme. According to those who put her name forward for this list 'both Vivian's technical and operational capabilities are outstanding', 'she is an inspiration in the sector'. 'Passion, knowledge and all-round loveliness' were also mentioned. She works closely with Cheltenham cyber group CyNam helping make sure its events remain a success.



Exalens launches groundbreaking platform for manufacturers

Exalens launched its first platform, designed specifically for manufacturers and aimed at detecting and responding to cyber-physical anomalies in seconds, thus reducing the mean time to respond to events or threats that can impact production.

The Exalens platform conducts root cause analysis across cyber-physical systems, so OT and IT teams know in seconds what, where, when, how and why an incident has occurred and how to best respond.

Ryan Heartfield, CTO of Exalens, says: "We're extremely excited to introduce our Cyber-Physical Detection and Response platform to the market. We've seen how the convergence of IT and OT in the industrial sector brings immense potential but also greater risk.

"Cyber-physical systems require cyber-physical security monitoring, and that's why we developed the Exalens platform. We believe it will revolutionise decision-making, incident response, and collaboration between IT and OT teams. And ultimately, this helps manufacturers minimise impact and optimise their operations, with confidence and resilience."



Rebellion Defense software to support UK Ministry of Defence

Rebellion Defense, which builds the modern mission stack to detect and deter adversaries, today announced that the U.K. Ministry of Defence awarded a contract for Rebellion Defense Iris Extract to accelerate end-to-end data extraction, ingestion, processing, and analysis.

Charles Forte, Chief Information Officer at the UK Ministry of Defence, says: "Rebellion Defense is a critical addition to the defence technology eco-system in the UK and brings next generation software capabilities and working practices onto the pitch. Rebellion's leadership and the partnership with the UK Ministry of Defence is putting cutting edge technology into the hands

of users to make mission decisions at the speed of relevance."

Chris Lynch, Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder of Rebellion Defense, adds: "We're proud to support the UK Ministry of Defence in achieving decision advantage on the battlefield. Today, the sheer amount of data across domains makes human processing and analysis at scale nearly impossible. Rebellion Defense software cuts through the noise so analysts and decision makers can glean insights and do what they do best – outpace adversaries and deliver results where it matters most."



Wavestone's UK Cyber Security Startup Radar

Wavestone's UK Cyber Radar is back to provide its own perspective of the emerging themes and trends arising in the UK Cyber Sector. With help from ScotlandIS, Northern Ireland's cyber security cluster and Plexal, Wavestone reached out to promising cyber security startups across the cyber innovation ecosystem and secured feedback from 57 startups to inform its analysis.

PORGiESOFT was spotlighted and says: "We're very pleased to have been featured in the anti-fraud category in Wavestone's 2022 UK Cyber Security Startup Radar."



Company: Cyntegra
Founder: Giles Watkins
Elevator pitch: Cyntegra enables fast, local and complete recovery from ransomware and cyber attacks, restoring business operations and productivity in hours and minutes instead of days, weeks or months.
Graduated programme: 2022
Website: cyntegra.com

Programme experience

“As an early-stage startup, finance and customers are critical to creating a viable business. Also precious is ‘headspace’ to focus on things that often do, but probably shouldn’t, take a back seat such as: strategy, elevator pitches, presentations, and business models. The NCSC For Startups programme provided a unique opportunity to properly focus on all these things, whilst also offering invaluable introductions to potential customers and investors. Since graduating, we’ve been able to approach the market with more focus and confidence. We’ve had our first commercial sale, have several active leads and are in active discussions with investors, while continuing to enhance our profile and improve our messaging by presenting at events and attending trade missions – like this one. I’m sure that when we look back in years to come, the relationships we developed during the programme will prove to be an inflection point in Cyntegra’s development.”



ESPROFILER

Company: ESProfiler
Founders: Louis Holt, Marc Newton
Elevator pitch: ESPROFILER helps organisations maximise the value their security investments bring. It enables customers to understand what security products they own, what they’ve deployed and the threats those products should protect against.
Graduated programme: 2022
Website: esprofiler.com



Ethicronics

Company: Ethicronics
Founder: Franck Courbon
Elevator pitch: Ethicronics is a Software as a Service (SaaS) solution that addresses hacked, counterfeit, or recycled electronics.
Graduated programme: 2022
Website: ethicronics.com

Programme experience

“The NCSC For Startups programme has enabled Ethicronics to first validate its hardware assurance and integrity approach to contribute answering the NCSC challenge of operation technology cyber security. Ethicronics has gained commercial insights, technical feedback and unique partnerships thanks to the programme. It was an eye-opening and unique opportunity for us in 2022 and it enables us, as alumni, to still be supported in 2023 and beyond. An important stepping-stone for Ethicronics – thanks to everyone involved.”

