Designing Responsible | Natural Language Processing

Science Communication & Public Engagement

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Today’s session

- Introduction to Science Communication & Public Engagement (50 mins)
- Comfort break (5 mins)
- Workshop activity (30 mins)
- Feeding back and discussion (15 mins)

What does ‘Public Engagement’ mean to you?

First, some (overlapping) terminologies…

- Science Communication (or Sci Comms)
- Public Engagement
- Public Understanding of Science
- Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE)
- Patient & Public Involvement (PPI)
- Community Engagement

And these sometimes overlap/align with:

- Participatory art works
- Participatory Research Methods
- Design methods
- Crowd sourcing
- Citizen Science etc.

Terminologies… (And what we learn from Copilot's PPT Design suggestions of what they mean…)

- Science Communication (or Sci Comms)
- Public Engagement
- Public Understanding of Science
- Patient & Public Involvement & Engagement (PPIE)
- Participatory Research Methods

Why undertake Public Engagement?

Why is community engagement important for research?

From basic science to health challenge research, effective community engagement involves communities most likely to be affected by research outcomes in ways that prioritise their views and experiences. It encourages mutual trust and improves the scope, relevance and impact of research.

https://wellcome.org/what-we-do/community-engagement

REF 2029
Research Excellence Framework

REF includes 25% weighting for impact and defines impact as

'an effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia'

https://2021.ref.ac.uk/guidance-on-results/guidance-on-ref-2021-results/index.html
https://2029.ref.ac.uk/guidance/section-6-engagement-and-impact-guidance/

For REF, engagement is defined as…

> *"an interaction between the HEI and relevant individuals, groups, communities, organisations, the public, commercial partners, or policy makers, that is purposeful, responsible, and context appropriate."*

Engagement includes, but is not limited to:

- reciprocal flows of knowledge, understanding, or skills including planned or spontaneous relationships that inform research, build trust, influence practice or policy, and/or support public participation
- activities that are accountable to affected communities and funders
- varied disciplinary practices that may directly or indirectly contribute to wider societal, economic, cultural, or environmental benefits (impact)
- Engagement practices recognise the value of researchers providing resource, information and guidance to the stakeholders of research, being accountable to both the communities that their research affects and those who fund the research.

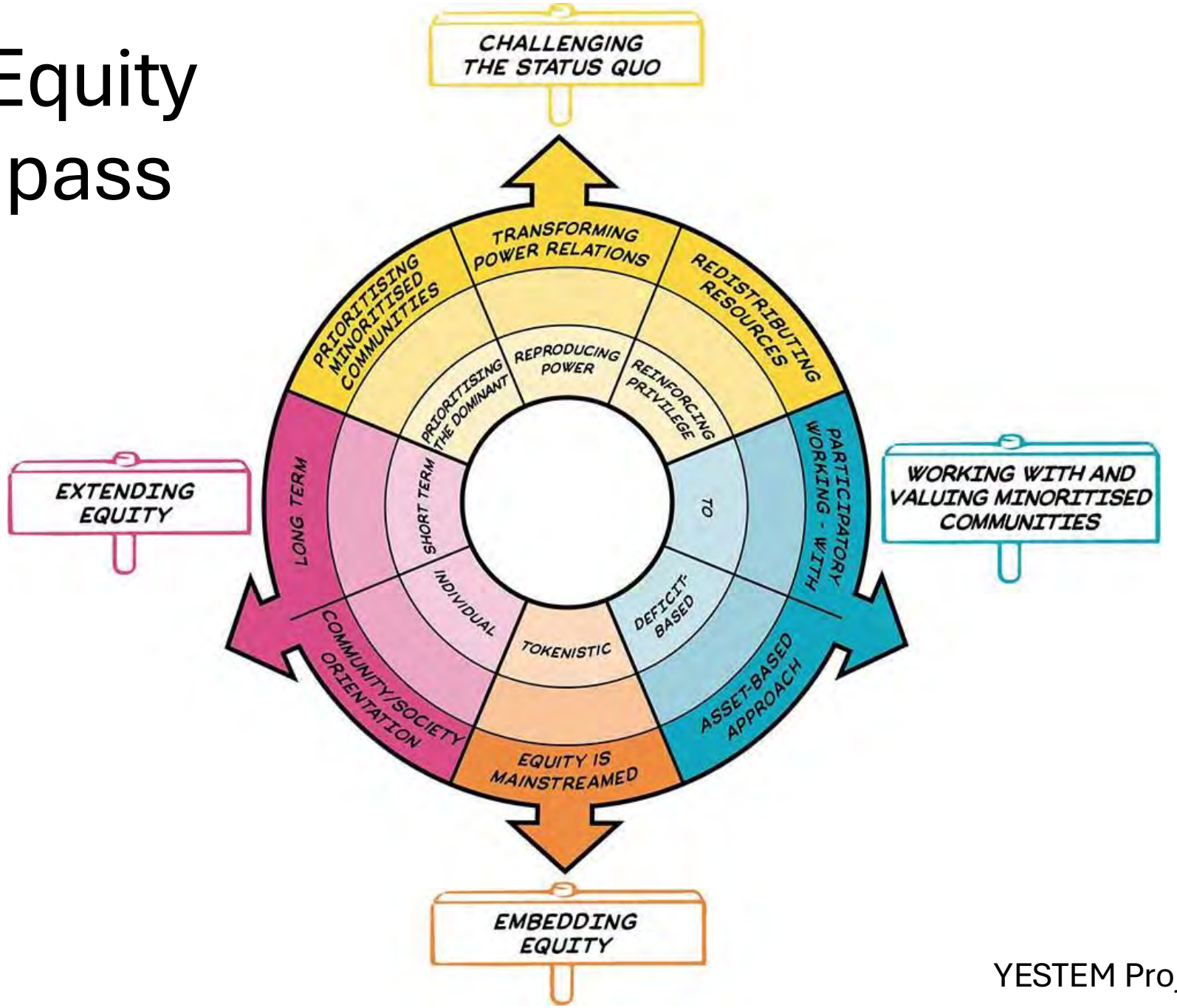
UKRI Guidance on Public Engagement

UKRI (2025a) sets out 8 key principles:

- **Include public engagement at the start of the project** – inc. in funding applications.
- **Explore available support** – including local support (eg the CDT team, ERO, etc.)
- **Listen to the public** – PE is a **two-way process** and everyone should benefit from their engagement
- **Identify your target group** – who do you want to engage with and why
- **Include all relevant people** – including those who have fewer opportunities to engage, follow principles of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI)
- **Make sure the public is an equal partner** - equitable relationship between researcher and audience, consider motivations, expectations, and distribution of resources, responsibilities, efforts, benefits
- **Consider the ethics** – including confidentiality and data protection, EDI, health and safety, safeguarding
- **Measure success** – including what success will look like and how you will evaluate this.

See also the wider UKRI Public Engagement resources including their strategy (UKRI 2022) and wider examples and resources (UKRI 2025b).

The Equity Compass

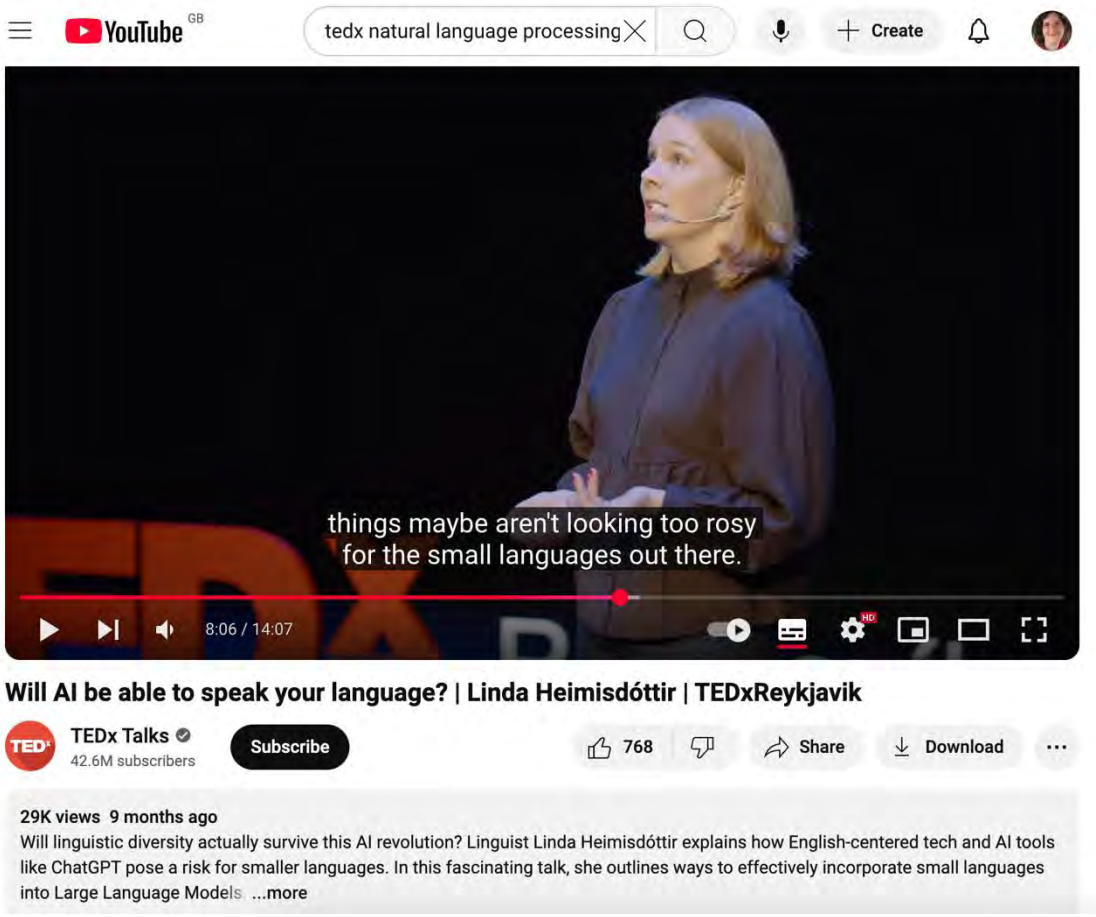


YESTEM Project Team (2021)

Are public talks good public engagement?

