



CHAIR
ROLE SPECIFICATION
DIGITAL CATAPULT

HEIDRICK & STRUGGLES



*Accelerating the practical application
of deep tech to equip the UK
to be future ready*

HEIDRICK & STRUGGLES

Business Snapshot

Digital Catapult is a technology innovation organisation. We accelerate the practical application of deep technologies to equip the UK to be future-ready.

We partner with businesses, investors and academia to identify valuable opportunities and create market pathways, ensuring the UK is future-ready. We enable our partners to think creatively, build resilience and grow by using our expertise to equip them with deep tech capabilities and help them adopt innovative solutions.

Digital Catapult helps businesses grow by applying deep tech. We show what is possible, positive and productive with advanced technology. Digital Catapult focuses on significant challenges and opportunities facing the UK's economy and society, where technology can play a major role in providing solutions.

2,832

company engagements
since 2019

£545m

Investment raised by
startups since 2018

20

advanced digital technology
facilities nationwide

89

collaborative academic
engagements in 2023/24

Digital Catapult is part of the Innovate UK Catapult network. Catapults provide a unique combination of cutting-edge R&D facilities and world-class technical expertise to support UK business innovation.

The organisation was established in 2013, with a registered office in London and an expanding network of offices currently located in Gateshead, Newcastle, Belfast and Bristol.

Visit www.digicatapult.org.uk for more information.

The Innovate UK Catapult Network

CATAPULT
Digital

The **Innovate UK Catapult Network** brings together nine leading technology and innovation centres spanning over 65 locations across the UK. They are independent not-for-profit private organisations transforming the UK's capability for innovation in sectors of strength.



CATAPULT
Network

Catapults are physical centres with cutting-edge R&D infrastructures including hubs, laboratories, testbeds, factories and offices, as well as technical experts that prove and adopt breakthrough products, processes, services and technologies.

Catapults work with thousands of innovative businesses across a wide range of sectors, such as manufacturing, space, health, digital, energy, transport, telecoms, the urban environment and many others.

The very best of the UK's businesses, scientists, technical specialists and engineers work side by side on late-stage research and development, helping industry get high potential ideas to market, fuelling business growth, and increasing productivity.

By bridging the gap between research and industry, the Catapult Network is helping tackle the biggest challenges that society and industries face today. Through their knowledge, infrastructure and collaborations, Catapults make today's industries more productive and create the markets of tomorrow.

CATAPULT
High Value Manufacturing
CATAPULT
Cell and Gene Therapy

CATAPULT
Offshore Renewable Energy
CATAPULT
Connected Places

CATAPULT
Compound Semiconductor Applications
CATAPULT
Medicines Discovery

CATAPULT
Satellite Applications
CATAPULT
Energy Systems

Sectors & Services

Uniquely placed at the centre of the innovation landscape, Digital Catapult partners with businesses, government, investors and academia to identify valuable opportunities and create market pathways, **ensuring the UK is future ready**.

