CW INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

CWIC 2026: Networks of Intelligence: Where Connectivity and Innovation Converge
Hinxton Hall, Wellcome Genome Campus, Cambridge
30 April 2026

09:00 – 10:00	**Registration | Exhibition Space**		
09:15 – 09:35	**CW New Era - Member Update | Barbara McClintock Pavilion**		
	Keynote | Francis Crick Auditorium		
10:00 – 10:10	**Welcome to the Conference** **Olu Orugboh**, Chair, **Cambridge Wireless (CW)**, CEO & Co-Founder, **Black Talent and Leadership in STEM**, and CEO, **Synergy Solutions**		
10:10 – 10:35	**Opening Keynote - Peter Haigh, Deputy CTO, The National Cyber Security Centre**		
	Plenary Session | Francis Crick Auditorium		
10:35 – 11:30	**Communication Service Providers at the Crossroads: AI Infrastructure and Autonomous Networks** **Chair: Dr Mike Short CBE, Chairman UK Telecoms Labs and AWTG** • **Dr Leon Lobo**, Head, National Timing Centre, **National Physical Laboratory (Gold Sponsor)** • **Ivana Bajović, Special Advisor to CEO, Telekom Srbija Group (Silver Sponsor)** • **Rana Kamill, Network Architecture and Standards Senior Manager, BT** The Communication Service Provider (CSP) industry stands at a pivotal moment. Can telcos move beyond connectivity and step into powering the AI economy, delivering not just bandwidth, but compute, sovereign edge capabilities, and the tools that underpin AI services? Or will hyper-scalers seize the advantage, leaving telcos as mere feeders into someone else's ecosystem? Simultaneously, telcos face the path to autonomous networks. Automation promises efficiency, speed, and improved service, but is a fully autonomous network achievable? Is it essential for valuable services like GPU-as-a-service or inference-as-a-service? These debates highlight a common tension: ambition versus risk. The panel explores whether these twin transformations represent a golden opportunity for telcos to redefine their role in the digital economy, or whether they risk being sidelined by legacy constraints and external competition.		
11:30 – 12:00	**Break | Exhibition Space**		
	Breakout 1 **Room: Francis Crick Auditorium**	**Breakout 2** **Room: Rosalind Franklin Pavilion**	**Breakout 3 | Barbara McClintock Pavilion**
12:00 – 13:00	**Operational Advantage: AI, Autonomy, and the Future Fight** **Chair**: **Gavin Doyle, Senior Consultant, Technology Strategy, Cambridge Consultants** • **Phil Pardoe, C4IS Capability Principal, Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL)** • **Cdr Trevor Bradley, Ministry of Defence** • **John-Paul Szczepanik, Chief Technology Officer, ALL.SPACE** The symbiosis of connectivity and artificial intelligence transforms defence infrastructure from a passive utility into a decisive operational asset. This is about cognitive dominance: harnessing machine learning and data science to accelerate decision-making and fortify network resilience. As the timeline for Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) shortens, understanding its profound implications for defence has shifted from a theoretical exercise to an urgent strategic imperative. In the physical domain, this intelligence translates directly into capacity and effectiveness. Armed forces are rapidly deploying uncrewed, autonomous capabilities to prosecute targets at speed and generate overwhelming force. However, this reliance on autonomy opens a new front in the war for the spectrum: a contested environment defined by Electronic Warfare (EW) and Electronic Countermeasures (ECM).	