



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

News Release

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Scottish scientists join UK effort to get the measure of big data

Scottish researchers are to be part of a UK national institute that aims to be a world leader in the understanding and application of large-scale digital data.

Mathematicians and computer scientists from the University of Edinburgh will contribute to the work of the Alan Turing Institute, which will have its headquarters in London.

The news was announced today (Wednesday) by Rt Hon Dr Vince Cable, Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills.

The Alan Turing Institute will enable knowledge and predictions from large-scale and diverse digital data to make discoveries, create business opportunities, inform policy making, improve our environment, health and infrastructure, and accelerate solutions to global challenges.

The University of Edinburgh is one of five universities – and the only one in Scotland – selected to join.

The Universities of Cambridge, Oxford, UCL and Warwick have also been invited to join the Institute, which was first announced in the Chancellor's 2014 Budget. It is being funded over five years with £42 million from the UK government.

The university partners will contribute further funding. In addition, the Institute will seek to partner with other business and government bodies.

The Institute's work is expected to span a range of academic disciplines and be relevant to many industry and public sectors and to the third sector. It will have its headquarters at the British Library, in London's developing Knowledge Quarter area.

Dr Cable, said: "Alan Turing's genius played a pivotal role in cracking the codes that helped us win the Second World War. It is therefore only right that our country's top universities are chosen to lead this new institute named in his honour.

"Headed by the universities of Cambridge, Edinburgh, Oxford, Warwick and UCL, the Alan Turing Institute will attract the best data scientists and mathematicians from the UK and across the globe to break new boundaries in how we use big data in a fast moving, competitive world."

Ranked among the top universities in the world

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Professor Sir Timothy O’Shea, Principal of the University of Edinburgh, said: “We are delighted to contribute our expertise in computer science and mathematics to the Alan Turing Institute, which promises to be a world leader in the analysis and application of data science. We look forward to working with partner institutions in this exciting and promising new area.”

The delivery of the Institute is being coordinated by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), which invests in research and postgraduate training in the UK.

Professor Philip Nelson, EPSRC’s Chief Executive, said: “The Alan Turing Institute will draw on the best of the best academic talent in the country. It will use the power of mathematics, statistics, and computer science to analyse Big Data in many ways, including the ability to improve online security. Big Data is going to play a central role in how we run our industries, businesses and services. Economies that invest in research are more likely to be strong and resilient; the Alan Turing Institute will help us be both.”

For further information, please contact:

Catriona Kelly, Press & PR Office, tel 0131 651 4401, email Catriona.Kelly@ed.ac.uk

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