Creative Industries

Energy

Digital Infrastructure

Aerospace & Defence

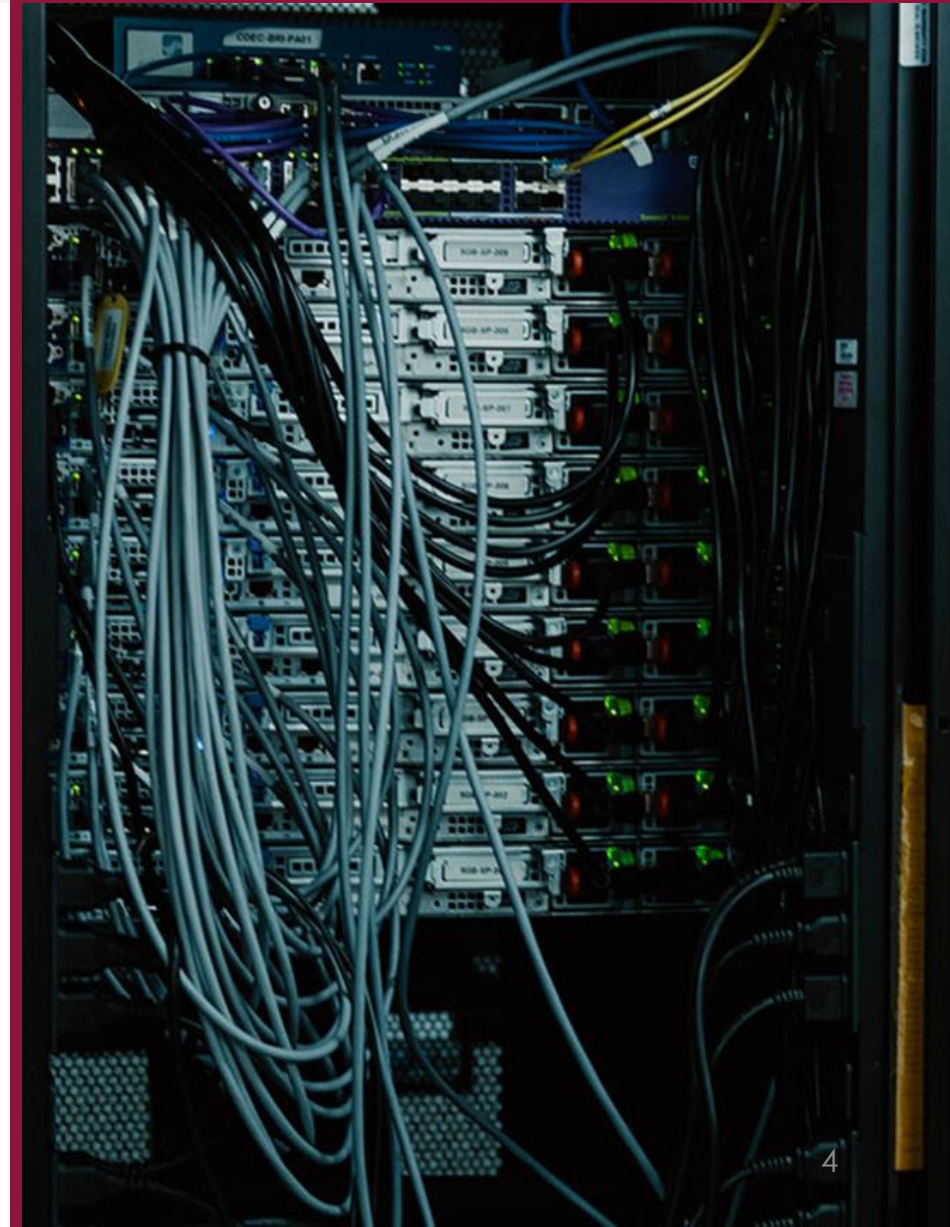
The organisation focuses on specific sectors of the **UK's major industries** where it can work with early adopters to educate, inform, develop and experiment, ultimately driving the practical application of Deep Tech to solve real-world problems.

This is done in three ways:

- **Advanced digital technology consulting and co-creation**
helping companies create a robust, scalable, strategic approach to advanced technology adoption. Focus on accelerating the time to value. The Catapult can also work with industry to provide feasibility assessments, as well as ideation services, technology innovation and solutions roadmapping to support sustainable industry.
- **Design and deliver targeted innovation programmes**
Supporting and helping grow the startup and scaleup ecosystem. Helping startups connect and deliver value to traditional industry. Digital Catapult provides a proven method for growing business understanding and technical readiness for companies with legacy systems and a desire to transform themselves.
- **Support the scaling of digital innovation**
Ensuring the full impact of Deep Tech innovation is realised by industrial end users, Digital Catapult helps customers move rapidly and strategically from proof of concept to MVP to preparation to scale.

HEIDRICK & STRUGGLES

CATAPULT
Digital



Working with Investors

Digital Catapult helps the investment community connect with high-calibre startups and scaleups with the latest ideas and developments in advanced digital technologies.

From angel investors to corporate venture capital, Digital Catapult helps the investment community discover more about the innovator ecosystem for mutual benefit, to improve their pipeline, increase their visibility of the wider innovator ecosystem, and raise their profiles with sought-after businesses.