**Advanced Manufacturing: Autonomous Production and the Rise of Dark Factories** **Chair**: **Katy Davies, Managing Director, Cap Air Systems** • **Eda Ozunturk, Strategic Account Manager, UK, Ireland & South Europe & Eurasia, Ericsson Enterprise Wireless Solutions** • **Professor Mike Wilson, Chief Automation Officer, MTC** • **Jonathan McKenna, Senior Vice President, Business Development - Intelligent Services, Cambridge Consultants** The convergence of AI, automation, and advanced robotics is transforming manufacturing into an intelligent, self-optimising capability. This shift towards cognitive production leverages data, machine learning, and autonomous systems to accelerate decision making, eliminate inefficiency, and achieve precision at scale. In the physical domain, this intelligence is driving rapid deployment of robotic systems and autonomous production cells. This evolution leads to dark factories: fully automated facilities operating 24/7 without human presence. While connectivity underpins autonomous production, dark factories require a broader portfolio: real-time data processing, edge and cloud platforms, AI orchestration, cybersecurity, digital twins, and secure integration with logistics and supply chains. For telcos, this presents a significant opportunity to move beyond connectivity and deliver the platforms and managed services that enable the next generation of industrial production.	**Architecting the Future of Advanced Connectivity: An Industry Workshop with FTH & JOINER** • **Peter Marshall, JOINER Industry Lead (facilitator)** • **Prof Andy Sutton MBE,** Director of Technology and Mobile, **Ofcom** • **Professor Harald Haas, TITAN Director, University of Cambridge** • **Professor Julie McCann,** CHEDDAR Director, **Imperial** • **Professor Dominic O'Brien, HASC Director, University of Oxford** • **Professor Dimitra Simeonidou,** JOINER Director, **University of Bristol** This interactive workshop brings industry and innovation leaders together to: • Engage with a leading advanced connectivity research ecosystem • Identify barriers and opportunities to accelerate market-ready innovation

			Explore collaboration with FTH & JOINER and help shape future research aligned to industry needs
13:00 – 14:00	**Lunch | Exhibition Space**		
	Breakout 4 **Room: Francis Crick Auditorium**	**Breakout 5** **Room: Rosalind Franklin Pavilion**	
14:00 – 15:00	**What Bold Ideas will Shape the Next Decades of Technological Progress?** **Chair**: **Simon Fabri, Director of Product and Engineering, HMGCC** • **Hamish Mackenzie,** Founder, **Revolve Labs** • **Ivan Kadić, Founder/CEO, Reputeo** • **Konstantinos Nikitopoulos,** 6G Innovation Centre, **University of Surrey/ Noema Signal Labs Ltd** • **Sara Almahri,** CEO and Co-Founder, **Mina AI** • **Enrique Munoz de Cote, CTO, Mutable Tactics** This session showcases cutting-edge start-ups and early innovations developing breakthrough technologies with the potential to transform industries and society. Founders and technical leaders will present what they are building today: the products, platforms, and systems emerging from frontier science and engineering, and the real-world problems these innovations are designed to solve. Concrete examples and stories of innovation will explore how novel technologies are being translated into practical solutions, and what makes these approaches distinctive. Designed to inspire, it highlights the role of start-up creativity and technical ambition in turning emerging ideas into impactful technologies for the connected world.	**Connecting Places: Better Services, Stronger Economies** **Chair**: **Dejan Bojic, Director, High Summits Consulting** • **Jessica Ellis, Director/Advisor, Digital Places** • **Sarah Marsh, Head of Digital Connectivity, Cambridgeshire County Council and Connecting Cambridgeshire Programme Director** • **Kieran Arnold,** Chief Technical Officer, **Smart City Consultancy** • **Seán Keating,** Consultant • **Tracey Jenkins,** Head of Business Development for the Public Sector, **Vodafone Business** Gone are the days of 'smart city' theory. It's time to talk about what actually works. How do we use digital connectivity to deliver better public services and fuel real economic growth? This session brings the entire value chain to the stage: from telcos and regional authorities to the public sector leaders on the frontline. Forget the jargon, this is about practical problem-solving. Hear real-world case studies on solving tough connectivity challenges and see how these solutions are transforming communities. We'll also look ahead, exploring the powerful impact AI will have on our public spaces over the next decade.	