2022



2022

fezzant

Company: Fezzant

Founder: Aliyu Yisa

Elevator pitch: Fezzant is on a mission to make cyber security and learning experiences accessible and inclusive for all. To help organisations close existing gaps in security culture, the business is building tailored cyber security experiences with accessibility at the core.

Graduated programme: 2022

Website: fezzant.com

Programme experience

“Summing up the experience, NCSC For Startups gave us all the tools, mentorship and opportunities for Fezzant’s next big phase. There was a lot of focus on research and, while research never stops, this year, our focus will be on building innovations to fuel our progress to the next level. We will also focus on partnerships with other organisations who share our vision. It really feels like the journey is getting a fresh start.”

Goldilock

Company name: Goldilock

Founders: Tony Hasek, Stephen Kines

Elevator pitch: Goldilock allows customers to remotely and instantly physically connect and disconnect assets (servers, networks, OT systems) to and from the internet – without using the internet.

Graduated programme: 2022

Website: goldilock.com

Programme experience

“We joined NCSC For Startups to connect with experts who would challenge our messaging, hone our strategy and introduce us to new opportunities, effectively obtaining the halo effect of working with NCSC and the Intelligence Community. Building on our pre-existing enterprise division since graduating, we’ve developed a defence and industrial division. We’ve continued to collaborate with the Community of Interest for the industrial control systems/operational technology division led by NCSC and joined Plexal’s Cyber Runway Scale programme. Internationally, we’ve been on two DIT Trade Missions to New York and Singapore, been chosen to participate at the Atlantic Future Forum on the HMS Queen Elizabeth, and received an invite to launch in the US under Maryland’s Soft Landing Program at MISI Dreamport.”

LUPOVIS

Company: Lupovis

Founders: Xavier Bellekens, Ivan Andonovic

Elevator pitch: Lupovis is an AI-based deception solution that engages adversaries who have penetrated a business network through a sequence of decoys using adaptive narrative and manipulation techniques – helping the organisation to carry on as normal.

Graduated programme: 2022

Website: lupovis.io

SOS Intelligence

Company: SOS Intelligence

Founders: Amir Hadzipasic

Elevator pitch: SOS Intelligence provides curated actionable multi-source threat intelligence. Its bespoke intel collection feeds provide unprecedented OSINT coverage including Dark Web data collection.

Graduated programme: 2022

Website: sosintel.co.uk

Redflags® from ThinkCyber

Company: ThinkCyber

Founders: Tim Ward, Mike Butler

Elevator pitch: ThinkCyber helps change people’s behaviour so they can better protect themselves against cyber threats. Its Redflags software applies behavioural science theory to deliver real-time, context-aware, on-device security interventions and nudges at the point of risk.

Graduated programme: 2022

Website: thinkcyber.co.uk

Programme experience

“Completing the NCSC For Startups programme topped off what was a fantastic year for ThinkCyber, in which we doubled our number of clients, demonstrating real and ongoing product-market fit. The programme served as a great opportunity to take stock, review and strengthen the foundations of our business before launching further into scaling in 2023. It very much feels like the beginning of a journey, building on our newfound relationships inside NCSC to tackle the engagement challenge that we hear about so often when speaking to organisations. We’re approaching 2023 with a very strong belief that we’re very much ‘on the right track’ with our unique Redflags Real-time Awareness offering.”

traced

Company: Traced
Founder: Benedict Jones
Elevator pitch: Traced believes that privacy is a human right. It's created a mobile threat defence solution that provides protection against mobile-borne threats to businesses, without compromising people's privacy.
Graduated programme: 2022
Website: traced.app



Company: Validato
Founders: Ronan Lavelle, Andrew Brown, Miroslav Solodujev, Jan Zentek
Elevator pitch: Validato is a breach and attack simulation platform that allows organisations to safely simulate cyber threat scenarios to test their defences in minutes and access guidance on how to mitigate and harden their defenses against key cyber threats.
Graduated programme: 2022
Website: validato.io

Programme experience
"Being part of the NCSC For Startups programme is in itself a great validation of our proposition and brings considerable credibility to Validato. We saw this programme like a ninja training camp for UK cyber startups where we were able to perfect and hone our skills and propositions over the 12-week programme. The programme has definitely influenced our go-to-market and development strategies for the better."

