Our history

Read about the key events that lead to the formation of the National Cyber Security Centre.

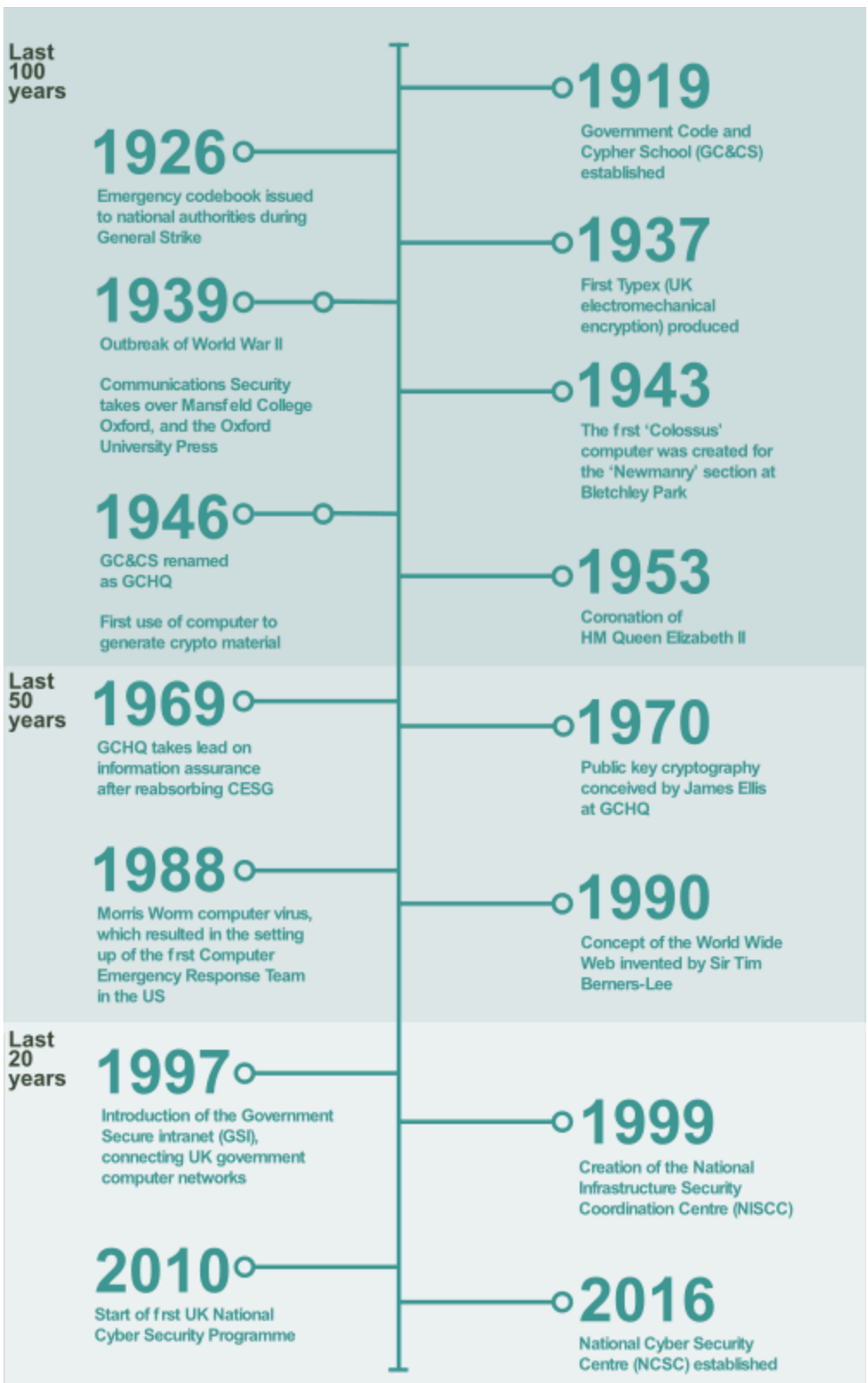
Over the last century, many milestones – including numerous heavily influenced by our parent organisation GCHQ – have brought us to this point, and we must prepare for many more changes.

The volume of telecommunications has exploded in the last 100 years, and has been accompanied by a huge rise in public awareness of the importance of staying protected.

However, government awareness of this pressing need has been around for centuries, with National Archive examples from as far back as the 16th century of encrypted official dispatches, particularly those being sent to and from diplomats.

This spirit was intensified through the 20th and 21st century, with many technological developments coming from Bletchley Park and beyond that helped to create the current booming digital economy in the UK.

The following timeline summarises the key milestones in the NCSC's history. To find out more about our legacy, you can download our launch brochure (PDF) below.



Alternative description

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Last 100 years

- 1919: Government Code and Cypher School (GC&CS) established
- 1926: Emergency codebook issued to national authorities during the General Strike
- 1937: First Typex (UK electromechanical encryption) machine produced

- 1939: Outbreak of World War Two Communications Security takes over Mansfield College Oxford, and the Oxford University Press
- 1943: The first ‘Colossus’ computer was created for the ‘Newmanry’ section at Bletchley Park
- 1946: GC&CS renamed as Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) First use of a computer to generate cryptographic material
- 1953: Coronation of HM Queen Elizabeth II

Last 50 years

- 1969: GCHQ takes the lead on Information Assurance after incorporating the Communications-Electronic Security Group (CESG)
- 1970: Public key cryptography conceived by James Ellis at GCHQ
- 1988: Morris Worm computer virus distributed via the internet, resulting in the setting up of the first Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) in the US

Last 20 years

- 1990: Concept of the World Wide Web created by Sir Tim Berners-Lee
- 1997: Introduction of the Government Secure Intranet (GSI), connecting UK government computer networks
- 1999: Creation of the National Infrastructure Security Co-ordination Centre (NISCC)
- 2010: Start of the first UK National Cyber Security Programme
- 2016: National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) established

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