

London's Tech Week Showcases Why UK Technology is Surging Ahead

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According to the [FT](#), while the UK is being buffeted by Brexit headwinds, the tech sector is now growing at one and a half times the rate of the wider economy. So significant is this growth that the UK is now considered the unicorn capital of Europe, having produced [13 firms valued](#) at more than \$1bn (£784 million) since 2018, taking its total to 72.

London Tech Week, celebrated last month, has shown why the UK is a world-class technology innovation hub at the forefront at the so-called fourth industrial revolution. The event has, in particular, focused on a number of key specialisms, including connecting global markets, cybersecurity, digital

transformation, innovation, people and skills, social, and start-up scaleup.

For those who missed London Tech week but are still keen to have a glimpse of the future, the 'AI: More Than Human review' exhibition at the Barbican, which is running until the end of August 2019 is a great place to start. The experience is showcasing some of the very latest AI projects including Deepmind by Alphabet (the parent company of Google), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and artists such as Mario Klingemann and Massive Attack. One particularly enlightening and thought-provoking exhibit by Joy Buolamwini is designed to show the in-built racial and gender bias within face recognition technology.

In this article, we will take a look at some of the most innovative tech businesses which we believe have the potential to be transformative, and dare we say, 'disruptive'. In truth, there are so many innovative tech companies covering every conceivable sector and specialism, it is almost impossible to narrow these down; however, we recommend watching:

1. **The Small Robot Company**– Far from being toys, this agri-tech firm is trying to revolutionise farming by using small robots to undertake many of the tasks required in the growth of crops. According to their [website](#), their robots will care for each plant individually, feeding and spraying automatically when needed, and providing nutrients and support. Their point of difference is that by providing bespoke care for each plant, not only will the yield be increased, but costs will be lowered by cutting wastage. Core to their offering is the ability for robots to collect data and analyse it using a 'neural network' which at present allows them to "tell wheat from weeds, and locate a plant to 2cm". They are even proposing a Farming as a Service (FaaS) model, whereby farmers simply pay a set fee per month, and the

company will manage all aspects of robot maintenance and replacement. They still have some way to go, having built three prototypes, but they have secured 20 initial clients, including the Natural Trust. A weeding robot is expected to commence trials in October 2019.

2. **[Moonbug](#)**– This UK / US company is tapping into the market of digital content for pre-schoolers. As any parent will attest to, it is almost impossible to manage the content children now interact with, in the forms of online videos and video games. Moonbug's intention is to 'inspire and engage' children through storytelling; teaching them healthy values, building vocabulary, counting skills, emotional development, how to be a friend, and management of emotions. The company was only founded in 2018, but they have robust ambitions to revolutionise the children's entertainment sector, in a manner which is safe but beneficial.
3. **Darktrace**– Darktrace is blending AI with cybersecurity, to detect cyber threats as they emerge, rather than relying on a database of known risks. They say they have modelled their AI technology on how the human immune system works, by learning what is 'normal' within the environment and therefore noticing threats which may otherwise go unnoticed. Their technology works on corporate networks and cloud-based environments. Given the rapid increase in crippling cyberattacks in recent years, and the known threat from cybercriminals and state actors, we believe Darktrace is on a rapidly upward trajectory. So much so, it is already worth £1.3bn after only five years in operation.
4. **Improbable**– Improbable is a \$2bn UK computer gaming technology company. Their technology, SpatialOS, allows real-time computer game companies to quickly develop highly detailed virtual worlds, which can then be displayed using games consoles and computers.
5. **[Birdie](#)**– With the well-established challenges of caring for an ageing population, Birdie aims to improve the

standard of care and safety for service users whether looked after by agencies and/or families. Birdie uses a series of internet-connected sensors placed around the home of the care service user which will detect falls and behaviour such as wandering – immediately alerting their carer. Their solution also automatically assesses integrated care report and sensor data, using AI to identify patterns of deterioration – automatically informing those who need to know. By bringing together the Internet of Things (IoT) with data analytics, we believe Birdie may have a winning formula.

Final words

While Brexit continues to pose an ongoing challenge to UK business, it is refreshing to see that by focusing on continued innovation and creating the optimal conditions for this to occur, the UK remains a pivotal player in the world of technology. Given the talent of our best and brightest minds, we have every reason to believe that our tech firms will continue to help solve some of the world's most pressing issues, including cybercrime and global warming, leading to further growth and success.

[BDBF](#) are employment law specialists.

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