visible

Company: Visible
Founders: Ben Graville, Kerem Koccar
Elevator pitch: Visible empowers people to see their digital-self, control the underlying data and change how others perceive them. It creates a way for people to protect and enhance their online image and safeguard themselves and their families against digital threats.
Graduated programme: 2022
Website: visible.cx

Programme experience
"It's hard to think that NCSC For Startups was only a 12-week programme because, somehow, we managed to get so much done. We tested our ideas, assumptions and stamina and came out of the end of it more confident and with greater clarity on what we need to focus on. The programme works as a catalyst and it's clear that you get out what you put in. We'll be staying in touch with everyone and looking forward to the alumni events in the future."



2022 Milestone moments >



Global Thinkers Forum

Cyntegra Founder Giles Watkins is the UK Country Leader for the International Association of Privacy Professionals, where he provides strategic advice on positioning the brand and developing business and member services in the UK market.

Giles has Board positions with several technology startups in the UK, USA and the Cayman Islands focused on innovative security, privacy and identity technologies and digital banking and financial services.

Giles has previously been a Partner at both KPMG and EY. At KPMG he led the

Global Privacy and the UK Identity and Access Management practices and Cyber Security services to major accounts. Whilst at Ernst & Young he sat on the Board of the UK Technology Risk practice, founded and led the global Technology Due Diligence and Post-deal services practice as well as founding the UK Privacy practice.

In-between these roles, Giles founded the boutique advisory firm, Concentium, which was subsequently acquired by KPMG.

2022



ESProfiler raises £2.8m

ESProfiler secured a £2.8m seed round led by Nauta Capital, building on the momentum from notable angel investments received in 2023. The seed investment will fuel ESProfiler's commercial growth, enhance product development and add substantial new capabilities to its platform.

Louis Holt, CEO and Co-founder of ESProfiler, expressed his enthusiasm: "Partnering with Nauta Capital marks a significant step in our journey towards offering continuous security investment validation to enterprises. This funding is not just a financial boost but a validation of our vision at ESProfiler. It will accelerate our engineering efforts, expanding our platform's capabilities and reach."

Pratima Aiyagari, London-based Partner at Nauta, added: "ESProfiler has created a new way for CISOs to operate. It provides continuous analysis of security tools and their performance. With this intelligence, any company's security can be optimized to help teams do more with what they have. For the first time, companies can rationalize their security budget based on hard data. In today's economic environment, that's a huge advantage – and one that positions security as a business driver and competitive advantage for the long term."



Volunteering for CyBlack

Fezzant CEO Ali Yisa is an experienced software engineer, cyber security professional and startup founder. He has authored academic articles, contributed to open source and mentored several enthusiasts.

With Fezzant dedicated to improving the accessibility and inclusiveness of cyber security training to underserved groups, especially people living with disabilities, Ali is a volunteer for CyBlack, a non-profit that's growing the next generation of black cyber security talent.

The organisation's work includes mentorship, career and academic support, community engagement and a cohort-based virtual internship.



A year of growth and cyber security awareness and outreach milestones

2022 was a year of firsts and growth for Goldilock, which highlighted milestones including financial growth, acceptance into prestigious accelerators, partnerships and awards, while revenue is expected to hit close to \$3m by the end of 2023.

On the financial front, Goldilock has booked upwards of \$1m in revenue from Q2 2022 to Q2 2023 from customers in segments as diverse as water utilities, hospitality, aerospace, high profit agricultural crops and crypto custodianship.

Goldilock founder and CEO, Tony Hasek, says: "Our engaging with one of the UK's largest water authorities to help them protect their operational technology network from cyber risk underscores the broad relevance of our physical isolation and connectivity solution, based on DPNS (Dynamic Physical Network Segregation), across all vertical segments.

"Our not requiring the use of internet to deliver physical connectivity or isolation within our solution has been registered by water utilities in other markets, as have customers in multiple other segments, reflecting their interest in our unique and innovative solution."



Growth Fund Grant from NCSC For Startups

SOS Intelligence are thrilled to announce that we have received a Growth Fund grant from the NCSC For Startups programme. This award will allow us to accelerate the development of our product and deliver both requested and innovative features to our clients.

Amir Hadzipasic, SOS Intelligencer CEO and founder, says: "We are absolutely delighted to receive the grant from the NCSC For programme. It's going to make a significant difference for our development and timescales and we are grateful for the support. As Alumni of the programme, the continued mentorship and support helps significantly."