Digital Catapult supports investors in a number of ways:

- Connecting the investment community to high calibre startups and scaleups – applying technical due diligence to pre-qualify all potential opportunities.
- Helping investors increase their understanding of the investment and scaling potential of the digital technologies Digital Catapult works with – using insight reports that summarise and analyse the activities of businesses participating in its programmes and providing valuable contextual information on the investment landscape and market and tech trends.
- Regular opportunities enable interested investors to scout the most promising startups, as well as meet other investors focused on the same technologies.
- Digital Catapult's knowledge of the UK, EU and international collaborative R&D helps to de-risk innovation for its investor partners.

Areas of Focus

Enable deep tech companies to scale

Improve industrial supply chain resilience through deep tech

Advance UK development & use of data driven & open future networks

People & Culture

Digital Catapult prides itself on its team of skilled and talented people from a wide variety of backgrounds that it successfully attracts and continues to carefully consider how the team is growing and how well this is representative of UK society overall.

The organisation is continuing to explore new initiatives that it can champion with communities local to its office locations to support social mobility. By the end of 2024, around 4% of the workforce has been pursuing apprenticeships at either higher or degree level.

In 2024, Digital Catapult was certified as a Great Place to Work for the second year running and listed amongst the Best Places to Work in Tech and in the Charity and Not-for-Profit Sector as well as a Best Workplace for Wellbeing.



Solve what matters

- Prioritise tasks and projects** based on their potential to create practical and positive impact.
- Communicate clearly** about priorities, progress, and decisions and **follow through on commitments**.
- Actively look for new ways of solving problems** and be the first one to **try them out**.
- Establish clear metrics and measures** to track progress and results.

Partner for progress

- Create safe and supportive environments**, make sure everyone feels heard, respected and cared for.
- Bring the right people together for purposeful innovation** so that decisions are made with the appropriate expertise and input.
- Ask for and provide specific and actionable feedback** that helps others develop.
- Celebrate successes and lessons learned**, constantly search for and applying new learnings to develop best practice.

Challenge purposefully

- Anticipate the future**, regularly explore emerging trends and potential scenarios.
- Consider the potential impact** your solutions can have on others and make responsible decisions.
- Present well-reasoned, diverse perspectives on future directions**, even when they differ from the majority.
- Ask questions that encourage others to re-evaluate assumptions** and consider broader consequences of actions.

The Position

The Chair plays a crucial role in providing high-level vision and direction, managing key stakeholder relationships (particularly with government entities and agencies) and ensuring executive accountability.

The Digital Catapult Board comprises a diverse group of senior industry and academic members who have a track record of making an impact in boardroom environments and who understand the roles of R&D, collaboration, innovation and commercialisation in delivering business value through the practical application of deep tech.

Context

Digital Catapult Board is seeking to appoint non-executive Chair to lead the board through the next stage of its journey. In the interim, the board has been co-chaired by Priya Guha and Keith Underwood.

With a new CEO having been appointed in spring 2024, the ongoing ambition is to continue to scale, mature and develop the business as a medium-sized innovation organisation, ensuring the right systems and processes are in place to support this growth, whilst continuing to foster a culture of innovation and agility.

We anticipate that the person will be in post by early 2026.

Time Commitment

The time commitment is likely to be greater in the earlier stages of being in the post, with less time required once the incumbent is established. It is estimated that the time commitment will be around 25 - 35 days per year. We are seeking an individual who will also make discretionary efforts on behalf of Digital Catapult in their wider network over and above these committed days.

Remuneration

This role is remunerated. The level of remuneration will depend upon the skills and experience of the successful candidate. It is expected to be in the region of £35,000 gross p.a.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Statement

In addition to complying with all current UK employment legislation, Digital Catapult applies established good practice in equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion in order to gain the benefits of building a diverse workforce. All applicants will be treated in a fair and consistent manner and in particular to avoid any form of discrimination.