15:00 – 15:30	**Break | Exhibition Space**		
	Plenary Session | Francis Crick Auditorium		
15:30 – 16:15	**Panel - The Quantum Internet** **Chair**: **Jonathan Legh-Smith, Executive Director, UKQuantum** • **Lory Thorpe**, Senior Quantum Ambassador, **IBM** • **Jouni Flyktman**, Vice President, Defence and Security, **IQM Quantum Computers** • **Luke Ibbetson,** Head of Group R&D , **Vodafone Group** The idea of a quantum internet has moved from science fiction into serious research agendas. By harnessing quantum mechanics, it promises a future of secure communications, distributed quantum computing, and entirely new applications we can barely imagine today. If the ambition is achieved, the quantum internet will not be just another 'G' upgrade. Rather, it represents a paradigm shift in how information is secured, shared, and processed. For telcos, policymakers, and innovators, the stakes are enormous: miss this wave and risk irrelevance; seize it and help shape the backbone of the next digital era. Is the quantum internet a genuine revolution, or overhyped research chasing funding? If quantum communications are "un-hackable", who decides access? Should telcos lead the quantum backbone, or will they be sidelined by hyper-scalers? Will the race for quantum leadership drive further geopolitical tensions?		

16:15 – 16:55	**Plenary / Panel: Securing our Future: Building the Talent Pipeline** **Chair**: **Andrea Wood MBE, Assistant Director for Skills, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA)** • **Joanna Cavan OBE,** Managing Director, **UK Telecoms Lab** • **Ruth Redding,** Associate, **Cambridge Management Consulting** • **Shona Taylor,** Business Engagement Manager, **UCAS** • **Lesley Holt,** Adoption Director, **WM5G** The technology landscape is evolving faster than the talent pipeline that supports it, and nowhere is this more visible than in connectivity and advanced communications technologies. As AI, agentic systems, and emerging fields such as quantum capture the imagination of the next generation, the disciplines of core network, infrastructure, and connectivity risk losing young talent to more visible career options grabbing the headlines. This session explores how the CW ecosystem can compete for and inspire our next generation of young talent. It examines what really drives talent choices today, from pay and flexibility to purpose, diversity, and societal impact, and how careers in connectivity, networks and digital infrastructure can offer compelling answers. The discussion will consider how shifting skillsets, new productivity models, and changing ways of working are reshaping the future workforce across the UK's digital economy. The panel will look at how to build clearer pathways into ACT careers, unlock regional growth, and ensure inclusion and equal access to opportunity.
16:55 – 17:25	**Closing Fireside Chat: The Sovereign Nervous System: Governance, Trust, Data, Quantum and the Human Element in the Age of Networks of Intelligence** **Daniel Doll-Steinberg, Cofounder, EdenBase** **Chris Bruce, Board Member, Cambridge Wireless and NED for innovative technology companies** As CWIC 2026 draws to a close, the conversation shifts from the 'how' of network convergence to the 'so what' of systemic autonomy. The day has traced the technical architecture of our future, one where these technologies are merging into a single autonomous operating system. This Global Nervous System does more than carry data. It helps determine what becomes data in the first place, how it is observed, how it is trusted, and how it is used to sense risk, interpret intent, and act in real time across our physical and digital worlds. Connectivity is no longer just infrastructure; it has become the control layer of modern life, enabling trust, resilience, and accountability at machine speed. As AI, advanced sensing, and eventually quantum systems begin to reshape what can be known, modelled and acted on, that control layer becomes more powerful, and more consequential. In this closing fireside, Daniel Doll-Steinberg joins us to explore what this transition really means. As AI embeds itself across every workflow, changing how we trade value, establish identity, and manage resources, the boundary between data movement and decision-making is dissolving. At the same time, the nature of data itself is changing: it is no longer just recorded information, but an active substrate for inference, prediction, and machine-led action. That shift forces a fundamental rethinking of governance: how do we regulate a system that moves faster than human thought? How do we preserve machine-speed trust without surrendering human agency? Daniel will examine the frameworks needed to keep this new era of intelligent networks a tool for progress, rather than a source of systemic fragility.
17:25 – 17:30	**Closing Remarks - Michaela Eschbach**, CEO, **Cambridge Wireless**
17:30 – 18:30	**Reception Drinks | Exhibition Space**
18:30	**Close**