

Technology Commitments in the 2015 Party Manifestos



Broadband

All parties, aside from UKIP, commit to improving broadband connectivity, which is now an important political issue. There are however differences in the target speeds, timelines, technologies and spending commitments to achieve this

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aspire to rollout 100 Mbps to all premises as soon as practicable Invest in superfast cable satellite services and top-slice the license fee to fund broadband Binding agreement for 90% coverage of UK mainland of voice and SMS by 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All to benefit from affordable, high speed broadband by the end of the Parliament Maximise private sector investment to deliver mobile infrastructure to extend coverage and reduce 'not spots' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the rollout of high-speed broadband to reach 99.9% of households & SMEs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for a Universal Service Obligation of 95% of Scottish premises to have access to fibre broadband by the end of 2017 Additional investment to support a more rapid roll out of 4G across Scotland | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An obligation to provide affordable high-speed broadband- to every household and small business | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Press mobile operators to invest in 4G provision and ensure Northern Ireland is 'not left behind' the rest of the UK | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved broadband with a target of 30Mbps for all parts of Wales and ensure mobile phone operators provide a better service in Wales |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|--|---|

Communications Data

All parties commit to updating communications data legislation, but there are clear differences on implementation, safeguards and the limits of surveillance, with a real split over reintroducing the Draft Communications Data Bill. Three of the seven parties oppose the mass surveillance of the so-called 'Snoopers' Charter'

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce new communications data legislation Rank and publish privacy and security standards Create Extremist Disruption Orders to ban Internet access for suspected extremists | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update investigative laws to adapt to changing technology Strengthen the powers available and safeguards protecting people's privacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oppose the introduction of the 'Snooper's Charter' and set stricter limits on surveillance Publish a wide-ranging Digital Bill of Rights to enshrine privacy and data rights | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reject "Tory plans for the reintroduction of the so-called 'snoopers' charter' Bring in targeted and overseen, measures to collect online communications activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in new surveillance technology to combat crime | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No 'mass surveillance', instead proportionate, necessary and effective surveillance with strong oversight Replace RIPA and support EU Data Protection proposals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new single Act to govern communications monitoring by the intelligence agencies | |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|



Cyber Security

Cyber security is recognised by all the main parties as an area of security in its own right, with specific commitments to boost cyber defences

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve responses to cyber-crime with reforms to police training and expansion of Cyber Specials • Continue investment in cyber defence capabilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a statutory requirement for all companies to report serious cyber attacks • Suppliers to the MoD must sign up to a cyber-security charter | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide appropriate resources to the police and intelligence agencies to meet cyber threats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Strategic Defence and Security Review to be more effective at tackling cyber-terrorism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a new Director of National Intelligence to review threats and develop cyber security measures | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boost cyber security defence capabilities to prevent attacks |
|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|

Digital Government

All parties are committed to the continuation of modernising and improving government services through technology. Some, such as Labour, put a strong emphasis on digital inclusion and skills

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to move more services and cross-government services online and ensure digital assistance is always available • Create 3 million new apprenticeships and develop digital skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital technology will be used to reform public services to communicate collaborate and share data • Reduce number of those unable to use the Internet and improve digital skills | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure accessibility, digital inclusion & skills • Work to ensure the shift to Digital by Default for public services does not leave people behind • Extend apprenticeships to creative and digital economies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1.5m to increase free provision of wifi in public buildings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abolition of DCMS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use government purchasing power to support open standards in information technology • Oppose the privatisation of data held by the Government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support for open data and new technology to change service delivery | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase use of tech to develop health services |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|---|

Tech

Tech in its wider sense features in all parties manifestos with nearly all committing to more investment, but on specific measures the Conservatives offer more commitments than Labour, whilst the Greens call for the doubling of investment in research as a percentage of GDP

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further research funding for the '8 great technologies' • Lead development of 5G & its standards • Increase government procurement SME target to 33% • Tripling of Start-Up Loans and a new Help to Grow scheme • 'Backing the fintech revolution' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term funding policy framework for science and innovation • Drive innovation and build on strength as a leader in digital technology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double innovation & research funding • Establish further tech clusters in cities • Promote greater take up of STEM subjects • Refocus entrepreneurs' relief | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a new Ministerial-led Innovation Forum and support collaboration through investment hubs and a £1m fund | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abolish tuition fees for those studying STEM subjects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure adequate research for science and tech, with public spending rising from 0.5% to 1.0% of GDP over the next 10 years | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create more opportunities for careers in tech for women • Institute coding and ICT in school • Subsidise tuition fees for Welsh student who study tech subjects |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|--|---|



Content

Whilst content is not a key issue, there are noticeably different approaches, with the Conservatives advocating more action on adult content, Labour offering no explicit policies and the Lib Dems and Greens reaffirming their commitment to digital rights

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce age verification for sites that offer pornographic content and age-rated music videos • Continue to require the blocking of copyright infringing and proxy sites | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguard the essential freedom of the internet and back net neutrality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modernise and reduce length of copyright • Limit the takedown of online content and protect free speech | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of all criminal laws and sentencing guidelines in light of societal changes and cybercrime | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect and support internet freedom | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|--|--|

Tax avoidance

Tackling tax avoidance is mentioned by all parties as a means to fund wider spending commitments, yet most are vague on how this this will be achieved, the Conservatives actually mention a figure it will raise

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|---|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crack down on tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance and tax planning to raise at least £5bn by leading international efforts to ensure companies pay their fair share | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several mentions on tackling tax avoidance with no concrete proposals or figures are included | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackle tax avoidance though no concrete policies or figures are included | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back measures to tackle tax avoidance, including early legislation and more resources for HMRC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a Treasury Commission to monitor the Diverted Profits Tax, bring in further measures to prevent aggressive tax avoidance by large multinationals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider making tax avoidance schemes illegal • An aggressive and targeted recovery strategy that is properly resourced | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a more aggressive and targeted tax evasion strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give HMRC more powers to crack down on tax avoidance |
|--|---|--|--|---|--|---|--|