# Euan Blair's AI firm falsely linked to UK Government digital ID scheme after TV controversy



Euan Blair, son of former Prime Minister Tony Blair, and his £1.2 billion AI education firm Multiverse recently found themselves at the centre of controversy after the BBC was pressured to pull an episode of the popular quiz show *Have I Got News For You* from its iPlayer streaming platform. The episode, which aired on 3 October, featured host Victoria Coren Mitchell making an inaccurate claim linking Multiverse to the UK Government’s proposed digital ID card scheme.

On the show, Coren Mitchell read from a cue card that falsely suggested Multiverse had been awarded a major government contract to develop digital ID cards, implying that the company would directly benefit from Labour leader Keir Starmer’s controversial ID policy. She remarked on the "happy coincidence" of Euan Blair’s connection to the business in this context. Following complaints from Multiverse and widespread social media circulation of the error, the BBC issued an apology, describing the mistake as an "unintentional editorial oversight," removed the episode from iPlayer, and later re-uploaded it after editing out the problematic segment.

Victoria Coren Mitchell publicly acknowledged the error on social media, attributing it to a failure in the show's fact-checking process and clarifying that Multiverse had no involvement in the ID card scheme. Multiverse retweeted her correction with a tongue-in-cheek message affirming their expertise in workforce upskilling in data and AI but denying any role in hosting comedy shows or building digital ID systems. Despite the light-hearted response, sources indicate that Euan Blair and his company's executives were displeased by the false claims.

Government officials and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology have also denied any private sector involvement in the digital ID project, emphasising that any system would be designed, developed, and managed in-house. The company reaffirmed there is "no truth" to the claims linking Multiverse with the government’s digital ID initiative.

The wider political context places this controversy amid longstanding advocacy by Tony Blair for digital ID cards. Tony Blair has a history of pushing for identity card schemes: he previously introduced compulsory ID cards during his premiership, although these were scrapped by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government due to privacy concerns. More recently, Blair has publicly championed the introduction of digital ID cards as part of modernising government services, improving security, and controlling immigration.

This push has encountered mixed reactions. In February 2023, alongside former Conservative leader Lord Hague, Blair called for digital ID cards as part of a "technological revolution" to bring the UK’s outdated records system into the digital age. However, civil liberties groups have expressed concerns about privacy and the potential for excessive data collection by the state. In July 2024, the UK government officially ruled out introducing digital ID cards, with ministers stating the policy was not in their plans or election manifesto, highlighting a gap between Blair’s advocacy and government policy at that time.

However, by September 2025, the government announced intentions to mandate digital ID cards for all UK citizens starting new jobs, aiming to enhance border security and deter illegal immigration. The ID would be stored digitally, integrated into employer checks by 2029. Blair, acknowledging the UK's cultural hesitance, suggested the public would need "a little persuading" to accept digital IDs, citing their potential benefits for efficiency and security.

Behind these developments, significant business interests are also at play. Tony Blair reportedly lobbied Business Secretary Peter Kyle to engage with the Ellison Institute of Technology, founded by billionaire Larry Ellison, who has pledged substantial funding to Blair’s think-tank. Oracle, a major tech company chaired by Ellison, reportedly holds sizeable government contracts and is well-positioned to profit from digital ID initiatives. Documents reveal that after Blair’s meetings, Oracle and related organisations have received unprecedented access to ministers and officials, raising questions about potential conflicts of interest and close ties between Labour insiders and powerful technology firms.

Conservative critics have seized on these revelations, accusing Labour of cronyism and warning that digital ID contract decisions may be influenced by political and financial connections rather than transparent processes. The controversy over the erroneous *Have I Got News For You* segment and the subsequent corrections ties into this backdrop of heightened scrutiny over the digital ID policy’s development and the roles played by political figures and private companies.

In summary, the false claim linking Multiverse to the government’s digital ID scheme inadvertently spotlighted the complex intersections of politics, technology, and business interests surrounding the UK's push towards digital identity solutions. While the public rollout of mandatory digital IDs moves forward, scrutiny over governance, privacy, and transparency continues to intensify.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1–5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tv/article-15169743/Tony-Blair-son-Euan-pressured-BBC-pull-HIGNFY-episode-host-Victoria-Coren-Mitchell-Labour-ID-cards.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 6–10 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tv/article-15169743/Tony-Blair-son-Euan-pressured-BBC-pull-HIGNFY-episode-host-Victoria-Coren-Mitchell-Labour-ID-cards.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-54010432), [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-64729442)
* Paragraph 11–14 – [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c87rgj4e0rzo), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britain-introduce-mandatory-digital-id-cards-2025-09-26/), [[7]](https://www.politico.eu/article/former-pm-tony-blair-admits-uk-will-need-little-persuading-to-embrace-digital-id/)
* Paragraph 15–17 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tv/article-15169743/Tony-Blair-son-Euan-pressured-BBC-pull-HIGNFY-episode-host-Victoria-Coren-Mitchell-Labour-ID-cards.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tv/article-15169743/Tony-Blair-son-Euan-pressured-BBC-pull-HIGNFY-episode-host-Victoria-Coren-Mitchell-Labour-ID-cards.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c87rgj4e0rzo> - In July 2024, the UK government ruled out the introduction of digital ID cards after former Prime Minister Sir Tony Blair advocated for their use to control immigration. Business Secretary Jonathan Reynolds and Home Secretary Yvette Cooper stated that ID cards were not part of the government's plans, with Cooper emphasising that it was not in the party's election manifesto. Blair had previously attempted to introduce compulsory identity cards during his tenure, but the scheme was scrapped by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-64729442> - In February 2023, former Prime Minister Tony Blair and former Conservative leader Lord Hague called for the introduction of digital ID cards for all UK citizens as part of a 'technological revolution'. They argued that government records were outdated and that digital IDs would make accessing services more secure. The proposal faced opposition from civil liberties groups concerned about data collection and state intrusion.
4. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-54010432> - In September 2020, Tony Blair advocated for the adoption of digital IDs to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. He suggested that digital records of vaccinations could be maintained by the government. Blair had previously introduced a compulsory ID card scheme during his premiership, which was later scrapped by the coalition government due to privacy concerns.
5. <https://news.sky.com/story/the-uk-is-an-outlier-by-not-taking-up-id-research-finds-as-tony-blair-calls-for-digital-card-shake-up-13273946> - In December 2024, research revealed that the UK was one of the few developed countries without a national ID card system. Former Prime Minister Tony Blair called for a digital ID 'shake-up' to modernise government services. The proposal faced opposition from civil liberties groups concerned about privacy and data collection.
6. <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britain-introduce-mandatory-digital-id-cards-2025-09-26/> - In September 2025, the UK government announced plans to introduce mandatory digital ID cards for all citizens and residents starting a new job. The initiative aimed to deter illegal immigration and strengthen border security. The digital ID would be stored on mobile phones and integrated into employers' hiring checks by 2029.
7. <https://www.politico.eu/article/former-pm-tony-blair-admits-uk-will-need-little-persuading-to-embrace-digital-id/> - In September 2025, Tony Blair acknowledged that the UK would need 'a little persuading' to embrace digital ID systems. He highlighted the potential benefits of digital IDs in modernising government services and improving efficiency. Blair's comments came amid discussions about the adoption of digital IDs in the UK.