Role Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Provide leadership to Digital Catapult and its Board in developing its strategy and vision, providing clear direction such that the organisation delivers its missions and goals;
- With the Board, oversee the performance of Digital Catapult and its CEO and Senior Leadership Team through the review of business plans, financial reports and progress in meeting KPI targets, and the reporting of these to the InnovateUK appointed Catapult Governance group;
- Ensure the Board reviews major risks and associated opportunities and strikes an appropriate balance between taking advantage of the opportunities, while managing and/ or mitigating any risks;
- Ensure the Board fulfils its duties to ensure the sound financial health of Digital Catapult;
- Participate, as appropriate, in Board subcommittees;
- Chair approximately four in-person Board meetings per year, approximately four virtual Board meetings, and an annual strategy day with the Board and Leadership Team.

Relationship with CEO and the Senior Leadership Team

- Establish a strong, constructive and effective working relationship with the CEO and the Leadership Team ensuring that the CEO is held to account for achieving agreed strategic objectives;
- Provide support, guidance and advice to the CEO whilst respecting the boundaries that exist between the roles of Chair and CEO;
- Conduct an annual appraisal and remuneration review for the CEO in consultation with the Remuneration Committee to the Board of Directors.



Role Responsibilities (cont'd)

External Relations

- Be a prominent figurehead in support of advanced technology innovations and raise the profile of Digital Catapult's brand, influencing both government and industry in order to attract support for the organisation;
- Develop and maintain relationships with the Chairs of the other Catapults, with the Catapult Governance Group, and with the Advisory Council of InnovateUK and the executive and Board of UKRI, under which Innovate UK sits alongside the Research Councils.
- Maintain relationships with Government Ministers and senior officials in relevant departments, particularly DSIT, DCMS, DESNZ and HMT, positioning Digital Catapult as a leading organisation in the country's digital and deep tech innovation landscape;
- Maintain relationships with academic establishments and leaders in key multinational and global companies in fields relevant to Digital Catapult's strategy;
- Maintain relationships with the private equity and venture funding investment community in a way that will benefit Digital Catapult.

Governance

- Ensure the Board fulfils its duties for the effective governance of the organisation, setting and upholding the highest standards of ethics and probity;
- Develop the knowledge and capability of the Board of Directors;
- Address and resolve any conflicts within the Board. The Chair will have a casting vote in the event of equal votes;
- Ensure the Board incorporates the right size and balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to match Digital Catapult's strategy and to govern and lead the organisation.

The Person

Person Specification & Experience

The Chair will be a well-networked and highly respected Board-level professional; they will ideally be a proven Chair or demonstrate clear readiness to assume the role – for example, through a robust track record as a NED and committee Chair within complex organisations;

They will have a broad commercial background in industries and technologies related to Digital Catapult's strategy, particularly digital infrastructure, aerospace and defence, creative, digital supply chains and energy;

They will have a strong vision of the importance and potential impact of advanced digital technologies in the UK economy (and in particular the Catapult's key sectors) and demonstrate a strong passion for Digital Catapult's significant contribution;

The successful candidate will be able to demonstrate the following key experience and skills, which will also be validated with high level endorsements.

Skills

Ability to lead Boards and set strategic direction for management teams; establish governance at the highest standards of fairness and transparency; ensuring the diverse strengths are leveraged.

Able to foster an innovation culture, striking the balance between control and entrepreneurialism, encouraging manageable risk taking and avoiding short-termism.

A contributor to and developer of team spirit and motivation.

Able to operate as a high-level influencer within government, the business community, academia and the financial community to ensure our core objectives are met.

HEIDRICK & STRUGGLES



The Person (cont'd)

Experience

- Board/executive level experience within significant organisations using advanced digital technologies, or within an organisation engaged in significant digital R&D and innovation. Prior Chair experience not essential.
- A background in relevant industrial sectors (creative, energy, telecoms, networks, etc.) and including the themes of supply chain resilience and sustainability.
- Good understanding and proven interest across deep tech featured in our technology roadmap: AI, quantum, data-driven platforms and advanced networking, distributed systems.
- Experience of developing or contributing to commercially-minded and externally facing Research & Development strategy and innovation.
- Experience of influencing public bodies. Will have, or had demonstrable connections within government, particularly with DSIT, DEZNZ, or DCMS or HMT, or devolved administrations and be able demonstrate their influence with ministers and departments.
- Experience of working collaboratively with multiple, cross-industry/sector stakeholders.
- Strong financial and managerial experience.



