

## Science, Tech and Digital lookahead next six months

The Science, Tech and Digital sectors are major parts of the UK's culture and economy. The coming six months are, unsurprisingly, heavily focused on Brexit, with this industry in particular being heavily reliant on EU-born workers and international funding. The upcoming negotiations are crucial for areas ranging from the Erasmus exchange programme to the future of the British nuclear industry, with major regulatory changes across the digital and tech sectors.

As the digital sector develops, online regulation has become an increasingly prominent issue and the implementation of GDPR towards the end of May is followed by a string of investigations and publications surrounding topics are varied as fake news, cyber security and connectivity.

The comms sector is seeing some seismic changes, with a potential merger between industry giants 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fox and Sky up for review by the Competition & Markets Authority, with a potential rival bid from Comcast also looming for both.

With Britain committed to reducing its carbon output in the coming years, energy usage and efficiency are set to become hot topics. As a result, the Government is committed to creating an environment that encourages the necessary technological advancements to take place – notably through bills like the Automated and Electric Vehicles Bill, which seeks to encourage the purchase and use of electric vehicles. This particular bill focuses on developing EV charging points across the country, and such large-scale infrastructure projects are a common feature of long-term planning within the Government.

Telecoms infrastructure is one sector in particular that is due to receive a major infrastructure funding boost from Government, and Matt Hancock, the DCMS Secretary, will set out a strategy to deliver on ambitious targets in the Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review at some point over the Summer.

Across the coming 6 months, there is evidence of widespread consultation on the topic of connectivity, with the Government and private sector both laying the groundwork for a roll-out of both 5G and full-fibre in the medium-term future, as well as the further digitisation of the economy more generally.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be seen as one of the most cutting-edge examples of technological innovation and, as Theresa May signalled in her May speech in Macclesfield, it will become a centre-piece of British scientific investment. Whilst there is little formally scheduled in the field of AI, it will likely become a hot topic both inside and outside Westminster over coming months....

*Please find below a timeline of key dates in final half of the year*

## June 2018

**13th:** BP Statistical Review of World Energy

**14th:** Expected CMA ruling on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fox takeover of Sky

**14th:** Official statistics published on UK government expenditure on science, engineering and technology in 2016

**16th:** Labour Live – Jeremy Corbyn speaks

**19-20th:** Connect Britain conference for telecoms industry, focusing on connectivity

**26th:** Public consultation ends on accessibility of public sector websites

**27th:** Connected Conference, Edinburgh (<http://www.holyrood.com/events>)

**28th - 29th:** European Council – leaders' summit

**TBC:** Government White Paper on customs and Brexit

**TBC:** Cairncross review into the sustainability of journalism, with a focus on the role and impact of digital search engines, content and data

**TBC:** European Union (Withdrawal) Bill returns to the Commons for consideration of Lords amendments

**TBC:** QS World University Rankings 2019

**TBC:** Energy Technology Perspectives 2018 – International Environment Agency report



## July 2018

**3rd:** End of the Government consultation on regulation of nuclear sites in the final stages of decommissioning

**5th:** Cyber Security Conference in London (<http://www.cybersecurityconference.co.uk>)

**6th – 13th:** London Fintech Week

**19th:** Statistics published on the level of scientific procedures involving animals in 2017

**24th:** Parliament rises for summer recess

**30th:** World Renewable Energy Congress takes place

**TBC:** The Cryptassets Taskforce (made up of the Treasury, the Bank of England, and the Financial Conduct Authority) will publish their final report on cryptocurrency.

**TBC:** Ofcom's Public Service Broadcasting Annual Report 2018

**TBC:** NHS Digital publishes experimental statistics on compliance with selected NICE appraisals in England

**TBC:** Immigration White Paper from Government

**TBC:** Secretary of State for Digital, Media, Culture & Sport Matt Hancock publishes the “*Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review*” detailing ambitious plans for the sector.

## August 2018

**7th:** Annual statistical release detailing what the internet is used for in the UK

**22nd:** The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport produces the results of the public consultation on the Civil Society Strategy

## September 2018

**4th:** Parliament returns from Recess

**14th:** Parliament rises for Conference Recess

**15th - 18th:** Lib Dem Conference

**23rd – 26th:** Labour Party Conference

**29th:** Article 50 process - 6 months until UK leaves EU

**30th – 3rd Oct:** Conservative Conference

**TBC:** Migration Advisory Committee report on post-Brexit immigration system



## October 2018

**TBC:** SNP Conference

**30th Sept – 3rd Oct:** Conservative Conference

**9th:** Parliament returns from Conference recess

**13th – 14th:** Welsh Lib Dem Conference

**18th – 19th:** European Council leaders’ summit – target date to agree a withdrawal treaty. Accompanied by transition deal, a separate “political declaration”

**TBC:** Draft Immigration Bill

**TBC:** Trade and Customs Bills return to the Commons for Report stage