Aamir Zaheer, SOS Intelligence business development manager, adds: "When speaking with existing clients and prospects, we also listen to their needs and suggestions. The Growth Fund grant allows us to accelerate our development to meet these needs and provide an affordable solution for businesses and organisations. "We recently announced a special plan for UK charities, NHS trusts and schools, so we are very pleased for a strong start to 2023."



Lupovis raises over €700,000 for cyber deception solution which makes the hunter the hunted

Lupovis, a cyber security spin-out from the University of Strathclyde, has secured a pre-seed investment of over €700,000 from a syndicate co-led by Techstart Ventures and Nauta Capital, and investment from the University of Strathclyde itself.

Founded in June 2021 by Xavier Bellekens, Glasgow-based Lupovis has created a dynamic deception solution that leads cyber attackers and ransomware away from high value assets, delivering a proactive defence, which turns the 'hunter into the hunted'. With this funding, Lupovis is on track to become one of Scotland's fastest growing cyber security startups and the investment will be used to expand the team and enhance functionalities of the platform. Lupovis is a software-based innovation providing an artificial intelligence (AI)-driven deception environment that enables the definition and execution of pro-active cyber-attack mitigation strategies. Lupovis allows early cyber-attack identification, dynamic management and classification.

Xavier says: "[The Lupovis system] uses artificial intelligence to create scenarios which mirror the existing infrastructure of an organisation and engages the attacker into believing they are progressing towards assets of value, turning networks from a flock of sheep to a pack of wolves."

Lupovis, an amalgamation of the Latin words for wolf (lupus) and sheep (ovis), offers the attacker incentives that steer them on a certain path.

Xavier adds: "[The Lupovis platform is in a] a unique position where we have unrivalled data on attacker techniques, methods and behaviour. We will feed this data into our platform, so our customers will always remain one step ahead of attackers, predicting their next move, long before they actually make it."



Best Cyber Security Training & Awareness Product or Service

ThinkCyber received recognition at the TEISS Awards 2024, where it was honoured with the title of "Best Cyber Security Training and Awareness Product or Service," against very strong competition. The TEISS Awards are renowned for acknowledging excellence in the cyber security industry, as judged by industry peers.

Impactful stats detailed in ThinkCyber's award entry included:

- Staff being 44% less likely to click on phishing links.
- 68% more likely to report during a recent phishing simulation.
- 45.6% reduction in screens left unlocked over several months.

Tim Ward, ThinkCyber CEO and Co-founder, said: "When you start on this journey, of building a business and innovating, you do it because you've had or seen a problem that isn't being fixed by existing solutions. That is exactly where Mike Butler and I came from in setting up and building Redflags. To get an award like this, to be recognised by security peers, is just fantastic validation that we aren't the only ones who see there is a problem here to be solved, and that Redflags is best in class at solving that problem for our amazing clients."



Traced Joins Microsoft Intelligent Security Association (MISA)

Traced has joined the Microsoft Intelligent Security Association (MISA), an ecosystem of independent software vendors and managed security service providers that have integrated their solutions to better defend against a world of increasing threats.

Traced was nominated for membership for its Zero-Trust capabilities for mobile devices, which protects businesses against data breaches and cyber attacks by restricting access to company data from untrusted and compromised mobile devices.

Traced CEO and co-founder, Benedict Jones, says: "By joining MISA, Traced will work closely alongside Microsoft to protect businesses against growing risks of costs and damages arising from mobile threats like malware and phishing.

"Microsoft Azure AD users will be protected as the Trustd app will verify their mobile devices are trusted and provide access to company data like email, cloud storage and company apps."



Validato secures funding from NCSC Growth Fund

Validato is pleased to announce that it has secured funding from the UK's National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) Growth Fund. The funding will be used to accelerate the development of Validato's innovative cyber threat simulation platform and expand its customer base.

The NCSC Growth Fund is a £100m initiative set up to support innovative cyber security companies and help them grow in the UK. Validato was selected for funding based on its innovative approach to security controls validation, which helps organisations better test their security defences and detection capabilities from cyber threats.

Validato's CEO, Ronan Lavelle, says: "We're thrilled to receive this investment from the NCSC Growth Fund. This funding will allow us to expand our team, enhance our technology, and bring our solution to more organisations worldwide."



