



## Scottish tech companies at the forefront of digital development

---

Scotland has long been at the forefront of global, digital development. A variety of technology companies such as Skyscanner and FanDuel (once exciting start-ups and now well-known brands) are rooted in Scotland's capital city, Edinburgh – while Mashable, the digital media website, was founded in an Aberdeen bedroom and is now headquartered in New York.

With a highly educated workforce, good digital infrastructure and strong transport links, Scotland is febrile ground for digital innovation. It is also not just a private sector ambition, but also on the Scottish Government's agenda too. The aim of realising Scotland's full potential in a rapidly digital world provides ample incentive for collaboration between both sectors.

This article looks at variety of Scottish technology companies at the forefront of digital development in Scotland.



### CivTech / Wallet.Services - a digital development partnership

One prominent Scottish tech accelerator is CivTech. Its idea is intuitive: combine public sector expertise and private sector creativity to overcome systemic problems, blockers and inefficiencies, often common in the public sector. Where an issue has been identified, CivTech encourages public bodies to frame this as an open challenge to the private sector for it to solve. Crucially, and of particular concern for start-ups, it is intended to create a swifter and more practical pathway for such companies to win public sector contracts.

Speaking at CivTech's annual Demo Day in February 2019, an event that aims to highlight the progress made by its participant companies, Scottish Finance Secretary Derek Mackay explained that the scheme, to date, had been successful in winning 'GBP 4.66m of contracts and 54 full time equivalent jobs.'

The clear frontrunner from the first batch of CivTech companies is Wallet.Services, an Edinburgh-based start-up. Scottish Government Cyber Resilience unit posed the following challenge: '*Systems used across public services can be disconnected, time-consuming and error prone. So how can we make things simpler?*' Wallet.Services' solution is SICCAR (which they explain is Scots for 'sure and certain') an enterprise platform backed with blockchain technology which seeks to allow government services and businesses to create a reliable, secure and immutable record of interactions and transactions.

For public bodies, Wallet.Services sees potential for application of its product where unanimous consent is required from a number of persons, such as in conveyancing, approvals and licensing processes. Industries with complex supply chains where disparate IT systems and strict regulatory compliance are also a growth area, with the company explaining that the platform will be able to digitally harmonise the input of multiple parties whilst improving efficiency and demonstrating strong cyber resilience.

Wallet.Services is gaining traction in the cyber security and blockchain sectors, and has won GBP 450,000 investment to date. In terms of industry accolades, SICCAR won the CitiBank Tech for Integrity Challenge's 'cutting red tape in government' category and the Best Cyber Breakthrough Award at the Scottish Cyber Awards 2017.



## Snap40 – strong vital signs

Snap40 is a Scottish start-up that has developed a digitally enabled wearable device to help health professionals monitor their patients in any setting, including the patient's home. A key USP is the application of machine learning to the raw patient data collected on its cloud platform. This allows aspects of its software (such as the generation of vital signs) to be upgraded as it amasses more and more data from its subjects. Founder, Gavin McCann explains, *'This is quite like the Tesla model where they ship new software updates to their car that lets the car go faster'*.

The company is headquartered in Edinburgh but has expanded into the US through its New York office, where it has clinical trials and pilots with leading hospitals and healthcare institutions in the pipeline. The company has, to date, raised USD 11.7m in funding, with its burgeoning reputation recently recognised by it winning two accolades in the inaugural Scottish Tech Startup Awards in 2018.



## IceRobotics – cream of the crop

Another proposition backed by cloud computing that heralds from Scotland is IceRobotics. A South Queensferry-based venture, IceRobotics is a leading developer and provider of data collection and analysis products for monitoring dairy cow behaviour.

Its flagship 'CowAlert' offering (which has been described as 'a FitBit for cows') works like this:

- Data is collected from a cow using a sensor placed on its rear leg, recording multiple times a second.
- Cloud computing then collects the data transmitted from the device, where diagnostic algorithms analyse what is received and send its findings back to the farmer's PC.
- The device can provide farmers with vital data relating to a cow's health and fertility – crucial to herd management.

In 2008, IceRobotics secured GBP 180,000 in seed investment from private investors, the Edinburgh Technology Fund, to support a management buy-out and company re-structure, and most recently has closed its venture round with GBP 1.1m in funding from Innovate UK in 2014. IceRobotics was also the recipient of the John Logie Baird award in 2011 and has received international recognition in recent months.



## Conclusion

The future is bright for the Scottish tech sector, which is now worth almost GBP 4bn to the national economy. The next Scottish tech 'unicorn' to be valued at USD 1bn is surely not too far away.

## Contact



**James McMahon**

Trainee Solicitor

**T** +44 131 200 7330

**E** james.mcmahon@cms-cmno.com

[cms.law/scotland/digital](https://cms.law/scotland/digital)