

**A Cambridge Wireless Heritage SIG Event
'The Politics of Technology, Then & Now'**

15 April 2026

Venue: **The Bradfield Centre, 184 Cambridge Science Park, Cambridge, CB4 0GA**

AGENDA

15:00 Registration over refreshments

15:30 Welcome from **Cambridge Wireless**.
Michaela Eschbach, CEO of Cambridge Wireless

15:35 Introduction from our Chair, **Stirling Essex, Espansivo** & CW SIG Champion

15:40 **'The Politics of Technology, Then & Now'**

[Stephen Unger](#), Former Chairman of the CW Board of Directors

Steve Unger will describe how politics and technology have collided in the past and argue that this experience is as relevant today as it's ever been - in the words of Mark Twain, 'history never repeats itself but it does rhyme'. He'll start with the first digital revolution, at the end of the 18th century, when codes applied to complex visual signals made possible the first telegraph networks. He'll describe how, over the next century, different governments responded to the increasing importance of these networks: France decided they were too powerful to be left in private hands, so created the first state monopoly; Britain allowed the development of commercial networks, and made a pioneering attempt to promote network competition, before giving up and nationalising them; the United States embraced commercial networks, but objected to the dominance held by British companies, so in an early example of mandated digital sovereignty forced Marconi to give up his American business. The talk uses excerpts from Steve's recently published book 'From Beacon Fires to Fibre Broadband - A history of innovation, enterprise and regulation.

16:50 **Q&A with the audience**,
Chaired by **Stirling Essex, Espansivo** & CW SIG Champion

17:00 **Event closes**

With the permission of the speaker his presentation will be shared with the delegates.

Profile of organiser

Cambridge Wireless (CW) - www.cambridgewireless.co.uk

Cambridge Wireless (CW) is a global not-for-profit membership organisation at the forefront of innovation in connectivity and digital technology. Since 2000, CW has united industry leaders across connected devices, networks, software, data analytics, telecoms, satellites, and more. CW exists to champion and connect the global connectivity and digital technology community. We bring our members together to foster innovation, enable collaboration, and provide opportunities for continuous learning and professional growth. From flagship conferences and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to networking events, strategic innovation projects, and skills development, our programmes create valuable opportunities for members. With headquarters at the heart of Cambridge, UK, CW partners with other international industry clusters and organisations to extend its reach and remain at the forefront of global developments and business opportunities.

Profile of host

The Bradfield Centre - www.bradfieldcentre.com

The Bradfield Centre's facilities are designed to accelerate businesses to new levels. The aim is to attract smart, ambitious, like-minded entrepreneurs and companies from both Cambridge and around the world; co-locate them in scalable, state-of-the-art facilities; immerse them in a collaborative, entrepreneurial culture; and connect them to investors, partners, mentors, advisers and potential customers.

Profile of speaker

Stephen Unger, Former Chairman of the CW Board of Directors

Stephen has spent much of his career working with wireless technologies. He started out using radio telescopes for astronomical research, before gaining his first commercial experience with Ionica, the Cambridge company that built the world's first fixed wireless network. He then moved to Ofcom, the UK regulator for digital communications. He was an executive member of Ofcom's Board, served as Ofcom's Chief Technology Officer, and as Acting Chief Executive. He led the teams responsible for setting strategy for digital communications in the UK, and for representing the UK internationally. Stephen now holds a portfolio of non-executive and advisory roles in the technology sector. A common theme across his portfolio is an interest in how innovators, entrepreneurs, and government can work together to generate economic growth and social value.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/ungersteve/>

Wireless Heritage SIG

The **Wireless Heritage Special Interest Group (SIG)** has been established to develop existing contacts with museums and organisations with an interest in telecoms and wireless history. The objective is to organise events that reference past experience in a contemporary context. It is championed by:

- **Stirling Essex, Director, Espansivo**
- **Geoff Varrall, Director, RTT Online**
- **Nigel Wall**

To learn more about the activities of this group and its Industry Champions please visit:

<https://www.cambridgewireless.co.uk/special-interest-groups/wireless-heritage.html>

Delegate List

Name	Organisation
Anas Al Rawi	Ofcom
Graeme Bilton	GVBnet
Lindsay Bliss	Cambridge Wireless
Phil Brown	CJ International Services Ltd
Michaela Eschbach	Cambridge Wireless
Stirling Essex	Espansivo
Simon Fell	Innovizr
Zahid Ghadialy	3G4G
Svetlana Gooderham	Woodfines Solicitors
Renato Goodfellow	Commercis
Michael Hill-King	Huawei Technologies R&D UK Ltd
Ben Hiscott	CU Phosco
Sue Keogh	Sookio
Clare Kettle	Cambridge Wireless
Tony Lavender	AM Lavender Consulting
Dr Shane Lawrence	Senstechse
Mario Lizzo	Cambridge Wireless
Richard Lowe	Satellite Applications Catapult
Allan MacLean	Amdeo

Andrew Milton	rbl brand agency
Rob Morland	Astutim
Amit Nagpal	Aetha Consulting
Andrew Papageorgiou	MediaTek (MTK Wireless Limited)
Stephen Pentland	Independent advisor
Idrees Rasouli	Anglia Ruskin University
Peter Robinson	Qualcomm Technologies International
Simon Rockman	CW
Kamuran Saka	TE Connectivity
Colin Smithers	Redtail Telematics
Steve Thompson	Form the Future CIC
Stephen Tunnicliffe-Wilson	Alliance Strategy Consulting Ltd
Stephen Unger	
Geoff Varrall	RTT Online
Nigel Wall	Climate Associates Ltd