

Press Release:

Dragonfly and UCL School of Management awarded Innovate UK funding to pioneer trusted AI-powered technology decision making

- Dragonfly and UCL School of Management awarded £704,863 (approximately \$1 million) in Innovate UK funding to develop next-generation AI systems that help businesses make safer, more effective technology decisions
- The 18-month project will encode the UK's Software Security Code of Practice into the world's first machine-queryable trust layer, enabling organisations and AI agents alike to assess the security of entire technology stacks, not just individual tools
- Research aims to establish new approaches to technology trust, compliance and AI adoption as organisations increasingly embrace AI-native ways of working

UNDER EMBARGO London, UK, August 17th 2026, 10:00 BST:

Dragonfly, the technology intelligence platform helping organisations make technology decisions with confidence, today announced it has secured Innovate UK funding in partnership with researchers from UCL School of Management. The collaborative project has been awarded £704,863 (approximately \$1 million) in total funding, shared across Dragonfly and UCL, through Innovate UK's Secure Software for Resilient Growth competition. The 18-month project begins in August 2026.

Businesses today face more technology choices than ever before. The average organisation now operates hundreds of software tools, whilst simultaneously grappling with the rapid emergence of AI systems and autonomous agents. Technology leaders are increasingly being asked not only which tools they should adopt, but whether those technologies can safely and effectively work together. Existing security tools can't answer that question, because they assess vendors one at a time, but real-world risk lives in the connections between tools: the data flows, integrations, shadow IT and over-privileged connectors that link a modern technology stack together. A business can select ten individually "secure" products and still end up with a dangerously insecure whole. Cyber attacks cost the UK economy an estimated £14.7 billion a year, with fragmented, poorly secured software infrastructure among the weaknesses attackers exploit.

The UK Government published the Software Security Code of Practice (SSCoP) in January 2025 to set a baseline for software security across supply chains, but most businesses lack the tools or expertise to check whether their software stack meets these standards, or to make security-informed decisions when choosing new tools.

The collaborative project will close this gap by building a secure stack advisory layer on top of Dragonfly's knowledge graph of more than 300,000 software vendors. The system will encode all 14 SSCoP principles as machine-queryable attributes, cross-mapped to standards including ISO 27001, NIS2 and the EU Cyber Resilience Act, and use a compositional risk engine to evaluate complete multi-vendor stacks: tracing data flows across tool boundaries, detecting weakest links and shadow IT exposure, and translating the findings into plain-language, citation-backed recommendations that non-technical decision makers can act on.

Sean King, co-founder at Dragonfly and project lead, said: "We're entering a world where every business will have both human and AI colleagues working together. The technology decisions organisations make over the next decade will fundamentally shape their ability to innovate, compete and adopt AI safely.

"This partnership with UCL allows us to tackle some of the hardest problems in technology decision making. Innovate UK's support is an incredible validation of both the problem and the opportunity ahead."

Sven Sabas, co-founder at Dragonfly and technical lead, said: "Today, businesses are expected to understand not only whether a piece of software is best-in-class, but whether it's secure, compliant, interoperable and appropriate within the wider context of their organisation. That's becoming an impossible task to solve manually.

"Together with UCL, we're building the intelligence layer that will help businesses understand not just what technology exists, but how it should work together: encoding the reasoning of an expert security consultant into a system that any business, or any AI agent, can query in seconds."

The research will be led at UCL by Professor Onesun Steve Yoo, Professor of Operations & Technology and Marketing & Analytics at UCL School of Management, as Principal Investigator, alongside co-investigators Dr Yi-Chun Akchen, Dr Yuri Resende Fonseca and Dr Aras Selvi. The UCL team brings deep expertise in optimisation, machine learning and decision-making under uncertainty, expertise directly relevant to the combinatorial challenge of evaluating technology stacks, where hundreds of tools must be assessed against interoperability, security and regulatory constraints.

Professor Onesun Steve Yoo, Principal Investigator, UCL School of Management, said: "As businesses increasingly rely on complex ecosystems of software and AI systems, there is a growing need for trustworthy and explainable approaches to technology decision making. This collaboration brings together cutting-edge academic research with real-world industry challenges to develop practical solutions that can help organisations navigate complexity with greater confidence. We're excited by the opportunity to contribute both rigorous research and meaningful impact through this partnership."

The project forms part of Dragonfly's wider vision to build the world's most trusted intelligence layer for technology decisions. Founded in December 2024 by Zego alumni Sean King and Sven Sabas, Dragonfly launched publicly in October 2025 alongside a £2.6M pre-seed round led by Episode 1, joined by Dreamcraft and Portfolio Ventures. Innovate UK's support will accelerate the development of Dragonfly's next-generation capabilities whilst contributing to the UK's leadership position in AI innovation and helping businesses safely embrace the opportunities presented by AI-native ways of working.

To find out more about Dragonfly, visit www.askdragonfly.com.

Notes to editors

About Dragonfly: Dragonfly is the intelligence layer between your business and the software it needs, helping individuals make technology decisions with confidence. Founded in December 2024 and headquartered in London, Dragonfly combines a knowledge graph of more than 300,000 software vendors with AI-powered analysis to help businesses build, manage and evolve their technology stacks. www.askdragonfly.com

About UCL School of Management: UCL School of Management is the business school of UCL (University College London), one of the world's leading universities. It is home to research faculty working across operations and technology management, analytics, strategy, innovation, entrepreneurship, marketing and organisational behaviour. Its research in business and management is ranked among the strongest in the UK. www.mgmt.ucl.ac.uk/

About Innovate UK: Innovate UK is the UK's national innovation agency, supporting business-led innovation in all sectors, technologies and UK regions. It helps businesses grow through the development and commercialisation of new products, processes and services, backed by an innovation ecosystem that is agile, inclusive and easy to navigate. Innovate UK is part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). www.ukri.org/councils/innovate-uk/

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Sources: The £14.7 billion figure is drawn from independent research commissioned by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, published November 2025, estimating the annual cost of significant cyber attacks to the UK economy at approximately 0.5% of GDP.