It depends…

- UKRI note public talks as a useful route to engage the public however…
- It depends on *where* you are speaking and *who* you are engaging – audiences can be self-selecting and lack diversity…
    - Can you target the right people to engage – could you partner with organization/s to do this?
    - Can you go *to* your audience/target community where they already are?
- Is a talk a good format for this information or audience? Is short video, in-person discussion, something more active or participatory better?



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvnXj0YJ6sA

Alternative presentation/interactive formats



Pint of Science Festival (next run: 10-12 May 2027). https://pintofscience.co.uk/

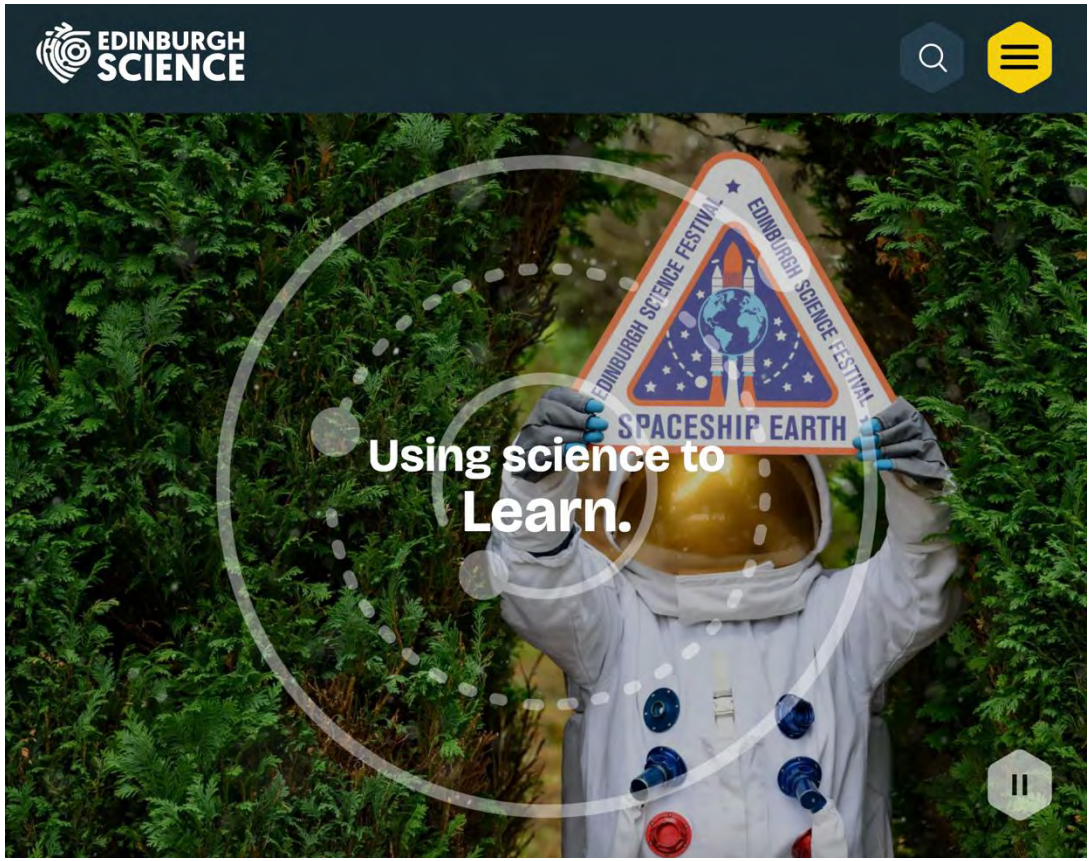


Mhairi Aitken (Turing Institute) performing at the Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas / The Provocateurs at The Stand. https://www.provocateurs.uk/

What public engagement examples have you seen/encountered?

Did they work well?

Science Festivals (Edinburgh & Others)



https://www.edinburghscience.co.uk/



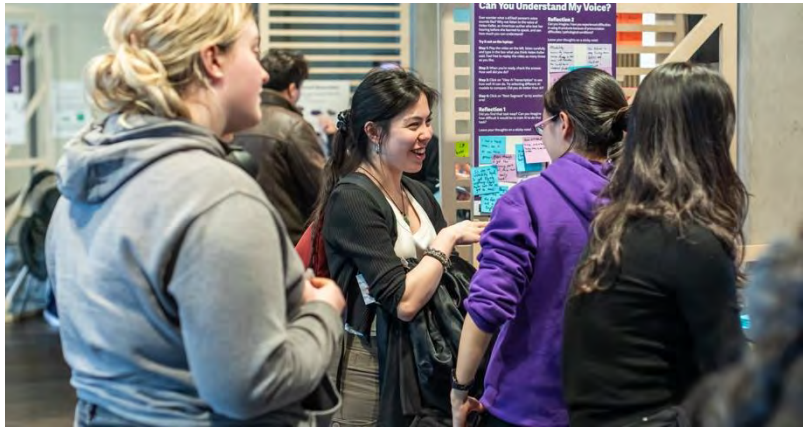
Creative Informatics Unleashed, Science Festival 2024 (Pirie 2024)









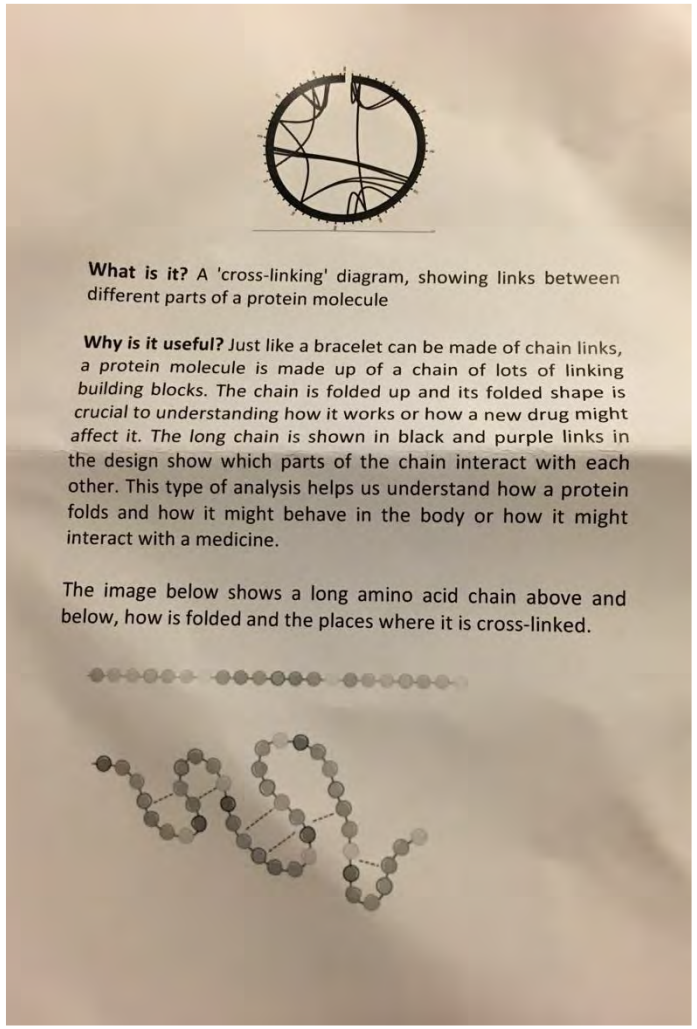




Designing Responsible NLP at Edinburgh Science Festival 2026
(You will be doing this at Edinburgh Science Festival 2027! Date TBC (9th or 16th April))

Opportunistic Engagement at Public Events





What is it? A 'cross-linking' diagram, showing links between different parts of a protein molecule

Why is it useful? Just like a bracelet can be made of chain links, a protein molecule is made up of a chain of lots of linking building blocks. The chain is folded up and its folded shape is crucial to understanding how it works or how a new drug might affect it. The long chain is shown in black and purple links in the design show which parts of the chain interact with each other. This type of analysis helps us understand how a protein folds and how it might behave in the body or how it might interact with a medicine.

The image below shows a long amino acid chain above and below, how is folded and the places where it is cross-linked.