The Security Interviews: Protecting your digital self

With our lives becoming ever more interconnected, and both real-world and online activities being recorded, we are generating an increasingly sophisticated record of what we are like. This digital self is a virtual representation of our lives, which people use as a basis for judgements, in lieu of meeting in person, and which algorithms use for informing their responses to that person.

"Nobody's life is solely offline these days," says Ben Graville, founder of Visible, in conversation with Computer Weekly. "When we go about our daily lives, whether we like it or not, the side-effect of our conscious use of technology is an unconscious data trail that leaves a digital shadow – a detailed representation in data of who we are, how we think and the things we do. It's a manifestation of us, but one we didn't know we were leaving."

"To stop us going into a dystopian world in the future, people need to feel empowered to own their identity and digital self and use that to make the internet a fairer place, where people have as much to benefit from their digital self as businesses do."



Ethicronics certification sets out to identify counterfeit electronics

Counterfeit electronic goods entering the UK is an ongoing challenge and being able to stop this threat would be a significant step in the right direction, says Ethicronics CEO and founder Franck Courbon.

Trading Standards has reported that over four million counterfeit products across all sectors breached the IP of legitimate businesses in the 2021-2022 financial year, worth an estimated £111m. The goal for Ethicronics is to stop fake, compromised (and unsustainable) electronics – for good.

The startup emerged from Franck's background as a security engineer working for Gemalto (now Thales) in France, before coming to Cambridge as a post-doctoral research associate at Cambridge University's Department of Computer Science and Technology (DCST) in 2015. In 2017 he became a Leverhulme early career fellow. By 2020 he was an affiliated lecturer and in 2021 he became the Physical Attacks and Supply chain Security (PASS) project leader supported by an EPSRC Impact Acceleration Account Partnership Award (and a private sponsor), all within the DCST.

Franck says: "Ethicronics started in June 2022 and I went full time in November 2022. Summer 2022 we were awarded an Innovate UK grant, for £50,000. Cyber security is the first selling point – that means no more fake or compromised electronics."

"The second is greener electronics, 75 per cent of the carbon footprint of your phone is generated before it reaches your pocket. So, we want to make people aware of that – and other aspects of the sustainable economy."



Company: Acubed.IT
Founders: Amit Gupta, Ashish Sharma, Andy Day
Elevator pitch: Acubed.IT is committed to supporting the public sector to ensure the UK’s ever-evolving cyber security is top priority, providing a novel security product for solving complex cross-domain problems.
Graduated programme: 2023
Website: acubed.it

Programme experience

“Joining NCSC For Startups is one of the best things that’s happened to Acubed. We’ve met such great people, who have been useful and supportive. Overall, the ecosystem in Cheltenham is energising and brought together the right community we needed to speak to, providing access to opportunities, which has been really important.”



Company: coc00n
Founders: Lucy Burnford, Luke Smyth, Morten Peachy, Harry Gough
Elevator pitch: coc00n’s unique suite of cyber security protections wrap around the mobile devices of high-risk and high-profile individuals, providing comprehensive digital privacy and security.
Graduated programme: 2023
Website: coc00n.com

Programme experience

“The programme offered a productive and collaborative work environment, which has been great. We’ve been able to meet several other companies in our sector that we may not have found

otherwise. It’s provided us with access to seminars, workshops and expertise, with a broad range of people involved, such as bright thinkers from Deloitte and innovative contributions from the NCSC, which has all been brought together brilliantly by Plexal. And that allowed us to think more about working on our business rather than working in our business, which at the stage that we’re at has been really beneficial.”

Cyber Tzar

Company: Cyber Tzar
Founder: Wayne Horkan
Elevator pitch: Cyber Tzar is delivering cyber resilience with its online Cyber Risk Management platform. Providing dynamic, data-driven insights, it empowers businesses with effective remediation pathways through empirical vulnerability scanning, cyber security profiling and scoring.
Graduated programme: 2023
Website: cybertzar.com

Programme experience

“We’ve seen NCSC For Startups transform other businesses and we wanted some of that magic for ourselves. Being on the programme, there was a real tangible feeling that what you’re doing is valuable. And the great thing was that the consortium team was wonderful, providing a huge amount of support as everybody did everything they could for us. They all understood that we were all in the same boat: working to improve the UK’s cyber security. Everybody provided a lot of help and support, which we loved.”

