

digital futures

Shaping a sustainable society
through digital transformation



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Together we shape the future

Digital Futures brings together leading researchers, industry partners, and public-sector organisations to shape the digital technologies that society depends on.

Since its establishment in 2020, the centre has grown into a strong cross-sector collaboration with long-term support from the Swedish government as a Strategic Research Area.

Today, twelve partners from academia, industry, and the public sector collaborate through Digital Futures: KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm University, RISE Research Institutes of Sweden, AstraZeneca, the City of Stockholm, Ericsson, Hitachi Energy, Region Stockholm, Saab, Skanska, TRATON and Xylem.

The vision of Digital Futures is to shape a sustainable society through digital transformation.

Our mission is to:

- **Excel in Research** – Pursue scientific excellence through pioneering cross-disciplinary research that addresses complex societal challenges.
- **Empower People** – Foster innovation, leadership, and education while embracing diversity, equipping individuals with the skills and mindset to drive change and shape the future.
- **Build Community** – Create a strong ecosystem where academia, industry, and the public sector collaborate across disciplines.

Digital Futures aims to become one of the world's leading university research centres in digital transformation technologies by fostering seamless collaboration between academia, industry, and society.





A collaborative meeting space

At the heart of Digital Futures is a vibrant meeting space where faculty, PhD students, postdoctoral researchers, visiting scholars, and industry partners come together to share ideas and build new collaborations.



The Digital Futures hub enables seamless participation both on site and online. Seminars, workshops, meetings, and events are designed to support inclusive interaction regardless of location, fostering an open and connected research environment.

The hub serves as a platform for creativity, experimentation, and knowledge exchange, bringing together expertise from different disciplines to explore the opportunities and challenges of digital emerging technologies.



We are very excited about our collaboration with Digital Futures. By combining their innovative research with our extensive technical expertise, we believe we can create improved testing opportunities and contribute to a more electrified and sustainable world.

Tobias Hansson, Country Managing Director Sweden
at Hitachi Energy



our

digital futures

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ARCHITECTURE

digital futures



From research to impact

Digital technologies are transforming every part of society – from sustainable urban development, industry to healthcare and education. As the pace of change accelerates, so does the need for research and innovation that can guide digital transformation in responsible and human-centred ways.



Since its establishment, Digital Futures has grown into Sweden's largest investment in research on digital transformation and its societal impact. Digital Futures brings together researchers, industry, public-sector organisations, and international partners to address major societal challenges through cross-disciplinary research and innovation.



Our research spans areas such as artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, robotics, digital health, sustainability, smart infrastructure, IT and mobile communication, and interactive technologies. Projects range from digital assistants in elderly care and intelligent water systems to digital twins for sustainable transport and technologies that support health and wellbeing.

Digital Futures also supports internationally connected and socially impactful research, including projects using drone technologies to combat dengue fever and digital solutions that improve access to mental healthcare.



Close collaboration between academia, industry, and the public sector is a core part of our mission. Together with our partners, we identify emerging challenges and develop solutions with real societal impact.

People are at the centre of Digital Futures. Through summer schools, exchange programmes, mobility initiatives, and international collaborations, we invest in the next generation of researchers and strengthen global knowledge exchange.

Close collaboration between academia, industry, and the public sector is a core part of our mission. Together with our partners, we identify emerging challenges and develop solutions with real societal impact.

Digital Futures is built around question-driven, cross-disciplinary research. Artificial intelligence acts as an enabling technology across domains, while experimental arenas provide large-scale, real-world environments where research can be tested, validated, and refined together with partners. These experimental arenas help shorten the path from theory to application and position Stockholm as a living laboratory for sustainable digital transformation.

Looking forward, Digital Futures will continue advancing world-class research and expanding its experimental environments. The centre will also strengthen innovation, entrepreneurship, trustworthy AI, international collaboration, and talent development.

By integrating research, experimentation, education, and innovation, Digital Futures accelerates the path from scientific discovery to societal value – helping position Stockholm and Sweden as global leaders in sustainable digital transformation.

Karl H Johansson
Director Digital Futures

Annika Szabo Portela
Executive Director Digital Futures



Funding and Research Programme



Digital Futures receives annual governmental funding and awards strategic research grants that support initiatives aligned with the centre's long-term vision. Our research advances the scientific foundations of digital transformation while addressing real societal needs.

By combining technological depth with societal relevance, Digital Futures integrates four societal contexts with three research themes.

SOCIETAL CONTEXTS

Smart Society

Digital solutions for sustainable cities, public services, and resilient communities.

Digitalised Industry

Next-generation industrial systems enabling efficiency, flexibility, sustainability, and new business models.