Tattoo My Science at the Meadows Festival (2018)… Doors Open Day 2025 etc.

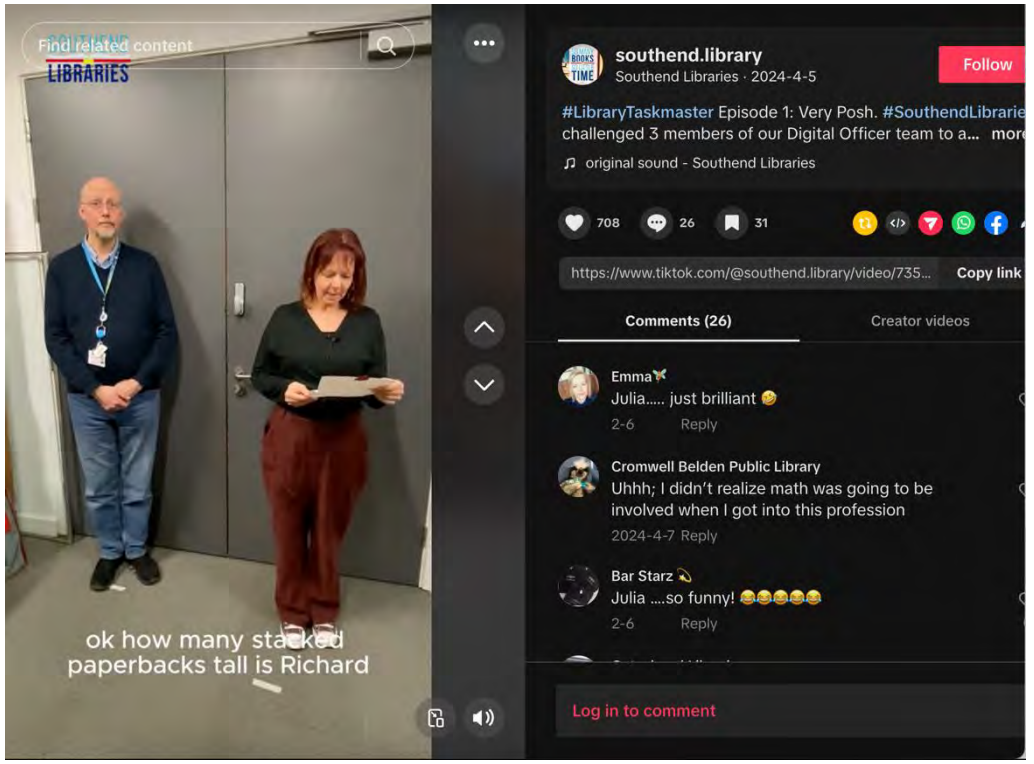
- Brief encounters at a large-scale public event
- Varying tattoos depending on campaigns and audience
- Free, appealing, visual, playful
- Child friendly but not a family-only activity
- Brief information given at point of applying temporary tattoo
- Further information shared as a take-away (2018) or as part of extended conversations (2024)
- Highly sharable as a talking point post-event.

Part of wider strategy: University of Edinburgh Wellcome Centre for Cell Biology (2018)

Social Media (pragmatic vs playful)



https://bsky.app/profile/cosmicshambles.com



https://www.tiktok.com/@southend.library/video/7354356988853128481?q=library%20taskmaster&t=1741135616086

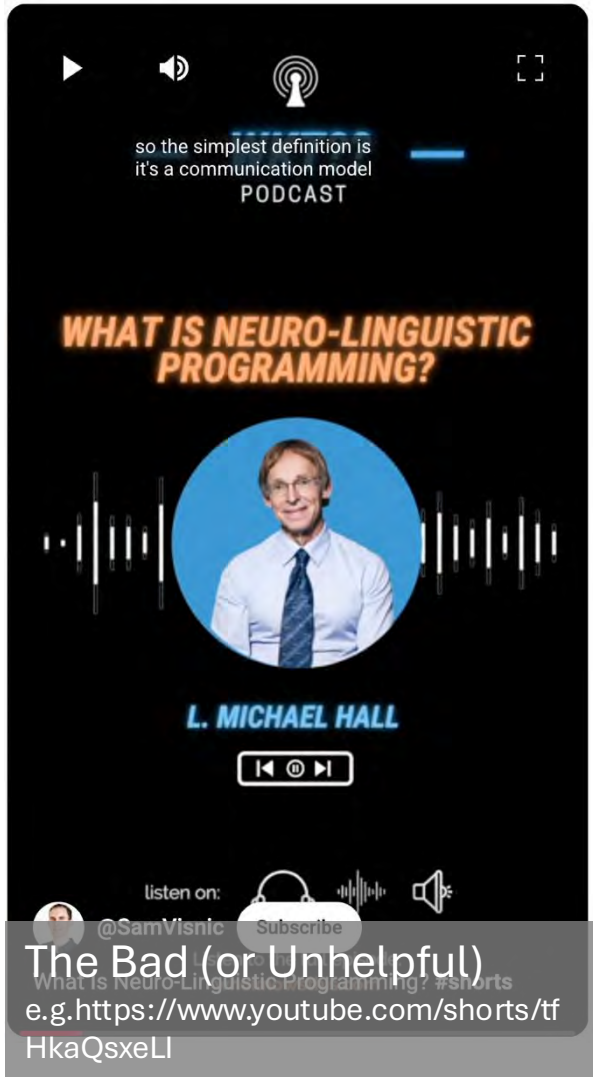
NLP – the Perils of acronyms!

(And the bots that love them and other AI keywords)



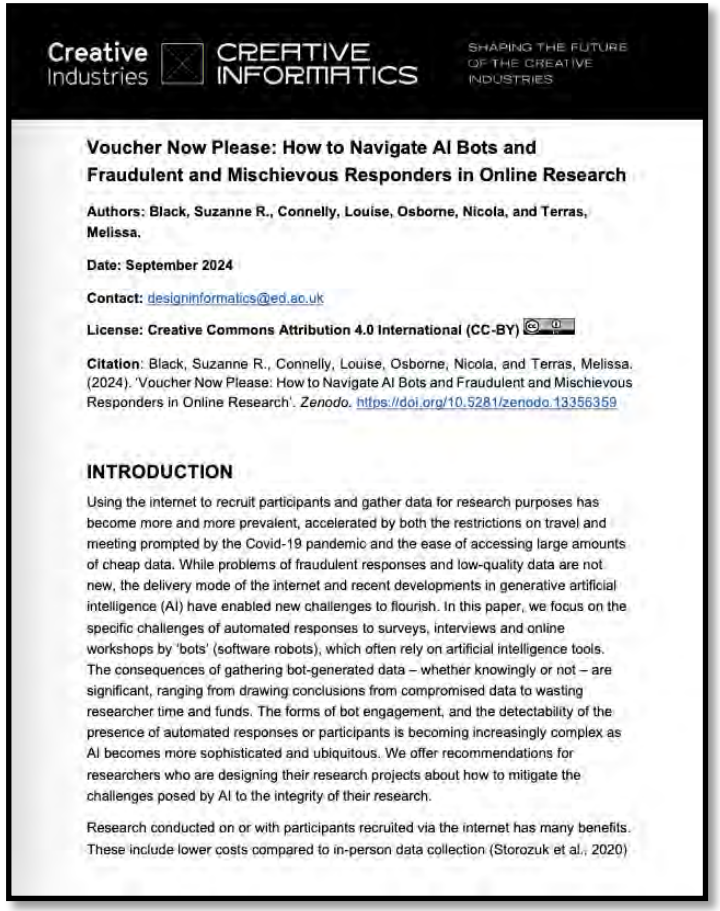
The Good

e.g.https://www.tiktok.com/@easy.daisy0/video/7511051759419395330



The Bad (or Unhelpful)

e.g.https://www.youtube.com/shorts/tfHkaQsxeLI



Creative Industries | CREATIVE INFORMATICS — SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Voucher Now Please: How to Navigate AI Bots and Fraudulent and Mischievous Responders in Online Research

Authors: Black, Suzanne R., Connelly, Louise, Osborne, Nicola, and Terras, Melissa.

Date: September 2024

Contact: designinformatics@ed.ac.uk

License: Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC-BY)

Citation: Black, Suzanne R., Connelly, Louise, Osborne, Nicola, and Terras, Melissa. (2024). 'Voucher Now Please: How to Navigate AI Bots and Fraudulent and Mischievous Responders in Online Research'. *Zenodo*. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13356359

INTRODUCTION

Using the internet to recruit participants and gather data for research purposes has become more and more prevalent, accelerated by both the restrictions on travel and meeting prompted by the Covid-19 pandemic and the ease of accessing large amounts of cheap data. While problems of fraudulent responses and low-quality data are not new, the delivery mode of the internet and recent developments in generative artificial intelligence (AI) have enabled new challenges to flourish. In this paper, we focus on the specific challenges of automated responses to surveys, interviews and online workshops by 'bots' (software robots), which often rely on artificial intelligence tools. The consequences of gathering bot-generated data – whether knowingly or not – are significant, ranging from drawing conclusions from compromised data to wasting researcher time and funds. The forms of bot engagement, and the detectability of the presence of automated responses or participants is becoming increasingly complex as AI becomes more sophisticated and ubiquitous. We offer recommendations for researchers who are designing their research projects about how to mitigate the challenges posed by AI to the integrity of their research.