2023

2023

LEXVERIFY™

Company: Lexverify
 Founder: Cristian Gherhes
 Elevator pitch: Lexverify is an AI-powered assistant that prevents legal and compliance risks on electronic communication in real time to save companies time and money, protecting their reputation and providing continuous training to employees.
 Graduated programme: 2023
 Website: lexverify.com

Programme experience

"We've met potential clients, potential partners and connected to fantastic networks that wouldn't have been accessed without the programme. This is what a really good demo-designed business support programme should look like. The whole experience was brilliant. Making new connections and getting to know the other companies on the programme are definitely key highlights."

MEMCRYPT

Company: MemCrypt
 Founders: Pete Jaco, Peter McLaren
 Elevator pitch: MemCrypt is taking a new approach to prevent and reduce the impact of ransomware attacks by supporting recovery of encrypted data to remove the need to pay any ransom.
 Graduated programme: 2023
 Website: memcrypt.io

Programme experience

"We had an excellent interaction with NCSC technical architects and the Plexal team that ran the programme, doing a wonderful job of assembling government and industry. Everyone

was really supportive and provided great feedback on our technology. We really enjoyed being on the NCSC For Startups programme, during which we met so many wonderful people including our fellow cohort members."

RevEng.AI

Company: RevEng.AI
 Founder: James Patrick-Evans
 Elevator pitch: RevEng.AI is building foundational AI models for understanding the contents and behaviour of software supply chains.
 Graduated programme: 2023
 Website: reveng.ai

RoboShadow

Company: RoboShadow
 Founder: Terry Lewis
 Elevator pitch: RoboShadow produces a range of technology innovations including cyber security products designed to be simple and easy to use, all the way through to cloud management, AI and much more. All of which the company plans on providing to the world for free.
 Graduated programme: 2023
 Website: roboshadow.com

Programme experience

"We know how to build tech but the programme has helped with getting our startup to market. This has meant making sure that we have a positive effect from a national security perspective, that we're adding value for businesses and end users. Having the necessary mentorship has helped us to make sure we're doing all of that properly and that we're not making mistakes, which has been really important."

ROWDEN

Company: Rowden Technologies
 Founder: Robert Harper
 Elevator pitch: Rowden is working on the digital fingerprinting of devices to help secure networks. The business integrates, customises and operationalises advanced technology from a wider ecosystem that it orchestrates for government customers.
 Graduated programme: 2023
 Website: rowdentech.com

VAULT SENTINEL

Company: Vault Sentinel
 Founder: Andrew Kirkby
 Elevator pitch: Cyber Recovery that allows an organisation to recover from a catastrophic cyber attack in days rather than weeks.
 Graduated programme: 2023
 Website: vaultsentinel.com

ZORB

Company: Zorb Security
 Founders: Mark Graham, Adrian Winckles
 Elevator pitch: Zorb Security provides cyber protection for business employees who need to access confidential data from outside of the corporate office. By scrutinising the origin of the data, the data destination and the data transmission method, Zorb prevents untrusted applications from transmitting data.
 Graduated programme: 2023
 Website: zorbsecurity.com

Programme experience

"The programme's about getting the business ready to go out there and talk to customers. It's helped us with our elevator pitches, customer pitches and everything we'd need to talk to a potential customer about to make sure we're selling value. It also got us ready for things like looking for investment and has really shaped how our business is going forward."

2023 Milestone moments >



AI-powered risk management assistant secures £900,000 investment

Birmingham-based Lexverify, an AI-powered risk management assistant, has raised £900,000 in seed round funding led by Midven, part of the Future Planet Capital Group. £550,000 is from the Midlands Engine Investment Fund (MEIF 1) through the MEIF West Midlands Equity Fund, alongside £350,000 from Raspberry Ventures, The LegalTech Fund and angel investors. The investment will enable the company to make the key hires needed to fulfil its expansion plans, following successful pilots with enterprises in the financial services and pharmaceutical sectors.

Cristian Gherhes, Founder & CEO of Lexverify says: "Today, reactive measures fall short, and with Midven's support, we're not just adapting; we're pioneering. Their referral to the NCSC For Startups was the spark and this £900,000 investment is the fuel for our next chapter. We're not just securing

businesses; we're revolutionising risk, compliance and cyber security in the digital landscape, helping organisations to achieve proactive compliance at scale."

Huw Sparkes, Investment Manager at Midven says: "Lexverify offers cutting-edge technology to proactively scan electronic communications in real time and in doing so sets a new standard for risk management, employee training and productivity growth. We are thrilled to support them on their journey to modernise the way businesses manage risk and foster a safer, more efficient, and professional workplace environment."



