

PRESS RELEASE

Published today: The Coronation Challenge CreaTech Report

Findings from a year-long research project show how emerging technologies can accelerate the growth of the UK's Creative Industries sector

LONDON 10 February 2025 - The Royal Anniversary Trust and The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) are pleased to announce the publication of **The Coronation Challenge CreaTech Report: How the fusion of emerging technologies and the Creative Industries can transform the UK's approach to skills, innovation and business.**

The Coronation Challenge, a year-long research initiative commissioned by the DCMS, was launched as part of the 2023 Sector Vision initiative, a landmark investment to stimulate growth in the Creative Industries. The resulting report, published today, is focused on the intersection of creativity and technology, known as CreaTech*, which is reshaping industries and presenting the UK with an unparalleled opportunity for economic growth, innovation, and global leadership.

The Creative Industries were highlighted in this government's first Budget as being worth £125 billion to the UK economy and named as one of the key growth-driving sectors in the cross-government Industrial Strategy. As this report makes clear, CreaTech represents a key opportunity for growth; the authors propose that by aligning robust skills pipelines, targeted innovation support, and tailored financing solutions, the UK can become a global leader in creative technological development. Read the full report here:

<https://royalanniversarytrust.org.uk/CreaTech-Report>

Sir Chris Bryant MP, Minister for Creative Industries, Arts, and Tourism, Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) said:

"The CreaTech report demonstrates how creativity and technology go hand in hand. We want our creative industries to be at the forefront of technological development so that the UK remains a global leader and one of the best places in the world to invest and do business.

"I look forward to working across government and with industry to address the report's recommendations, so that we can drive economic growth in the sector, support good jobs, spread opportunity, and build a sustainable skills pipeline - all central to this government's Plan for Change."

Sir Damon Buffini, Chair of the Royal Anniversary Trust and Chair of the Coronation Challenge Advisory Board said:

"This report is a call to action: the UK must claim its place as *the* global leader in CreaTech. As chair of BBC Studios and the National Theatre, I've witnessed the transformative impact of combining creativity with technology. It turns out that CreaTech is one of the UK's most potent levers for economic growth, with the potential to generate an additional £18 billion in Gross Value Added (GVA) over the next decade and create 160,000 new jobs. We already have 350,000 professionals working in this space and 14,000 creative businesses leveraging emerging tech, but these numbers should – and must – grow exponentially if we are to lead globally. If we act boldly and ambitiously, the rewards could shape our economy, our society, and our standing in the world for decades to come."

The Coronation Challenge project team was convened by the Royal Anniversary Trust and included representatives from 22 universities and colleges recently awarded a Queen's Anniversary Prize - the highest national honour in education - and Creative Industry experts Erskine Analysis whose research formed the basis for this report. The group was supported by a distinguished Advisory Board and industry-led Working Groups.

The report concludes with the authors' five policy recommendations, summarised here:

[1.] Drive a CreaTech skills revolution

Education reform is needed to build a robust skills pipeline, starting with the integration of creative and technical subjects from primary to secondary school education and progressing through targeted, CreaTech-specific programmes in further and higher education.

[2.] Boost investment in CreaTech R&D

To support CreaTech's continued growth, policymakers, industry and funders should together build a five year plan to substantially increase the level of public investment in R&D which supports the Creative Industries, in recognition of its position as a priority "growth-driving sector" in the government's industrial strategy.

[3.] Transform the UK's CreaTech capability by introducing a new CreaTech Catapult

A dedicated CreaTech Catapult would create a collaborative hub, fostering connections among creative businesses, educational institutions, and technology developers.

[4.] Leverage new private investment in CreaTech by supporting access to R&D tax reliefs

Evidence suggests that R&D tax reliefs may be underused by the Creative Industries. An active research pilot offering support to creative businesses wanting to apply for R&D tax reliefs would deliver a base of case studies that could inform future policies.

[5.] Create new funding mechanisms for scaling CreaTech businesses

To bridge the gap in later-stage funding, a government-backed Fund of Funds should be created, providing Series B+ investment for UK-based CreaTech companies.

Notes for Editors:

[*] For the purposes of this project, the report's authors define CreaTech as the intersection of creativity, arts, culture, and technology, where innovative technologies are used to enhance creative processes, create new forms of artistic expression, and accelerate the economic growth and social benefits of the Creative Industries. Further details on the methodology are available in the report.

The Royal Anniversary Trust is a charity that celebrates and champions the outstanding work of universities and colleges across the United Kingdom. We are best known as custodians of the prestigious Queen Elizabeth Prizes for Higher and Further Education (formerly known as the Queen's Anniversary Prizes) part of the UK national honours system, recognising excellence, innovation and public benefit in work by universities and colleges across the United Kingdom. www.royalanniversarytrust.org.uk

The Coronation Challenge project team included the 2023 winners of the Queen's Anniversary Prizes for Higher and Further Education (since renamed the Queen Elizabeth Prizes for Education):

Prifysgol Aberystwyth University
University of the Arts London
Prifysgol Bangor
University of Birmingham
Bridgwater & Taunton College

City College Plymouth
City of Glasgow College
University of Glasgow
Hopwood Hall College & University Centre
The Institute of Cancer Research, London
Lakes College West Cumbria
University of Lincoln
University of Liverpool
Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine
Loughborough College
Newcastle University
The Open University
University of Oxford
Plumpton College
Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)
University of Strathclyde
Prifysgol Abertawe | Swansea University

The Coronation Challenge Advisory Board was led by Sir Damon Buffini, Chair of the Royal Anniversary Trust. Additional members included:

Tom Adeyoola, Extend Ventures
Rishi Coupland, British Film Institute (BFI)
Sarah Ellis, Royal Shakespeare Company
Hilary Hall, DCMS
Graham Jack, beloFX
Anna Lowe, Smartify
Chris Michaels, Digital Advisory
Caroline Norbury OBE, CreativeUK
Kate O'Connor, Animation UK
Professor Christopher Smith, Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)
Dr Jeremy Silver, Digital Catapult
Stian Westlake, Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
Jon Zeff, Creative Industries Council

About Erskine Analysis

Erskine Analysis, launched by Eliza Easton in June 2023, is a think tank dedicated to exploring soft power, the global creative industries, and the future of the UK economy. Recent papers have included 'Scene Change: Optimising business model innovation in the performing arts' with the National Theatre, 'Ambition to Reality: The Case for Creative Education' with Heatherwick Studio and 'Keeping the UK's creative industries globally competitive: a playbook to protect our future prosperity and security' with University of the Arts London.

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