Research conducted on or with participants recruited via the internet has many benefits. These include lower costs compared to in-person data collection (Storozuk et al., 2020)

The Ugly (bots)

(see: Black et al 2024)

Dance your PhD 2026



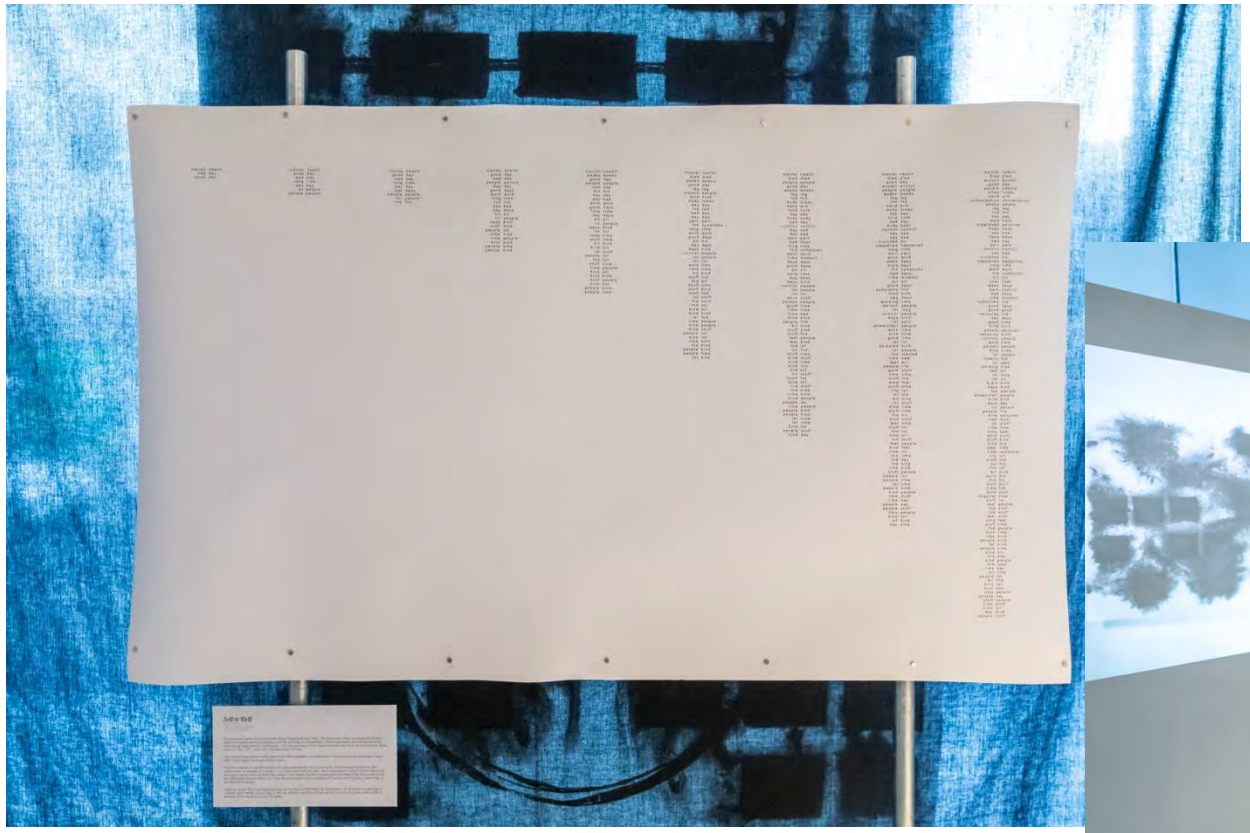
Overall Winner and Physics Winner: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWHdiLdemXQ

Dance your PhD 2026 – (new) Special AI Prize



Special AI Prize Winner: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvOIIWD7vso

Public Engagement through artistic works: Andrew Brooks: FND Stories





https://www.ajb-art.com/fnd-stories

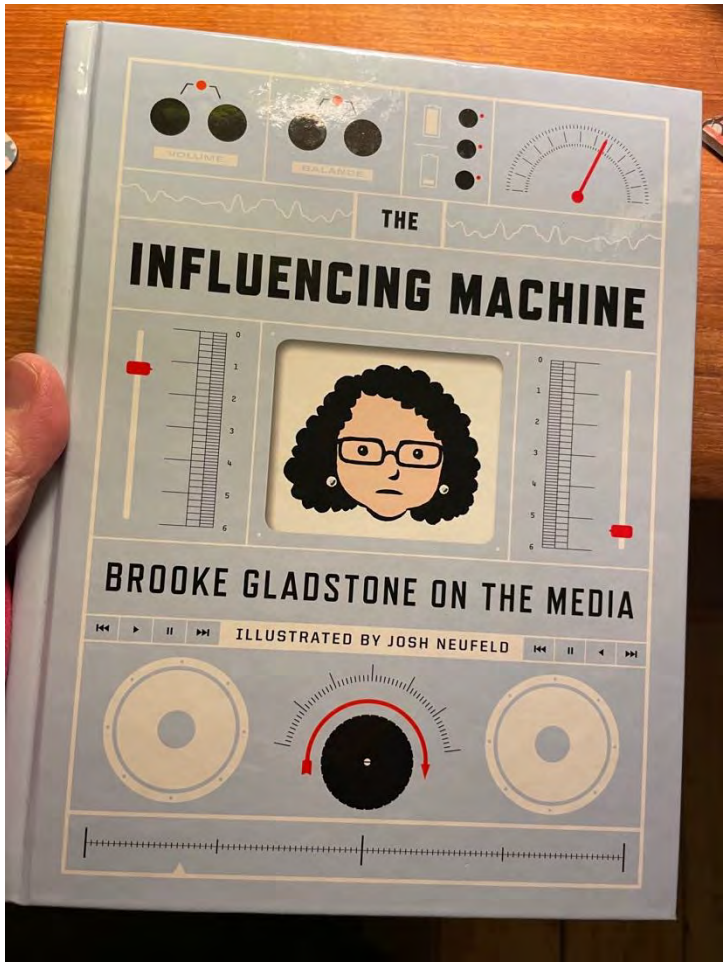
BRAID: The Tipping Point: Artist Responses to AI





https://braiduk.org/tipping-point
https://inspace.ed.ac.uk/tipping-point/
https://vimeo.com/manage/showcases/11850480

Comics/graphic novels



Gladstone and Neufeld (2011)



Nazir et al (2016)

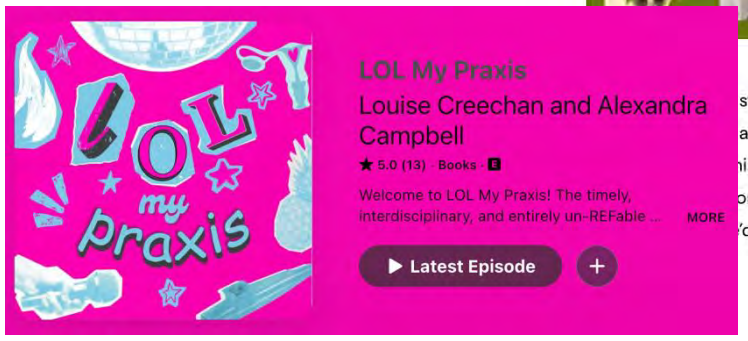


Inglis and Cramb 2021.
See also Inglis (2021)

Podcasts (& Broadcast)



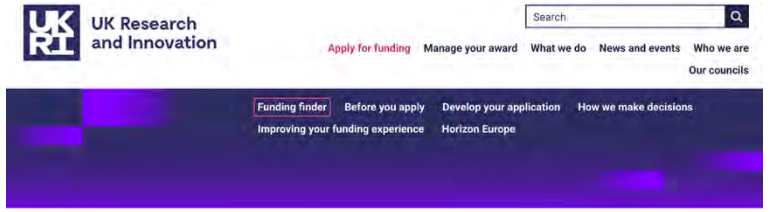
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001wjf8