Board of Directors (cont'd)



Priya Guha

Co-Chair

Priya is a Venture Partner at Merian Ventures, investing in women-led innovation, an Advisor to Kheiron Medical Technologies and Gallos Technologies, a member of the Investment Governance Board at Future Planet Capital, a non-executive director at Reach PLC, UK Research & Innovation (UKRI), Digital Catapult, and GB Badminton, and Adjunct Faculty at the Ashridge Hult Business School.

She was previously GM for RocketSpace, launching their UK operations.

Priya used to be a career diplomat, most recently as British Consul General to San Francisco and previously in India and Spain.

She sits on the Royal Academy of Engineering International Committee, Althea Foundation Board, Tech London Advocates and Global Tech Advocates Advisory Boards. She is a Trustee at TechSheCan.

Priya was awarded an MBE in 2021 for services to international trade and women in innovation.



Keith Underwood

Co-Chair

Keith has worked in the media industry for over 20 years and has successfully managed a broad range of business functions; strategy, digital, technology and finance.

Keith was Chairman of Freeview, and a Board Director of Digital UK, YouView and Parable.

Keith was at Channel 4 from 2009 until early 2020, most recently as COO and previously as Director of Strategy & Technology. Recruited with an initial brief to drive digital business transformation, Keith went on to lead the launch of All 4, transform digital development capabilities, rebuild and reposition the finance function, and deliver all operational workstreams of Channel 4's relocation. Keith was also the Senior Accounting Officer, Member of the Audit Committee and Trustee of the Pension Scheme.

Earlier, Keith was at Discovery Networks International as VP of Strategy and Digital Media for all territories outside the US, having previously served as a member of the UK Executive Management Team responsible for strategy and business/commercial development. Keith is a member of the Royal Television Society and currently Chairs the Events Committee.



Susan Bowen

Chief Executive

As CEO of Digital Catapult, Susan is focused on bringing together her 25+ years of experience in the technology sector to guiding and co-creating an ethical approach to advances in technology across multiple industries with an aim to effectively balance our Digital Catapult initiatives from Research and Development through to commercialisation.

Starting her career as a coder, Susan stands out among senior executives due to her demonstrated expertise in successfully leading and expanding corporate and listed divisions, as well as mid-market and SMB private equity organisations.

With a vast geographical scope encompassing the USA, Canada, Europe, and the UK, Susan possesses remarkable transformative abilities and extensive operational knowledge in mergers and acquisitions, making her a seasoned change catalyst dedicated to enhancing shareholder value, with an aptitude for creating innovative business models and fostering collaborations within complex organizations and diverse industries.

Board of Directors (cont'd)



David Bletso

Chief Financial Officer

A dynamic Chartered Accountant with a proven track record for enabling growth, David is Chief Financial Officer for Digital Catapult.

David brings financial expertise from a career in several sectors including marketing & communications, publishing, retail & leisure and the charity sector; working collaboratively with organisations to create successful growth strategies. He takes pride in developing best in class teams that provide deep insight to drive performance monitoring and effective decision making, whilst ensuring a robust control environment.



Joe Butler

Chief Technology Officer

Joe is a highly respected and well recognised technology leader with a career that has ranged from startups and scaleups to some of the UK's largest technology and infrastructure projects at the heart of government. His previous roles include Chief Technology Officer for the radio spectrum and Director of AI and Machine Learning at Ofcom, and Director of Telecoms and Chief Scientific Advisor at DCMS.

At Ofcom, prior to leading on AI and machine learning policy and regulation, Joe worked on delivering multi-billion spectrum auctions for 4G and 5G. He was one of the authors of the National Infrastructure Commission report on 5G and the future of mobile communications, and spent his early career in developer and R&D roles at artificial intelligence startups and scaleups, as well as helping to develop a state of the art physics visual fx system used in multiple blockbuster films.



Dr Damien Buie

Non-Executive Director

Damien is Sector Lead, Energy Transition at Amazon Web Services (AWS). With over 20 years of experience in the energy industry, Damien is the Industry Lead for renewables, electrical networks and energy services within AWS for Energy, globally responsible for supporting its customers to accelerate the energy transition.