RevEng.AI named among cyber security startups to watch, according to VCs

Cybersecurity startups raised around \$1.8bn in 2022, matching the total funding that the sector drummed up in the year before, writes Sifted. Digital asset investment platform Copper raised the biggest round of the year – a \$180m Series C from Tiger Global Management and Barclays PLC – followed by Nord Security's \$100m raise.

But which up-and-coming startups are VCs watching in the space? Sifted reported the companies investors clocked, with one caveat: they weren't allowed to pick any of their portfolio companies.

Nick Kingsbury, partner at Amadeus Capital Partners, a global technology investor based in Cambridge, says: "RevEng uses machine learning to analyse binary code and detect potential malware. The company structures and executes binary code to identify suspicious behaviour, by searching for patterns within the code. Crucially, this approach allows companies to ensure that no malicious code is running on their systems, even if the original malicious binary code has been altered."



Rowden Technologies looks to grow following £600,000 support package

Founded in 2016, Rowden Technologies now employs a team of 80 specialists in Bristol and has ambitions to grow their team to 250 and triple turnover within the next three years. Due to a surge in demand for its highly specialised solutions, the business has sought support from Lloyds Bank to enable the company to unlock its growth potential.

Rob Harper, CEO at Rowden Technologies, said: "As the business enters a period of rapid growth, our main priority is scaling across all our specialisms to provide a fast and flexible approach for the design and delivery of cutting-edge technology solutions to our growing client base."

"The support from Lloyds Bank and in particular recent funding from their Growth & Structured Finance Team means that we can meet the increasing demand for critical technology infrastructure both in the UK and further afield."

Lloyds Bank's new SME Growth & Structured Finance Team was established in 2022 to provide bespoke funding to UK companies at key moments in their lifecycle and support their growth ambitions including investment, acquisitions, and changes of ownership.

Steven Knight, Director of SME Growth & Structured Finance at Lloyds Bank, said: "It is fantastic to be able to support innovative, fast-growing businesses like Rowden Technologies to achieve important milestones in their growth journey."



ZORB Data Shield launches

ZORB Security has launched its new product, the Zorb Data Shield, just two months after graduating from the NCSC For Startups programme.

Benefitting from NCSC and private sector technical expertise while on the programme, the company's new product empowers businesses to understand and minimise the risk associated with sensitive business data breaches.

Mark Graham, Zorb Security CEO, says: "In today's remote working era, it's essential to know where your sensitive information is going. ZORB's Data Shield monitors the destination of all outgoing data, to protect against data breaches when your sensitive data is outside of the corporate office. Don't leave your remote user's data vulnerable to cyber theft."

Cynalytica

Company: Cynalytica
Founder: Richard Robinson
Elevator pitch: Cynalytica specialises in industrial control systems (ICS), supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) and operational technology (OT) security. The business offers all-sources communication capture as well as advanced machine learning and AI-driven threat detection, protecting critical infrastructures with predictive cyber security and operation solutions.
Graduated programme: 2024
Website: cynalytica.com

Programme experience

“We’ve really enjoyed the collaborative and innovative spirit of the programme. Meeting a lot of industry experts has been extremely helpful to tailor our products and business.”

iothic

Company: Iothic
Founder: Christopher Autry
Elevator pitch: Iothic provides technology to enable post-quantum secure, smart networks to function without reliance on third parties or single points of vulnerability, which presents higher productivity and asset utilisation from broader operational connectivity – at lower risk and lower cost.
Graduated programme: 2024
Website: iothic.io

Programme experience

“The community is very much a highlight of the programme. Meeting our peers on our cohort, we saw how we were complementary and working together enabled us to meet community needs.”

Kuro

Company: Kuro
Founders: Emma Humphrey, Nick Hutchings, Jonathan Drewett
Elevator pitch: Kuro is simplifying the cloud through software that helps organisations overcome numerous barriers to accessing cloud capabilities, which can often result in non-expert users finding the cloud confusing and inaccessible.
Graduated programme: 2024
Website: kuro.black

Programme experience

“The programme that was curated really followed the growth of our company and the NCSC and Plexal really supported us with it.”

