



Baroness Joanna Shields OBE

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Technology expert and online safety pioneer honoured by Northumbria University

A technology industry veteran, who has transformed the lives of people around the world through her global online initiatives, has been awarded an honorary degree of Doctor of Civil Law from Northumbria University, Newcastle.

Throughout her 38-year career, Baroness Joanna Shields OBE has been at the forefront of harnessing technology to drive social change.

She has held executive roles at companies such as Google, Facebook, and Veon, and served as non-executive director of the London Stock Exchange Group and TalkTalk Telecom Group.

But it is her ground-breaking work protecting children from online exploitation and leading the development of new treatments for diseases using artificial intelligence where she has made the greatest impact.

In 2014 she founded WePROTECT, a global alliance to stop the global crime of online child sexual abuse and exploitation. Initially hosted by the UK government, today the WeProtect Global Alliance counts over 100 countries, 92 civil society organisations and 65 private sector companies.

In 2015 she was appointed the UK's first Minister for Internet Safety and Security, taking on the additional role of Prime Minister's Special Representative on Internet Crime and Harms in 2016.

Her dedication to making the online world a safer place led to her to being awarded an OBE for services to digital industries and voluntary service to young people in 2014. She was also made a Life Peer of the House of Lords the same year.

Since 2018, she has been Chief Executive Officer of BenevolentAI, a technology development company which uses artificial intelligence to help scientists uncover new insights from medical data, enabling them to develop drugs for underserved diseases.

The Government's National Cyber Security Centre has named Northumbria University as a Centre of Excellence in Cyber Security Research in recognition of the strength and quality of its research in the field.

This reputation, combined with the rapid growth of the North East's technology sector, means the region has both the skills and opportunities to support exciting future innovations in online technology.

Speaking about her honorary degree and partnership with Northumbria University, Baroness Shields said: "I am humbled to receive the Doctor of Science degree from Northumbria University.

"Northumbria holds a solid and enviable leadership locally and internationally in shaping young excellence in advancing technology's frontiers, protecting against cyber threats, and harnessing digital opportunities for positive societal transformation, and I am honoured to be recognised with this important honour by them today."

UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

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