Rich and Healthy Life

AI and digital technologies improving physical and mental health, healthcare delivery and quality of life.

Educational Transformation

Human-centred, AI-enhanced learning across the lifespan — strengthening autonomy, creativity and professional judgement.

RESEARCH THEMES

Trust

Secure, safe, and transparent systems. Privacy, cybersecurity, resilience, accountability, and explainable AI are vital design principles.

Cooperate

Distributed systems where humans and digital agents collaborate effectively and reliably.

Learn

Adaptive, data-driven systems capable of generalisation and responsible AI innovation.

At the intersection of these contexts and themes, new research questions emerge and new solutions are created. Artificial intelligence acts as a catalyst across all areas, always guided by ethical responsibility and human agency.

Digital Futures' Research Matrix



Trust



Cooperate



Learn



Smart Society



Digitalized Industry



Rich and Healthy Life



Educational Transformation

Partnership and Collaboration

Digital Futures fosters a dynamic ecosystem for collaboration and knowledge sharing, where partners from academia, industry, and the public sector work together to identify emerging challenges, explore new technologies, and develop strategies for digital transformation. These collaborations create opportunities for joint research initiatives and interdisciplinary projects addressing pressing industrial and societal needs.





The Stockholm innovation system is rising to meet today's and tomorrow's challenges through collaboration. As a partner in Digital Futures, the city drives innovation and digital transformation together with the public sector, industry, and academia.

Karin Ekdahl Wästberg, Director of innovation,
City of Stockholm



Through workshops, seminars, outreach activities, and recruitment opportunities for graduates and researchers, Digital Futures supports continuous interaction between research and practice. The partnerships also contribute to strengthening Stockholm's position as a leading international hub for digital transformation, innovation, and interdisciplinary research.

In addition, Digital Futures collaborates closely with research institutes, universities, and innovation centres across Europe and internationally, further expanding its global network and impact.



Joining the Digital Futures Postdoctoral Fellowship at KTH has been a great learning experience. It opened new avenues for me, gave me new insights into research I was already involved in, and brought forward new opportunities for collaboration, which are essential for an early-career researcher.

Satarupa Chakrabarti, Digital Futures Postdoctoral Fellow



The networks we develop make digitalization possible. To understand the specific requirements of industries and society that will use the network platform for innovative digitalization solutions, we want to work together with ecosystem partners and leading academia. Sweden has a long tradition of successful collaboration between industry and academia, something we want to build on.

Magnus Frodigh, Senior Advisor, former Vice President and Head of Ericsson Research



Being a part of Digital Futures ecosystem will further facilitate our collaboration with industrial and public stakeholders. This partnership will bring new insights and talents to our digital transformation driving innovation and sustainability in our operations.

Anders Bergman, Director Sweden Operations Digital Lighthouse Lead, AstraZeneca



Through Digital Futures we collaborate with digital transformation leaders and learn from each other in applied research and development projects of mutual benefit to multiple partners. The exchange of ideas and co-operation in research with external partners and academia are also essential for us to be an attractive employer of talent in the Stockholm area.

Johan Ragnevad, Chief of Staff and Head of Strategy & Change, TRATON GROUP



I have loved being in Stockholm and at Digital Futures! I've been able to work with KTH researchers to organize our recent workshop about feminist approaches to considering AI use in gendered health contexts, and I'm looking forward to continuing that work. There's such an amazing community of scholars here in Stockholm who are working on really interesting projects, and I'm very happy to be a part of that community this year.

Oliver L. Haimson, Digital Futures Scholar-in-Residence, Associate Professor at the University of Michigan School of Information

Mobility and Opportunities

Digital Futures fosters collaboration and innovation through a wide range of programmes and initiatives. We support academia–industry exchange, fellowship programmes, cross-disciplinary postdoctoral positions, and talent-development initiatives. Diversity and inclusion are promoted through specialised courses, mentorship, and research opportunities for students at all levels, including summer programmes that inspire the next generation of innovators.



The Scholar-in-Residence Programme provides financial support for scholars from non-Swedish universities to undertake research visits ranging from one to twelve months. Designed for academics seeking a sabbatical within the Digital Futures environment, the programme encourages participation in research, teaching, events, and the mentoring of early-career researchers. By attracting international scholars, the programme strengthens diversity and introduces new global perspectives in digital transformation research.



The intellectual energy at Digital Futures and KTH is stimulating, and I am inspired by the range of research interests and projects being pursued. I am learning more about the HPC and AI initiatives in Sweden and across the EU, and I hope to find opportunities to collaborate with the outstanding people I have met here in the future.