Damien's area of expertise is in leveraging data to drive innovation at scale. Prior to this role, Damien was the Chief Digital Officer of the renewables division of EDF, based in Paris, and led the digital transformation of the group, following on from more than 10 years of experience in North America leading innovation and product development.

Damien has a PhD in Computational Physics for the University of Sydney and post-doctoral experience at University College London.

Board of Directors (cont'd)



Jessica Cecil

Non-Executive Director

Jessica is a leading media industry figure and an expert in the field of disinformation, currently working as a consultant to media and tech companies.

She founded the Trusted News Initiative (TNI), the world's only alliance of major international tech companies and news organisations to counter the most harmful disinformation in real time. TNI's membership includes Meta, Google, Twitter and Microsoft alongside leading global news providers, and its members have a fast-alert system to counter the most harmful disinformation.

Jessica's media industry leadership experience was honed over a long career at the BBC, which serves an audience of 450 million people around the world. As Chief of Staff to four Directors-General, she had a track record of creating and leading global alliances responding to the changes tech is having on audience's lives. Jessica's background is as a news journalist and documentary maker. She was an international news producer and assistant editor of BBC Newsnight. She is an Emmy nominee for the prime time TV science documentary Human Instinct.



Perdita Fraser

Non-Executive Director

Perdita is Chair of National Numeracy and Trustee of the Campaign for Science and Engineering. Perdita is an experienced director, adviser and angel investor in innovative companies in the UK and the US.

She has held board roles across the private, public, third and university sectors, with specific focus on innovation-led business, promoting UK science/research, and skills, communities and place-based investment. Roles include Non-Executive Director/trustee roles at University of Edinburgh, Oversight Panel for European Social Funds England and National Lottery Community Fund. Perdita is senior adviser on AI and business to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh, focused on the development of industry partnerships in AI and life sciences.

A former JP Morgan investment banker, she has 20 years' experience in cleantech startups/SMEs. She also has a variety of panel/ambassador/advisory roles with the Cabinet Office, BEIS, 25x25, Women on Boards and Changing the Chemistry.



Valerie Todd

Non-Executive Director

Valerie is the former People and Organisation Director for Siemens UK and Ireland and supported the business through 5 years of transformation and growth to establish it as one of the largest technology companies in the world.

Valerie has held senior executive positions, principally in people leadership, in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors. She is an experienced non-executive director, having held a number non-executive positions, including with the British Army, Pearson Education Limited, Leonard Cheshire Disability Charity and as Chair of Investors in People CIC.

She is a Companion of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CCIPD). She was awarded a CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for Services to Skills, Training and the Development of Young People.

Board of Directors (cont'd)



Belinda Howell

Non-Executive Director

Belinda is founder and Managing Director of sustainability strategy consultancy Decarbonize Limited.

She brings extensive experience at board level across sectors from digital and energy infrastructure, natural resources, agri-commodities marine and fisheries through the supply chain to utilities, consumer goods and retail.

As the first CEO of a software as a service technology provider, she has direct experience in digital start-up/scale up and blue-chip drivers for environmental social and governance supply chain information solutions.

Belinda is currently on the board of the London Pensions Fund Authority and Marine Management Organisation and Trustee of the National Biodiversity Network. Previous board experience includes National Centre for Atmospheric Science advising on Net Zero Digital Research Infrastructure and Roundtables for Sustainable Palm Oil and Responsible Soy Associations.

She holds a Diploma in Company Directorship with distinction (Institute of Directors) and first class, business award-winning MBA.



William Priest

Non-Executive Director

William is an experienced Board Adviser and Director in the public and private sectors. He is currently on the Major Programmes and 5G Boards at DCMS within central government. He has invested in, and mentors a number of tech startups, and is the Chair of Connexin. He recently joined the World Bank staff as a part time adviser on data and digital governmental programmes.

From February 2018, to July 2019 William was a Director in the Cabinet Office, and the first CEO of the newly formed UK Geospatial Commission, that set policy for and drove the UK geospatial agenda.