https://podcasts.apple.com/gb/podcast/lol-my-praxis/id1536775862



https://radiolab.org/podcast/the-immortal-life-of-henrietta-lacks



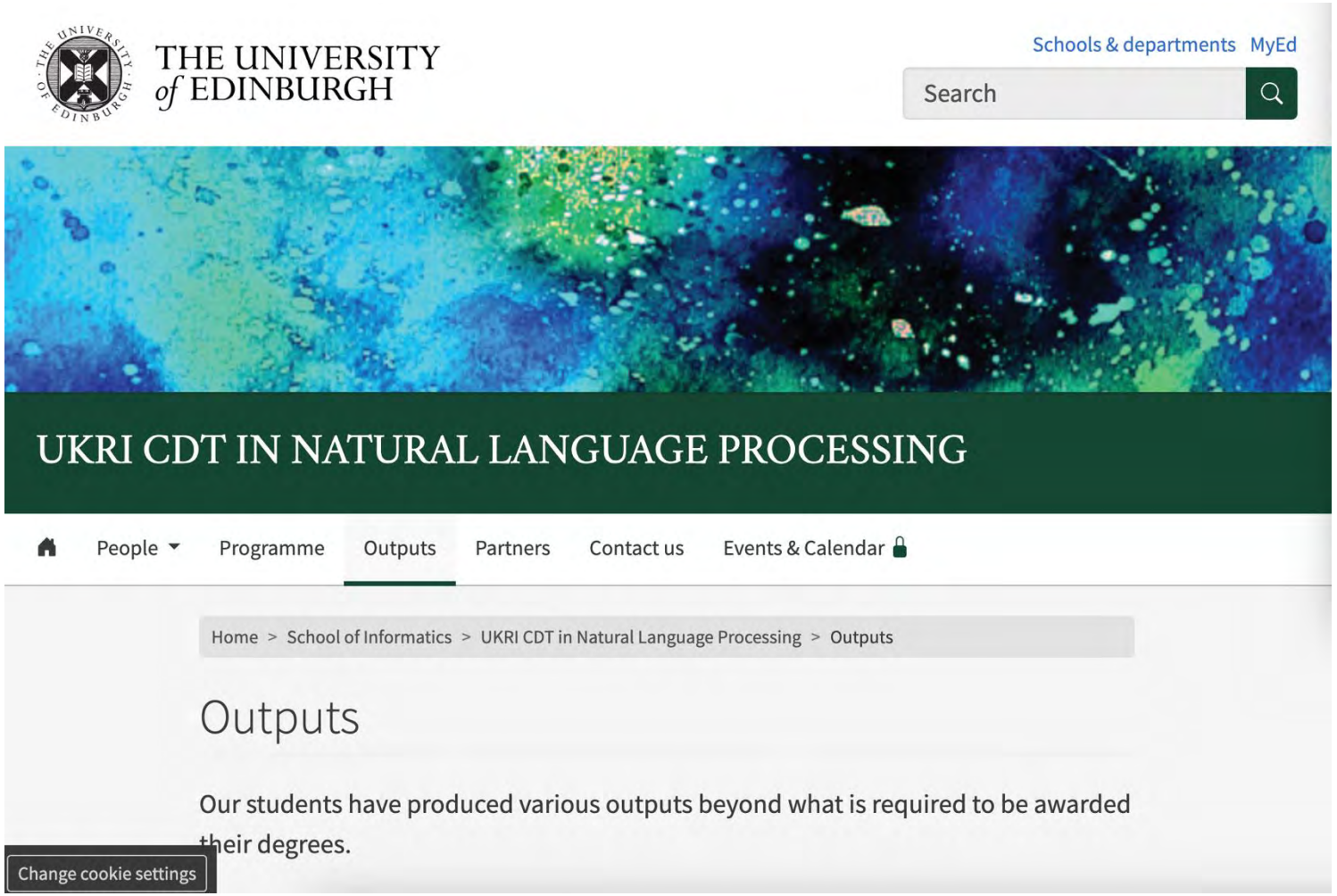


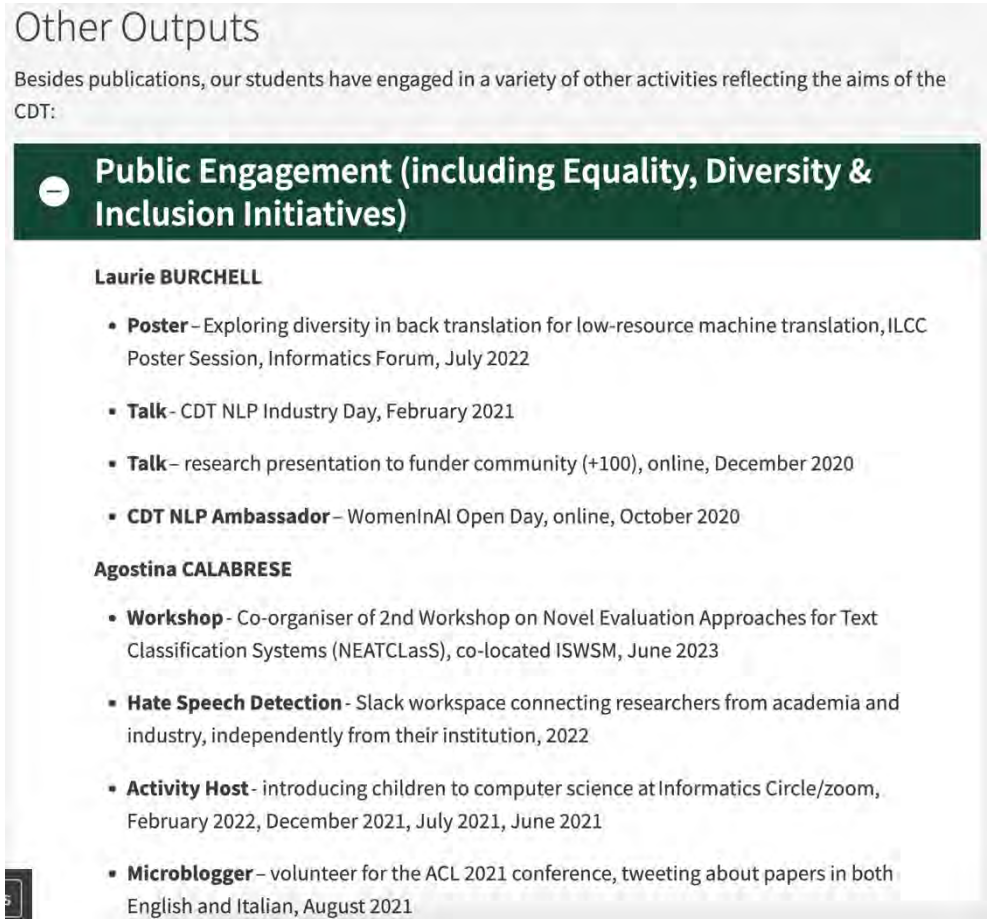
https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/ahrc-and-bbc-new-generation-thinkers-2026/



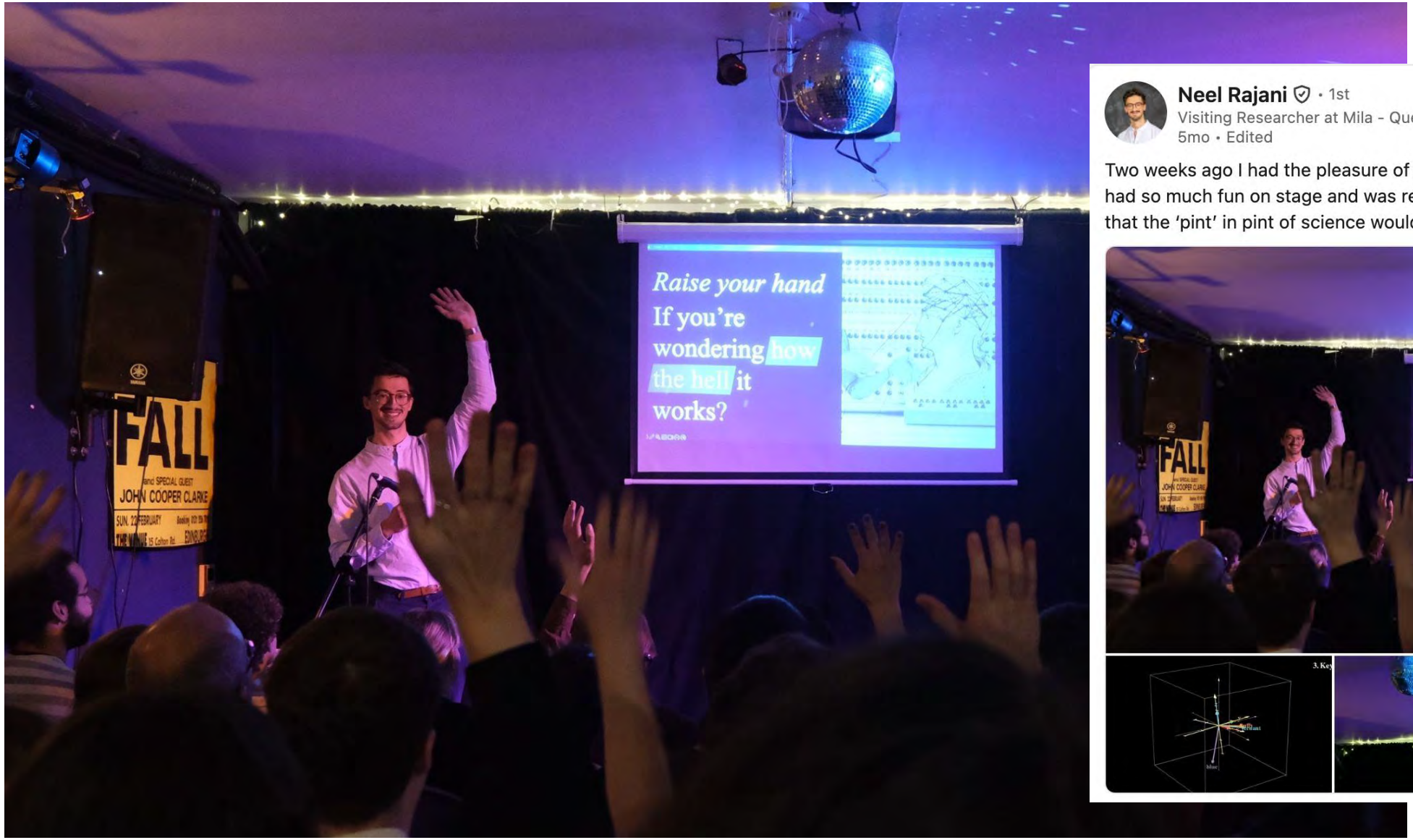
https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b015sqc7

