
JOANNA SHIELDS, BARONESS SHIELDS

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- UK Minister for Internet Safety and Security from 2015-17
- Group CEO for BenevolentAI, the market leader in harnessing the power of AI to enhance and accelerate global scientific discovery



Topics

- Leadership
- Management
- Technology

Joanna Shields (Baroness Shields) is a technology industry veteran who currently serves as Group CEO for BenevolentAI. BenevolentAI is the market leader in harnessing the power of AI to enhance and accelerate global scientific discovery. She previously served as UK Minister for Internet Safety and Security from 2015-17.

An early pioneer in digital technology, before joining the government Joanna spent over 25 years building some of the world's best known technology companies. In 1997, she took on her first CEO role at Veon, developing video streaming technology and leading the company to a successful acquisition by Philips. Post-acquisition Joanna became VP International at RealNetworks in London. Joanna then joined Google as Managing Director EMEA, growing revenue to over US\$ 1 billion and leading technology and content acquisition teams for Google Video (YouTube), Books, Maps and Commerce.

In 2006, Joanna Shields was recruited to run social networking start-up Bebo. In less than 2 years she grew the network to 50 million users and developed Bebo Originals; an Internet production company that released the BAFTA nominated "Kate Modern", viewed 85 million times online. Joanna then served as President of Aol's newly created People Networks division, overseeing all social and communications products including AIM, Aol Instant Messenger and ICQ. She then joined Facebook as Vice President and Managing Director EMEA, responsible for building the largest team outside the US.

In 2012, Prime Minister David Cameron asked Joanna Shields to help build the UK into a tech powerhouse and she became CEO and Chair TechCityUK. Here she catalysed the digital economy, launching a number of successful initiatives, including TechNation, the Digital Business Academy, Future Fifty and HQ-UK during her tenure.

Joanna Shields was appointed the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Internet Crime and Harms. During her time at Downing Street, Joanna led a taskforce established by President Obama and Prime Minister Cameron to combat online child abuse and exploitation, founding the WePROTECT initiative, now supported by 63 countries, law enforcement agencies, NGOs, civil society and tech industry leaders. Its mission is to eradicate online child abuse and exploitation. Her responsibilities include combating online extremist recruitment and radicalisation, eradicating harmful online crimes, including child abuse, exploitation and cyber hate, and ensuring safe and open access to the Internet for everyone.

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