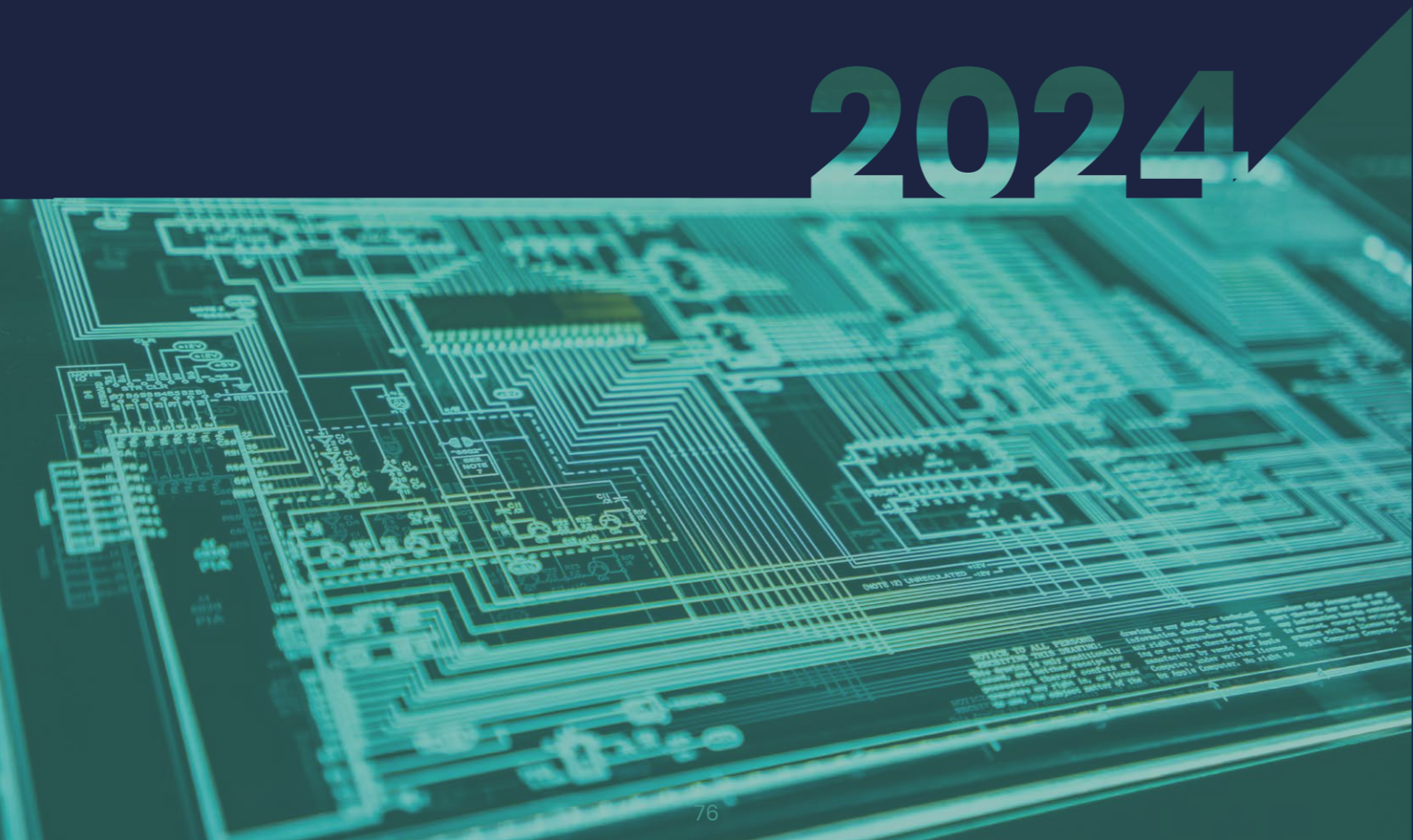
OrbiSky

Company: Orbisky
Founder: Sylvester Kaczmarek
Elevator pitch: OrbiSky is working to transform business operations through development of next-generation encrypted data management technology, doing so with creation of an innovative edge data unit.
Graduated programme: 2024
Website: orbisky.com

Programme experience

“I really valued the access to cyber security expertise from NCSC and GCHQ and business mentoring and guidance from Plexal and Deloitte.”

2024



2024



Founders: Joe Boyle, Patrick Keehan,
Jonathan Blair
Elevator pitch: Salt Communications
provides a secure mobile solution
for sharing sensitive information.
Organisations using its solution can
accelerate decision making, increase
productivity and drive efficiency.
Graduated programme: 2024
Website: saltcommunications.com

Programme experience:
“The NCSC For Startups collaboration
days, at which point external
stakeholders were brought in to have
candid conversations with us about
pain points, technology and market
interactions, really stood out for us.”

2024



National Cyber
Security Centre

a part of GCHQ



National Cyber
Security Centre
For Startups



plexal