Some examples of what previous PhD students have done…





https://informatics.ed.ac.uk/ukri-cdt-in-natural-language-processing/outputs





Neel Rajani (Cohort 1) at Pint of Science, May 2026
See: https://lnkd.in/p/eV6ZtJPC



Designing Responsible NLP Partner Summit 2026













Designing Responsible NLP at Doors Open Day 2025 (EFI & Inspace)

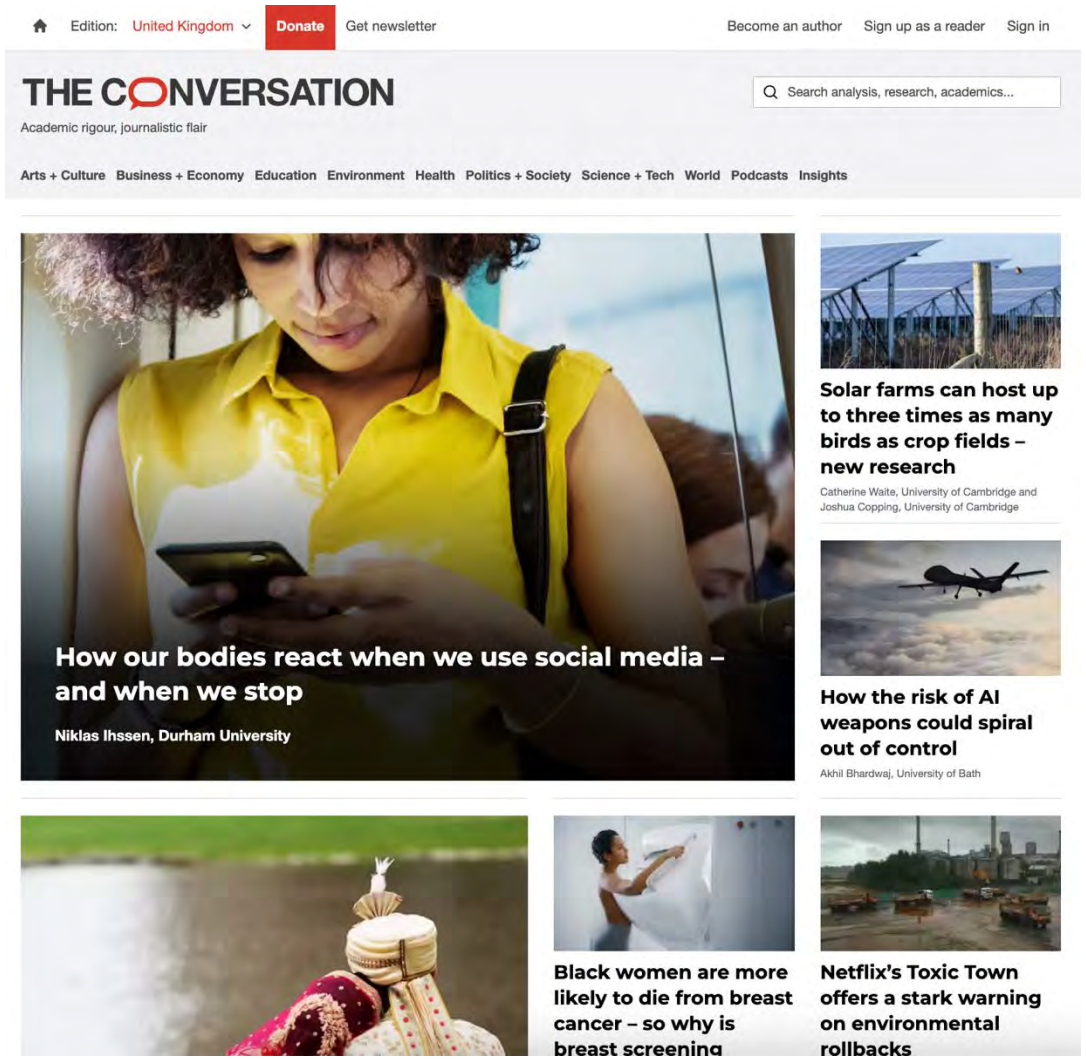
Planning Public Engagement Activity

1. **What is your purpose in engaging the public?** Are you trying to change their mind, to share something new, to bring them into a conversation about your work? What would success look like?
2. **Who is the intended audience/community you want to engage?** (The ‘general public’ is too broad an audience for almost any public engagement activity.)
3. **Where can you find that audience?** What is the right kind of space (physical or virtual) to find them? Can you go to them where they are?
4. **What does your audience know already?** What expectations or possible misunderstandings might they bring in? Will they be receptive? Do you need to plan for a difficult situation? (e.g. Holder 2014)
5. **What is your audience’s cultural context – will they relate to what you want to do?** Does it pose any risks or challenges for them?

Planning Public Engagement Activity

6. **How will you communicate your work and involve your audience in it?** What's the right format for this activity? What are the limitations (practical, financial, technological, etc.) on what is possible?
7. **Ethics - do we need formal ethics approval?** Be aware that perspectives vary on this especially where no data collection takes place. (Garcia Iglesias et al 2024)
8. **Practical planning – what do you have?** What do you need? Do you need other people to support you?
9. **What are the key messages you want you audience to take away?** How will you ensure that they do?
10. **How will you document, evaluate and capture impact of your activity?** Does this change anything about your ethics or delivery approach?
11. **Will this be a one-off or are you beginning an ongoing conversation?** If its ongoing, how will you sustain that and manage expectations around your time or availability.