Previously, William was Interim CEO of Broadband Delivery UK and an acting Director in DCMS. He was accountable for the delivery of manifesto commitments to provide Superfast Broadband to 95% of UK premises, in addition to the launch of full fibre and 5G.

William has over 30 years executive experience in the IT and Telecoms sectors and has held senior leadership positions with a number of the leading global ICT Service Providers, including IBM, Orange, and Verizon.



Yvonne Rogers

Non-Executive Director

Yvonne is the director of the Interaction Centre at UCL (UCLIC), deputy head of department for Computer Science and a Professor of Interaction Design.

Her current research focuses on digitalisation, in all its various manifestations, with a focus on how human behaviour is being impacted and augmented through the design and adoption of new technologies.

She is particularly interested in how humane applications of AI and smart technologies can be developed that benefit and disrupt society.

She frequently collaborates with industrial partners and has been awarded a Microsoft Research Outstanding Collaborator Award (2016). Other awards include the Royal Society Robin Milner Medal (2022) and a MRC Suffrage and Science Award (2020) for being one of the leading women in 'mathematics & computing.'

She was also elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society (2022), a Fellow of the ACM (2018); a Fellow of the British Computer Society (2014) and a Fellow of the ACM's CHI Academy (2012).

Board Dates 2025

(Dates for 2026 are yet to be confirmed)

Date	Time	Meeting	Zoom/Hybrid/In Person
Thursday 23rd January	14:00-16:00	Audit Risk Committee	In Person
Tuesday 28th January	10:00 - 14:00 18:30	Board Meeting Board Dinner	In Person
Wednesday 12th February	14:00-15:30	Investment Governance Committee	Virtual
Tuesday 25th February	14:00-16:00	Remuneration Committee	Virtual
Tuesday 11th March	16:00-17:00	Board Call	Virtual
Tuesday 22nd April	14:00 - 15:30	Nomination Committee	Virtual
Tuesday 29th April	13:00 - 17:00 18:00	Board Meeting Board Dinner	In Person
Tuesday 13th May	14:00 - 16:00	Remuneration Committee	Virtual
Wednesday 11th June	11:00 - 12:00	Board Call	Virtual
Friday 27th June	11:00 - 12:30	Nomination Committee	Virtual
Monday 30th June	13:00 - 14:30	Investment Governance Committee	Virtual
Wednesday 2nd July	14:00 - 16:00	Audit Risk Committee	In Person
Thursday 3rd July	10:00-12:00 13:00 -17:00	Board Meeting Board Strategy Day	In Person
Tuesday 2nd September	16:00-17:00	Board Call	Virtual
Monday 8th September	10:00 - 11:30	Nomination Committee	Virtual
Monday 8th September	14:00 - 15:30	Investment Governance Committee	Virtual
Tuesday 14th October	14:00 -16:00	Audit Risk Committee	In Person
Tuesday 28th October	13:00 - 17:00 18:00	Board Meeting Board Dinner	In Person
Tuesday 4th November	14:00 - 15:30	Remuneration Committee	Virtual
Tuesday 9th December	16:00-17:00	Board Call	Virtual

Additional Information (links)



**COMPANY
WEBSITE**



**CATAPULT
NETWORK**



**LEADERSHIP &
BOARD**



**PRESS
RELEASES**



**INSIGHTS &
PUBLICATIONS**



**LINKEDIN
PAGE**

Contact Information

For further inquiries, and to submit your application for this position, please send an email to

digicatapult@heidrick.com

The deadline for submitting your application is 26 September 2025.

Engagement Team

Kit Bingham | Partner

Christine Kruger | Engagement Manager

Sonia Jakubiak | Associate

Sumeet Sharma | Analyst

Jane Conroy | Executive Assistant

Heidrick & Struggles serves the executive leadership needs of the world's top organizations as a trusted advisor for leadership consulting, culture shaping and senior-level executive search services. Our data driven solutions empower senior executives and boards of directors to transform their organizations by leveraging top talent and accelerating performance across all layers of the business.

Heidrick & Struggles

31 St. James's Square
London SW1Y 4JR
United Kingdom

HEIDRICK & STRUGGLES

CATAPULT
Digital

