

How Scotland's brain power is helping world's war on Covid-19

Tech investor Paul Atkinson on some of the academic expertise seeking cures, vaccines and helping patients



By **Paul Atkinson**

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Paul Atkinson, strategic advisory board chairman for Converge.

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innovators looking for ways to halt the spread of the contagion and eradicate Covid-19 altogether.

The world is leaning heavily on the technology sector - specifically artificial intelligence (AI) and data science - to track and fight the pandemic. As a result, tech start-ups and more established innovator businesses are integrally involved with clinicians, academics, governments and NGOs around the world.

We've heard of cloud computing resources and supercomputers from several major global tech companies such as Huawei being used by researchers to fast-track the development of a cure or vaccine for the virus. Google's DeepMind division is using its latest AI algorithms and computing power to understand the proteins that make up Covid-19 and publish the findings to help others develop treatments.

At a more tangible level, the University of Edinburgh start-up Augment Bionics, which creates 3D-printed prosthetic limbs, responded to the call by the NHS for more PPE (personalised protective equipment). It has repurposed its technology to make 3D-printed protective face masks. [Augment Bionics](#) was able to provide these masks to the NHS free of charge thanks in part to a GoFundMe page.

[Current Health](#), which won the [Converge Kickstart](#) in 2014 and began life as a University of Dundee start-up, is busier than ever providing its wearable patient monitoring device to help detect any symptoms on patients at risk from Covid-19. Current Health can help medical staff with patient management strategies so they can be monitored and treated outside hospital or as part of an early discharge programme for non-Covid patients to free up hospital beds.

This is an unparalleled global call to arms. The science and technology community is throwing its weight behind unravelling the complexity of this global health crisis.

It's a significant challenge, but Scottish innovation and can-do attitude is proving we are part of this global scientific and technology community which has thrown its full weight behind finding solutions that help mitigate the impact of the pandemic.

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[Paul Atkinson](#) is strategic advisory board chairman of [Converge](#), the entrepreneurship and enterprise programme for higher education staff, students and recent graduates

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