The Conversation

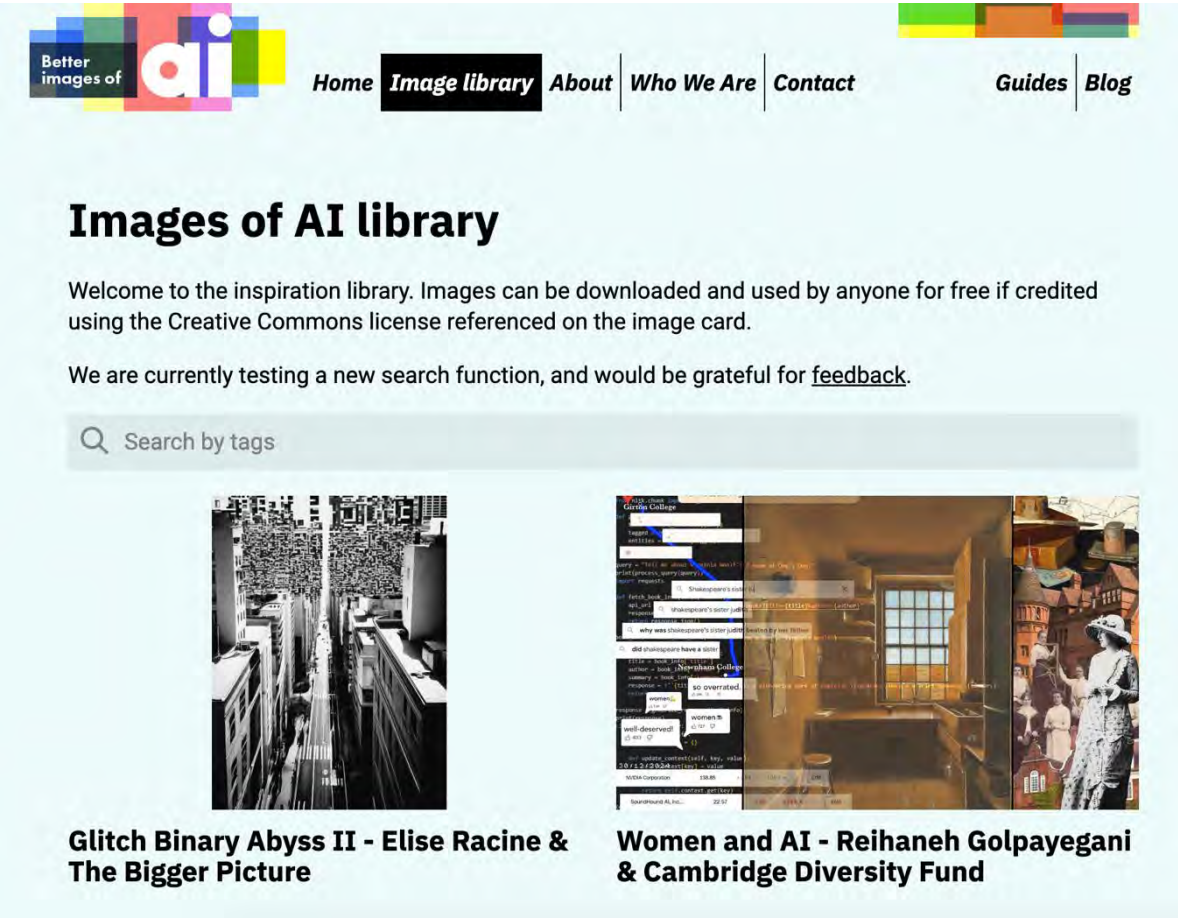


https://theconversation.com/

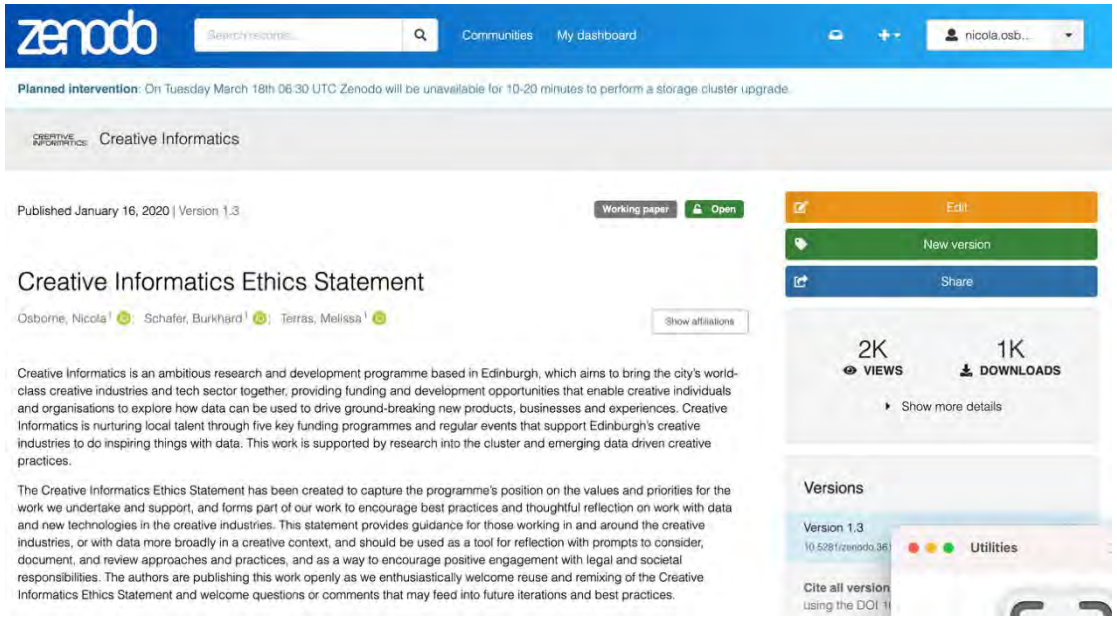


https://theconversation.com/our-research-on-dark-web-forums-reveals-the-growing-threat-of-ai-generated-child-abuse-images-249067

Engagement through open resources

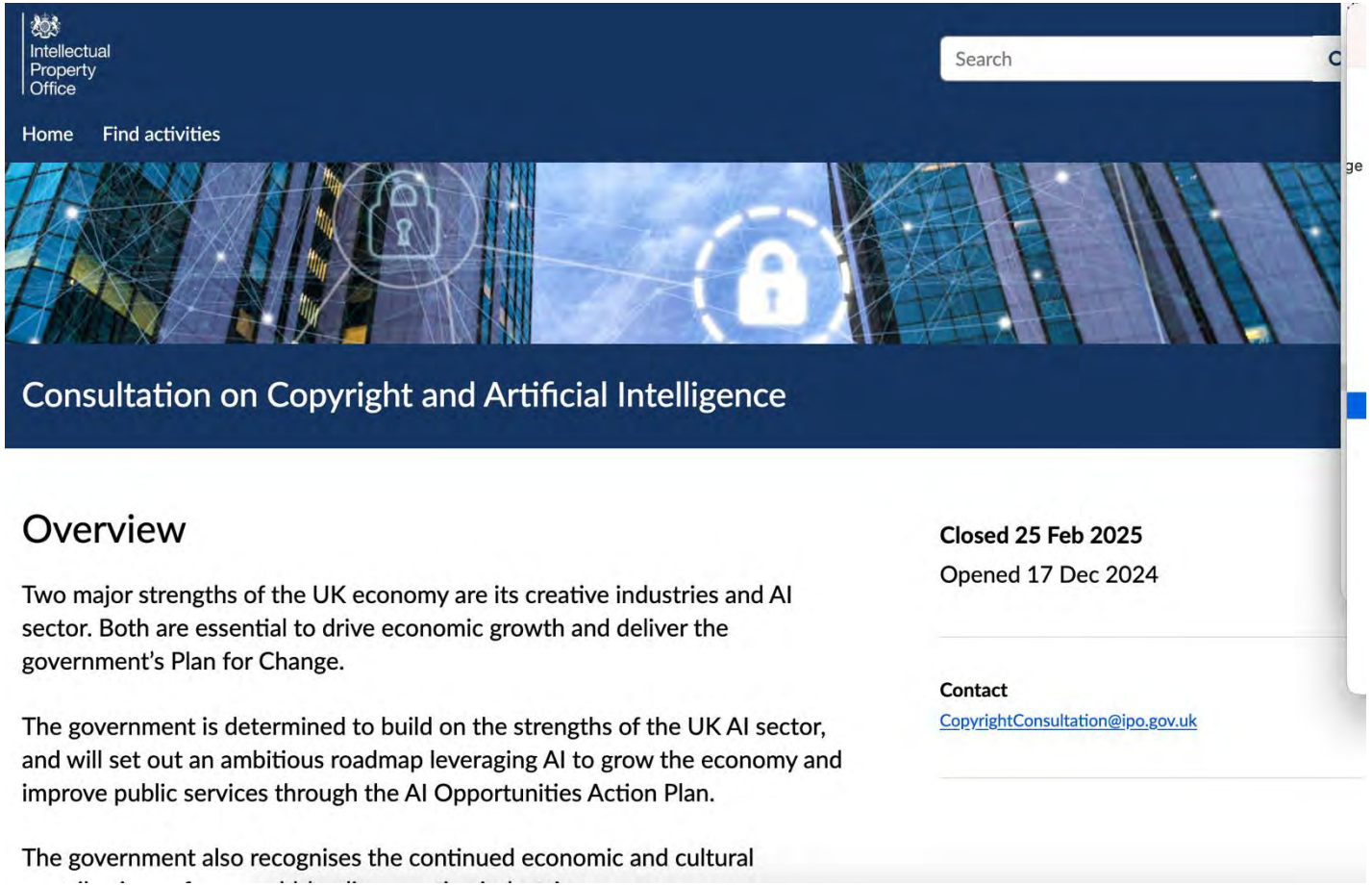


https://betterimagesofai.org/



https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.11260235

Public Engagement through contributions to policy



Examples of UoE related. responses:

DECaDE – UKRI Centre for the Decentralised Digital Economy (2025) DECaDE's Response to the UK Government Open Consultation on Copyright and Artificial Intelligence. DECaDE website, 11 Feb 2025. https://decade.ac.uk/2025/02/27/the-future-of-ai-and-copyright-law-decades-response-to-uk-government-consultation/

Jones, B., Strait, A., Parnell, B.-A., Horzyk, A. M., & Perez, J. (2025). Journalism and generative AI: data, deals and disruption in the news media. Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14968195

Osborne, N., Parkinson, C. A., Terras, M., & Cruz, J. (2025). Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh Response to the UK Government Intellectual Property Office Consultation: Copyright and Artificial Intelligence. Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15002867

Sichani, A.-M., Westenberger, P., Bryan-Kinns, N., Bunz, M., Collett, C., Heravi, B., Miltner, K. M., Moruzzi, C., & Townsend, B. A. (2025). BRAID researchers' response to UK Government copyright and AI consultation. Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14945987

https://ipoconsultations.citizenspace.com/ipo/consultation-on-copyright-and-ai/

Policy Engagement case study: AI and Elections in the Representation of the People Bill – Jamie Hancock

Any Initial Questions?

Quick Comfort Break (and or/viewing moment)



Capturing & Evaluating Public Engagement

You are expected to participate in at least one public engagement activity per year and will be expected to report on this. Think about:

- **Documentation** of the event (with permissions)
- **Recording how many people you engaged** and (if possible) some idea of **who they were**/what their backgrounds are
- **Capturing feedback** from participants and/or your reflections and learnings on what went well/less well, areas for improvement etc.
- **Recording any coverage/media/social media commentary and immediate impacts** of follow ups, invitations to speak, collaborations or interest in further discussion of your work, etc.
- Consider **how you might capture long term impacts** both on your audience, and on your research (see eg Wellcome Trust 2014)

There is a great set of how to guides on planning and evaluating Public Engagement on the UoE Engagement for Impact Hub: https://uoe.sharepoint.com/sites/EngagementforImpactHub

Public Engagement Reporting

researchfish by interfolio

Creative Informatics: Data Driven Innovation for the Creative Industries

Lead Research Organisation: University of Edinburgh
Department Name: Edinburgh College of Art

Go back

Overview | Organisations | People | Publications | Outcomes

- Artistic and Creative Products
- Key Findings
- Impact Summary
- Policy Influence
- Further Funding
- Research Databases and Models
- Collaboration
- Software and Technical Products
- Engagement

Description	"Bootstrapping data processes within the arts: creative Informatics" Conference Paper, at Digital Heritage in a World of Big Data, Stirling University, 14th May 2019
Form Of Engagement Activity	A talk or presentation
Part Of Official Scheme?	No
Geographic Reach	National
Primary Audience	Professional Practitioners
Results and Impact	50 attendees at a Conference at Stirling University to discuss big data in cultural heritage. This was a talk I gave, which sparked many questions and discussions afterwards.
Year(s) Of Engagement Activity	2019
URL	https://digitalheritageconference.wordpress.com/programme-2/

https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=AH%2FS002782%2F1

HESA

OPEN DATA | DATA COLLECTION | SUPPORT | ABOUT

Support » Definitions and data standards » HE Business and Community Interaction

Definitions: HE - Business and Community Interaction

+ HE Business and Community Interactions coverage
+ Higher education provider identifiers.

