Susan Greenfield

MEDIA PERSONALITY · SCIENTIST

Workforces and customers spend hours a day in environments engineered to capture attention. Leaders sense the cognitive shift but lack a framework for what is happening inside the brains of their people and customers. They need a defensible model of what digital technology is doing to human cognition, and what to do about it.

Susan Greenfield is an Oxford neuroscientist whose work shows leaders what digital technology is doing to attention, empathy and identity.

Susan Greenfield's 2026 Biography

Why organisations work with Susan Greenfield

- She framed the question. Her “Mind Change” thesis treats prolonged exposure to digital technology as a force on human cognition comparable in scale to climate change, and has shaped a decade of mainstream debate on screens, attention and identity.
- The science behind the argument is hers. Two hundred peer-reviewed papers, mostly from her Oxford lab, sit beneath her claims about attention, empathy and identity in the digital age.
- As founder and CEO of Neuro-Bio, the Oxford biotech she launched in 2013 to pursue a novel theory of Alzheimer’s based on the T14 peptide, she speaks from inside an active research programme.
- She has spent decades translating brain science for senior non-specialist audiences. That includes twelve years leading the Royal Institution of Great Britain as its first woman director, and ten years as a Forum Fellow at the World Economic Forum at Davos.

Biography highlights

- Founder and CEO of Neuro-Bio Ltd, the Oxford biotech developing a novel approach to Alzheimer’s based on the T14 peptide
- Senior Research Fellow at Lincoln College, Oxford, and former Professor of Synaptic Pharmacology, University of Oxford
- Director of the Royal Institution of Great Britain from 1998 to 2010, the first woman to hold the post; first woman to give the Royal Institution Christmas Lectures (1994)
- Author of Mind Change, The Private Life of the Brain, ID: The Quest for Identity in the 21st Century, and A Day in the Life of the Brain, published by Penguin and Random House
- Crossbench Life Peer in the House of Lords since 2001 as Baroness Greenfield, of Ot Moor
- Honours include CBE, Chevalier de la Légion d’Honneur, Australian Society for Medical Research Medal, Fellowship of the Royal Society of

AVAILABLE FOR

- After Dinner Engagement
- Speaking

SUSAN'S SPEAKING THEMES

- Creativity
- Future of Technology
- Health & Wellbeing
- Mental Health in the Workplace
- Multigenerational Workplace

LANGUAGES: English

Edinburgh, and 32 honorary degrees

Biography

In a 2009 House of Lords debate, a question was raised that the technology industry has never fully answered. If the human brain adapts to its environment, and the environment is now digital, what is happening to the brain at scale? The argument that grew from that question, developed across the next decade, has shaped how serious organisations think about screens and cognition.

Greenfield's standing to ask the question came from a long career in brain science. Two hundred peer-reviewed papers from Oxford, where she became Professor of Synaptic Pharmacology, sit behind it. So does her tenure as the first woman director of the Royal Institution of Great Britain, the post she held from 1998 to 2010, and the Royal Institution Christmas Lectures she delivered there in 1994. In 2001, she was created a Life Peer as Baroness Greenfield, of Ot Moor.

Mind Change, published in 2014, set out the case. The technologies surrounding a young brain shape its development. This is uncontroversial neuroscience. What is contested is the scale of the effect when those technologies are engineered to capture attention and to be returned to. Greenfield's argument is that the consequences show up in places leaders care about: in how people sustain focus, and in how they form empathy and construct identity.

She still runs the science. In 2013, she founded Neuro-Bio, the Oxford biotech she leads as CEO, developing a novel approach to Alzheimer's based on her research into a peptide called T14. Her lab has linked T14 to neurodegeneration upstream of the amyloid pathway, and is working on a saliva-based diagnostic test the company hopes will detect Alzheimer's decades before symptoms appear.

Key speaking topics

- The neuroscience of digital technology and the human mind
- Consciousness, identity and the physical basis of the mind
- Attention, empathy and the cognitive shift between digital generations
- The neuroscience of creativity
- Alzheimer's, dementia and the future of brain health
- Women in science, engineering and technology

Ideal for

- Boards and executive committees in financial services, technology, media and consumer-facing sectors
- CHROs and learning leaders are working on attention and digital fatigue in the workforce
- Strategy and innovation teams whose customers are the first generation to grow up entirely in a digital environment
- Education and policy audiences engaging with the science of cognition and the workforce of the future

Audience outcomes

- A defensible vocabulary for what digital technology is doing to attention, empathy and identity
- A working distinction between what brain science actually shows and

what is loosely attributed to “neuroscience” in popular commentary
- A view of where Alzheimer’s and dementia research is heading from a scientist actively pursuing a novel theory
- A perspective on the cognitive differences between digital natives and the workforce that came before them, grounded in published evidence

Susan Greenfield's Videos