

**Strictly Embargoed Until 10.30am Monday 27 April 2020**

Monday 27 April 2020

## Online Safety Tech Industry Association (OSTIA) launches at Leeds Digital Festival

- *New UK association is first of its kind, bringing together expert companies and advisory bodies to tackle online safety*
  - *The launch has been welcomed by the UK government*

Today marked a significant step forward in the UK's fight against online harms, with the launch of the Online Safety Tech Industry Association (OSTIA).

The first of its kind, the industry body brings together innovative companies who operate in the field of online safety, who believe the UK is at the forefront of safety tech and the development of products and solutions that will make a significant contribution to online safety. Initiated by Edinburgh-based [Cyan Forensics](#) and [PUBLIC](#), 14 separate tech companies have joined the association whose mission is to drive conversation and policy, and enact global change in the complex area of online safeguarding technology.

The concept of OSTIA emerged at a roundtable event in 2019 organised by Cyan Forensics and PUBLIC, and chaired by Baroness Shields, OBE. The event brought tech companies, government and charity organisations together to share ideas and to discuss collective issues and solutions to many of the online harms-related problems faced today.

OSTIA has received backing and support from across government, campaign bodies and charities, as well as vital organisations including the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) and NSPCC. Organisation representatives will meet regularly with government representatives to explore ways to support innovation and growth in UK safety tech.

OSTIA's launch comes at a crucial time, as just this month, the NCA [predicted](#) a rise in online child sexual abuse during the coronavirus pandemic, and earlier this month Interpol [issued](#) a global threat assessment, demonstrating that recent weeks have seen increased online activity by paedophiles seeking child sexual abuse material.

Ian Stevenson, OSTIA chair and Cyan Forensics CEO and co-founder, says:

“The topic of online safety is wide-ranging and hugely complex. Unfortunately for regulators and providers, it is made up of many individual problems; there is no silver bullet that will solve the whole issue. That's why we wanted to establish this industry association – to create a powerful collective voice to enact change. By focusing on specific, actionable areas, we can work together to demonstrate how



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the thriving safety-related products and services market will play a significant role in helping companies protect the most vulnerable from accessing harmful content, while driving digital growth. Together, we can ensure that the public, technology companies and policy makers are aware of these lifelines.”

Caroline Dinenage, Minister of State for Digital and Culture in the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, said:

“We are determined to make the UK the safest place in the world to be online and have set out world-leading proposals to put a duty of care on online companies, enforced by an independent regulator. We are backing the industry to support our work by developing new products to improve online security and drive growth in the digital economy. This new association will help bring together relevant organisations to collaborate, innovate and create a safer online world.”

The association has three key aims:

- Provide a voice of hope by informing policy makers, technology providers and the general public about online safety technologies
- Create collective influence on policy, regulation and broader support for the sector
- Provide a forum for companies contributing towards the goal of online safety

Traditionally, debate in online safety has been between those who seek change, and those who fear it will be costly and difficult to implement. OSTIA will represent new voices – the companies that have built the technology that can deliver the much-needed transformation.

Chaired by Ian Stevenson, CEO and co-founder of Cyan Forensics – with members hailing from Cyan Forensics, Yoti, Crisp, Securium, SuperAwesome and SafeToNet amongst others – the association’s working group aims to formally establish and drive forward the association’s key aims. By joining OSTIA, members are committed to tackling the challenges and opportunities presented to make the internet a safer place. OSTIA is also actively looking for funding in order to continue its work.

OSTIA’s current focus is compiling an Introductory Guide to Online Safety, a document drafted with specialist insight from government and civil society organisations. It will act as a guide for online platforms to proactively tackle online safety in the very design of their offerings.

For information on how to join and support OSTIA, with updates on roundtables and other events, please visit its [website](#).

To be part of the launch of OSTIA at the Leeds Digital Festival on Monday 27 April at 10.30am, please register [here](#).

- Ends -

## **About OSTIA**

The Online Safety Tech Industry Association (OSTIA) is the UK's first association to unite innovative companies that operate in the field of online safety. OSTIA aims to inform policy makers, technology providers and the public about online safety technologies; establish a collective influence on policy, regulation and support for the sector; and provide a forum for networking and collaboration for companies involved in the broad field of online safety.

Formed in 2019 following a roundtable event chaired by Baroness Shields, OBE, the association currently is formed of 14 specialist technology companies operating in the field of online safety and has had support and input from organisations including the National Crime Agency (NCA), Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), Home Office, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Department of International Trade (DIT), as well as vital organisations including the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) and NSPCC. The association's working group – chaired by Ian Stevenson, CEO and co-founder of Cyan Forensics, with members hailing from Cyan Forensics, Yoti, Crisp, Securium and SafeToNet amongst others – aims to formally establish and drive forward the association's key aims.

## **Follow OSTIA**

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## **About Leeds Digital Festival**

Leeds Digital Festival is a two-week long celebration of all things tech and digital, running on an open-platform system meaning that anybody can get involved and host an event. Over 120 exciting online events are taking place from Monday 20 April to Friday 1 May, covering a wide range of topics. Full range of virtual events can be found on our [website](#).

## **Editorial Notes**

Full list of OSTIA industry members:

- [Crisp](#)
- [Cubica](#)
- [Cyan Forensics](#)
- [DragonflAI](#)
- [GoBubble](#)
- [Image Analyser](#)
- [Qumodo](#)
- [SafeToNet](#)
- [Securium](#)
- [Securus Software](#)
- [SuperAwesome](#)
- [Trust Elevate](#)



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- [Vigal AI](#)
- [Yoti](#)

For additional images, please download using the link [here](#).

For further information and interviews with Ian Stevenson, OSTIA Chair, please contact [cyanforensics@aspectusgroup.com](mailto:cyanforensics@aspectusgroup.com)

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