REF2014 impact case studies (Research Excellence Framework)

About | How to search | FAQs | API | Terms of Use | REF2014 Home

Search again:
Search a case study.... Search

Submitting Institution: Edinburgh (University of)

REF impact found *227* Case Studies

Currently displayed text from case study: Summary of the impact Refresh

Actual Analytics Ltd: automated processing of video data to reduce the use of laboratory animals in scientific research

Summary of the impact

Series of images from animal behaviour studies contain vast quantities of complex and highly valuable data. Extracting the value from this scientific data often requires expert annotation. This is frequently an intuitive process based on experience gained through years of training to make

Read More

Submitting Institution
University of Edinburgh

Unit of Assessment
Computer Science and Informatics

Filter Impact Case Studies

Submitting Institution: Edinburgh (University of) (227)
Show only Joint Submissions
Unit of Assessment: All Units of Assessment (227)
Summary Impact Type: All Impact Types (227)
Research Subject Area: All Subject Areas (227)

A Few Gotchas…

- **Podcasts** are great, **but don't try to start a new one** – the time commitment involved to make a good one is huge. Do look for opportunities to contribute to others' though.
- **Communities are ongoing, research projects and PhDs are time limited** – manage expectations realistically – trust is hard to build and easy to destroy
- **Budget and plan realistically** – there is typically little additional/flexible budget for public engagement unless embedded in project / research plans
- **Social media** – can be used brilliantly for public engagement if you know your community/audience well and where they hang out. It no longer works as a broad public forum (e.g. as in early days of Twitter). Only suits some types of content and bots and platform policies makes AI a challenging topic.
- **Video** content always takes about 5 times+ longer to make than you expect… But can be impactful.
- **Remember to note what you've done** – it builds up quickly and helps you demonstrate that you are making an impact with your work!













Designing Responsible NLP at Edinburgh Science Festival 2025

Workshop: Find the public engagement story

In twos or threes:

Think about a core NLP concept you might want to communicate to a public audience – it might be technical (e.g. how LLMs understand prompts) or something related to how NLP works (e.g. training data bias). It doesn't need to be your research and can be something quite high level.

Imagine you are presenting this to an audience at the Edinburgh Science Festival – mixed age and background, general interest in AI and its impact on their life. Think about:

1. How would you share this? What might it look like?

2. How would they engage with your exhibit/ideas/you? What would the 'hook' be?

3. What would you want them to take away in terms of understanding? And how would you know this had happened? Would there be some form of takeaway or follow up?

4. How would you capture what happened? And who you engaged with?

Workshop: Find the public engagement story

Feedback from each group

Any other thoughts and questions on this?

What to Expect over the next few months

- **Science festival details will be confirmed** – keep an eye out for imminent emails, including schedules for preparing ideas, training, and to chat through ideas.
- We are planning a **workshop with comedian Susan Morrison** of The Provocateurs, Bright Club etc. to provide further support for sharing your ideas with the public (date in early 2027 TBC).
- We will be working with support from a designer, and there will be opportunities to work with our Research Software Engineer and EFI workshop colleagues to develop your ideas. If you need other kinds of support, let us know.
- Other opportunities to engage wider publics with your work will be circulated, including industry and public-facing events – but do also let us know if you need support with opportunities you find.

Questions?

If you have questions later I’m happy to set up a time to chat, and can also be reached via email and/or the CDT mailbox.

Resources: Local Training

- Development for Postgraduate Researchers: https://doctoral-college.ed.ac.uk/postgraduate-researcher-and-career-development
- Research Office – Public Engagement with Research: https://research-office.ed.ac.uk/public-engagement-with-research
- Edinburgh Innovations Engage Training – online learning resource on working with industry (for staff): https://uoe-edinburgh-innovations.ed.ac.uk/for-staff/training-and-events/engage
- Edinburgh Innovations Student Training offers: https://uoe-edinburgh-innovations.ed.ac.uk/for-students
- If participating in The Provocateurs (previously called, The Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas), you are encouraged to participate in a series of "bootcamps" – performance and show development training. See: https://www.provocateurs.uk/
- Resource: Osborne, N., & McDonald, C. (2025). Responding to Policy Consultations: An ekip How-To Guide (Version 1.0). ekip. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15592302

Resources: Organisations and Communities

- Research Office (ERO) Public Engagement with Research: https://research-office.ed.ac.uk/public-engagement-with-research
- UoE Engagement for Impact Hub: https://uoe.sharepoint.com/sites/EngagementforImpactHub
- BIG STEM Communications Network: https://www.big.uk.com/
- National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement: https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/ including a set of case studies: https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/learn-others/case-studies
- UKRI CDT in NLP (previous UoE CDT) public engagement archive: https://informatics.ed.ac.uk/ukri-cdt-in-natural-language-processing/outputs
- UKRI CDT in NLP public engagement and outreach resources: https://web.inf.ed.ac.uk/cdt/natural-language-processing/practicalities/public-engagement-and-outreach
- Pscicomm (mailing list): https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=PSCI-COM
- EUSEA: European Science Engagement Association: https://eusea.info/
- European Citizen Science Association: https://www.ecsa.ngo/
- Better Images of AI: https://betterimagesofai.org/
- Beltane Public Engagement Network (dormant but useful resources and examples: https://www.beltanenetwork.org/
- Edinburgh Research Office (where public engagement team now based): https://research-office.ed.ac.uk/
- Binks Hub: https://binks-hub.ed.ac.uk/

Resources: Opportunities

- 3 Minute Thesis ™: https://vitae.ac.uk/support-services/vitae-three-minute-thesis-3mt-competition/
- The Provocateurs (previously The Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas): https://www.provocateurs.uk/ - coordinated through Charlie Pike at ERO (Edinburgh Research Office: https://research-office.ed.ac.uk/)
- Edinburgh Science / Edinburgh Science Festival: https://www.edinburghscience.co.uk/ - UoE activities are usually coordinated through Charlie Pike and Fiona Murray at ERO (Edinburgh Research Office: https://research-office.ed.ac.uk) I'm a Scientist Get Me Out of Here: https://imascientist.org.uk/
- Explorathon: https://www.explorathon.co.uk/
- Pint of Science: https://pintofscience.co.uk/ inc. Edinburgh details: https://pintofscience.co.uk/events/edinburgh
- Being Human Festival: https://www.beinghumanfestival.org/
- Festival of Social Sciences: https://festivalofsocialscience.com/
- Science Magazine's annual Dance Your PhD competition (includes an AI and a Social Sciences winner): https://www.science.org/content/page/announcing-annual-dance-your-ph-d-contest
- Scottish AI Summit (accepts proposals for panels and sessions): https://www.scottishaisummit.com/ (no further dates confirmed at present)
- UK Science Festivals Network: https://sciencefestivals.uk/festival/
- UKRI Next Generation Thinkers: https://www.ukri.org/opportunity/new-generation-thinkers-2025/
- Diverse AI – opportunities for engagement, speaking etc. often shared in Slack, sign up via: https://www.diverse-ai.org/
- Science is a Drag – Canadian STEM themed drag: https://www.scienceisadrag.com/
- Bright Club Edinburgh (on hiatus): https://brightclubedinburgh.blogspot.com/

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Dance Your PhD Winners 2026

- Overall Winner and Physics category winner: Sofia Papa, Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies's Biorobotics Institute, "Piezoelectric Polymer Materials for Printed Wearable Ultrasound Transducers": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UWHdiLdemXQ
- Biology category winner: Laura Ihalainen, University of Eastern Finland, "Quantifying the benefits and cost-effectiveness of Real-Ear Measurements (REM) for hearing aid fitting": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeWYxuao89M
- Chemistry winner: Dina Haddad, University of Cambridge, "Extraction of Cell-Free DNA using Magnetic Nanoparticles for Urine Biopsy": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxZNo6WWGLU
- Social Sciences category winner: Asia Kaiser, University of Colorado Boulder, "The Landscape and Socioecological Drivers of Insect Biodiversity in Cities": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SMuD4qh8lQE
- Special AI Prize Winner: Kate Kondrateva, Maastricht University, "Why tumors 'light up' on contrast MRI: gadolinium delivered by blood shortens T1 relaxation, increasing signal on T1-weighted images": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvOIIWD7vso