

Press release

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Imperial College forms key part of new £1.7 million digital security network

- UK wide network formed called Security, Privacy, Identity and Trust Engagement Network (SPRITE+)
- Funded by EPSRC with £1.7 million
- Network brings Imperial together with 4 other leading universities, as well as high-profile businesses, government and civil organisations

Imperial College – through the Institute for Security Science and Technology - is one of the 5 academic partners in a consortium that has been awarded £1.7 million by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council to establish a new digital security network.

The Security, Privacy, Identity and Trust Engagement Network (SPRITE+) is a UK-wide network that will bring together experts from academia, business and industry, government, and civil society to tackle existing and emerging challenges to trust and security in the digital age. It will fund studies and pilot projects, as well as holding workshops and facilitating internships & staff exchanges.

SPRITE+ will be led by The University of Manchester's Professor Emma Barrett, with the other consortium members being Professor Bill Lee (Imperial College London), Dr Stacey Conchie (Lancaster University), Professor Vladimiro Sassone (University of Southampton), and Professor Sakir Sezer (Queens University Belfast).

Professor Lee, Co-Director of the Institute for Security Science and Technology, Imperial College London said: "With the proliferation of digital technologies throughout society the threats to consumers, business and critical national infrastructure have expanded and evolved. Collaboration is absolutely essential to meeting these challenges, which is why SPRITE+ is so important."

Eleven high-profile organisations have already signed up as project partners so far - BT, Nasdaq, Arm, Titan IC, Tiani Spirit, National Grid, LORCA, the Open Data Institute, South Korea's Hanyang University, Greater Manchester Police, and the Office of HM Chief Scientific Advisor for National Security – with more to follow.

Rapid advances in technology and connectivity have led to new opportunities in every aspect of life, from manufacturing, finance, and retail to education, media, and politics. Digital technologies and services now profoundly influence citizens' work, educational, financial, civic, social, and political lives.

The ability to collect and process enormous amounts of data and the proliferation of AI applications raise issues of privacy, confidentiality, transparency, accountability, and public acceptability – some of which may contribute to the erosion of public trust in formerly trusted

institutions and processes, including the media, government, and democratic systems. Our reliance on digital services highlights the importance of effective identity verification and authentication, and the growing importance of our digital lives lead to new questions about our sense of self and social identity.

Professor Barrett of the University of Manchester said: "This is an exciting and ambitious venture. SPRITE+ will harness outstanding UK research expertise in security, privacy, identity, and trust, to address priority challenges identified by and with stakeholders. Together, we will create new knowledge, deepen collaborations, and support the growth of interdisciplinary, stakeholder-focused research for the benefit of our society and economy."

SPRITE+ will launch this September and is funded by the EPSRC for four years.

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Notes for editors:

About Imperial College London

Imperial College London is one of the world's leading universities. The College's 16,000 students and 8,000 staff are expanding the frontiers of knowledge in science, medicine, engineering and business, and translating their discoveries into benefits for society.

Founded in 1907, Imperial builds on a distinguished past - having pioneered penicillin, holography and fibre optics - to shape the future. Imperial researchers work across disciplines to improve health and wellbeing, understand the natural world, engineer novel solutions and lead the data revolution. This blend of academic excellence and its real-world application feeds into Imperial's exceptional learning environment, where students participate in research to push the limits of their degrees.

Imperial collaborates widely to achieve greater impact. It works with the NHS to improve healthcare in west London, is a leading partner in research and education within the European Union, and is the UK's number one research collaborator with China.

Imperial has nine London campuses, including its White City Campus: a research and innovation centre that is in its initial stages of development in west London. At White City, researchers, businesses and higher education partners will co-locate to create value from ideas on a global scale.

www.imperial.ac.uk

Institute for Security Science and Technology

The Institute for Security Science and Technology (ISST) is Imperial College London's hub for security research and engagement. The Institute was founded in 2008 as one of Imperial College's Global Challenge Institutes, to help meet the greatest security challenges faced by society. We promote interdisciplinary working, serve as a focal point for multidisciplinary activities and an interface to stakeholders, formulate and apply new areas of knowledge and technology, and provide independent scientific advice. Our activity areas represent the diverse and changing security landscape, and include critical infrastructure, healthcare & medical devices, financial systems, biosecurity, nuclear, transport, and climate & environmental security.

The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) is part of UK Research and Innovation, a non-departmental public body funded by a grant-in-aid from the UK government.

EPSRC is the main funding body for engineering and physical sciences research in the UK. By investing in research and postgraduate training, we are building the knowledge and skills base needed to address the scientific and technological challenges facing the nation.

Their portfolio covers a vast range of fields from healthcare technologies to structural engineering, manufacturing to mathematics, advanced materials to chemistry. The research we fund has impact across all sectors. It provides a platform for future UK prosperity by contributing to a healthy, connected, resilient, productive nation.