Professor Allen D. Malony, Digital Futures Scholar-in-Residence, University of Oregon in the Department of Computer Science and Director of the Oregon Advanced Computing Institute for Science and Society (OACISS)



The Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme with regular calls for proposals is established to attract outstanding early-career researchers from around the world. The competitive international programme combines career development, interdisciplinary collaboration, scientific networking, and mentorship, with a strong emphasis on gender balance, diversity, and inclusion. Fellows carry out their research under the joint supervision of at least two senior researchers.

The Summer Early Career Visiting Programme supports tenure-track academics from non-Swedish universities undertaking summer research visits of one to five months within the Digital Futures environment. Participants engage in research, teaching, seminars, and mentorship activities while strengthening international collaboration and academic exchange.



The Summer Research Internship Programme offers bachelor's and master's students hands-on experience in academic research during the summer. Interns participate in defined research projects under the supervision of Digital Futures-affiliated faculty and become part of an active interdisciplinary research environment at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm University and partner institutions. The eight-week programme also includes seminars, industry visits, and final presentations, providing valuable insight into research careers and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Exchange and Outreach

Digital Futures supports a broad range of workshops, conferences, seminars, and public events each year. Support includes access to the Digital Futures hub, event coordination, communication and marketing assistance, and co-financing.

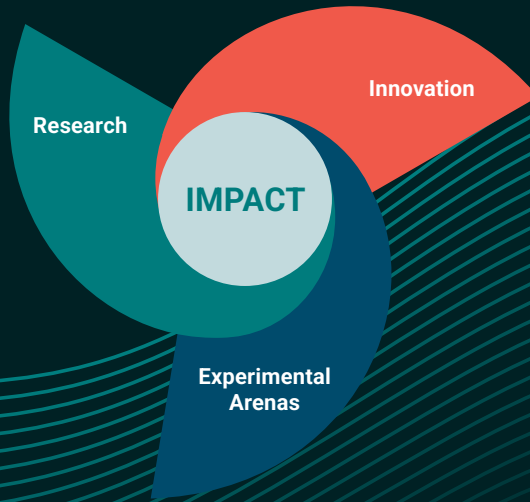
The annual *Digitalize in Stockholm* conference attracts an international audience through a rich programme of keynote speakers, panel discussions, and presentations featuring leading researchers, industry representatives, and public-sector partners.

In addition, seminars, lectures, and workshops are organised every week, bringing together researchers, students, companies, policymakers, and public-sector organisations to exchange knowledge, inspire new ideas, and strengthen research and innovation.



Strategic Direction

To accelerate digital transformation and create societal and economic impact, Digital Futures integrates research, experimental arenas, and innovation in a novel and comprehensive way. By linking cutting-edge research with real-world experimentation and implementation, Digital Futures strengthens its position as a global leader in digital research and innovation.



Experimental arenas are large-scale, real-world environments where new technologies and solutions can be tested, validated, and refined in collaboration with industry, the public sector, and society. These arenas act as engines for ideation, validation, and scaling, while positioning Stockholm as a living laboratory for sustainable digital transformation. Examples include Stockholm Digital Sandbox, Stockholm Urban Innovation Lab, Digital Health Environment, Environmental Sensing and

AI, and the Educational Arena.

Innovation transforms research and experimentation into tangible value. This requires close collaboration with industry and the public sector, stronger engagement with SMEs, support for entrepreneurship and spin-offs, and stronger links to innovation actors. The aim is to foster a culture that accelerates innovation, scales impactful solutions, and enables commercialisation and the creation of new ventures.

Organisation

The *Governing Board* is the decision-making body of Digital Futures, responsible for approving the strategic plan and budget. The Governing Board consists of eight members representing KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm University, and RISE Research Institutes of Sweden.

The *Executive Committee* is responsible for the day-to-day operations of Digital Futures. Its members include faculty representatives and members of the Digital Futures Operations Team.

Partnerships with industry and public-sector organisations are established through agreements between the founding partners of Digital Futures and external collaborators. These partnerships are represented within Digital Futures through the Industrial and Societal Board, where all industrial and societal partners are represented.

The *Strategic Research Committee* is responsible for shaping the research strategy of Digital Futures. Its responsibilities include identifying emerging research areas and topics, prioritising future project calls, planning initiatives that strengthen collaboration among researchers, and ensuring research quality.

The *Working Groups* address the societal challenges and research themes within the Digital Futures Strategic Research Programme, including Smart Society, Digitalised Industry, Rich and Healthy Life, Educational Transformation, and Trust, Cooperate and Learn. The Working Groups are chaired by members of the Strategic Research Committee.

Research, experimentation and innovation – together driving the future of digital transformation.

