



Job Description

Job title	Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Digital News
Division	Social Sciences
Department	Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (within Department of Politics and International Relations)
Location	13 Norham Gardens, Oxford, OX2 6PS
Grade and salary	Grade 7: £36,024 - £44,263 per annum
Hours	Full time
Contract type	Fixed term until 31 August 2025
Reporting to	RISJ Director of Research – Dr Richard Fletcher
Vacancy reference	168935
Additional information	Closing date – midday (UK time) on Monday 27 November 2023. Interviews will be held on towards the end of w/c 4 December 2023.

The role

The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism (RISJ), part of the Department of Politics and International Relations, is seeking to appoint a post-doctoral researcher to work for up to two years ending August 2025 as part of a larger project aimed at the quantitative analysis of news audiences across a sample of more than forty countries, with a particular emphasis on digital media, news, and politics.

We are looking for a colleague who can take responsibility for and deliver on distinct parts of a larger project to advance our understanding of how journalism and news audiences are changing in different contexts considering the rise of digital media. Applicants should be keen to contribute relevant insights to the news industry and the journalistic profession as well as rigorous academic analysis of substantially important questions concerning digital media and their implications. The position is an exceptional chance to be part of one of the largest international studies of journalism and news in the world.



The purpose of the larger project is to develop a better understanding of media developments in different countries (and their implications), including the interplay between analogue and digital media and the relation between news provision and news consumption. The project output includes both academic publications and publications oriented primarily at media industry professionals, practicing journalists, and policy-maker audiences.

The individual appointed will be working with Institute Director Rasmus Nielsen and with Senior Research Fellow Richard Fletcher as part of the wider project, which expands our ongoing, annual Reuters Institute Digital News Report (www.digitalnewsreport.org) and our wider Reuters Institute research activities.

We are particularly interested in a new colleague who can help us develop our understanding of audiences' engagement with and perception of news and media. More specifically, how can data from the Digital News Report survey, additional quantitative data from other sources, and other quantitative research methods help us understand how people around the world engage with news and media, what their attitudes are towards journalism and digital technology, and what political, social, and other factors influence their news and media use? Specific research topics could include:

- Trust in the news
- News avoidance
- New technology and news use
- Participation and interaction with news
- Platforms and news use
- Misinformation, disinformation and the news
- News, politics and polarization

The Research Fellow appointed will take responsibility for a particular area but also be part of the wider project team including the principal investigators, the project coordinator, a team of other Oxford-based researchers, as well as a wider network of outside partners from both the academy and the media industry, all as part of the larger project.

Responsibilities

- To work with colleagues on developing an appropriate methodological approach to one of the issues highlighted above.
- To arrange and conduct the empirical research necessary for the implementation and execution of this approach.
- To work with colleagues on analysing and interpreting the data considering contextual background provided by the wider project and other people's research.
- To liaise with other team members and project partners on getting advice and input on the research design, data analysis, and conclusions.
- To develop academic publications and other project output based on the research done.
- To develop ideas for further research (including ideas for generating research income) and to present detailed research proposals to the principal investigators for future work in this area.
- To produce first drafts of parts of project outputs and work closely with other RISJ colleagues to finalize each output.

- To prepare a range of presentation materials suitable for external events, conferences, and for project partners and sponsors.
- To represent the RISJ at external events/conferences, either with other members of the RISJ or alone.
- To work with other project researchers, the project coordinator, and the principal investigators on other aspects of the wider project, and work with the rest of the RISJ staff as part of the everyday life of the institute.

Selection criteria

Essential

- Hold a relevant PhD/DPhil (or be close to completion) or equivalent experience in a substantive area of political or other social science including journalism/media studies, communication, sociology, or data science;
- Experience in working with relevant quantitative methods and analysis and extensive training in survey research and quantitative analysis using statistical software (e.g. SPSS, Stata, or R)
- Familiarity with the existing literature and work;
- A record of relevant research and writing achievement at an international level, including peer-reviewed publications in journalism studies media/communication research, sociology, computational social science/data science, or other social sciences;
- Excellent written, editing, and verbal communication skills, demonstrating the potential to write and present at an international level. The candidate should be able to distil information rapidly from a wide range of sources and use initiative in writing, research, and collaboration with other partners;
- The skills, flexibility and commitment to be a fully participating member of the RISJ and to help build its international presence and research output.
- A desire to work as part of a larger team with other researchers, principal investigators, and outside partners.
- A commitment to the Reuters Institute's mission of connecting research with the issues faced by news media and journalists around the world.

Desirable

- Detailed knowledge of the literature and debates on trends in media use and news consumption around the world;
- Familiarity with the existing literature and work in the field of comparative/international media research;
- Documented active involvement in relevant international academic communities;
- A record of work on digital media and journalism;
- Experience of combining different research methods;
- An interest in international comparative research that bridges academic, practitioner, and policy communities;
- Proficiency in several languages

Pre-employment screening

Standard checks

If you are offered the post, the offer will be subject to standard pre-employment checks. You will be asked to provide: proof of your right-to-work in the UK; proof of your identity; and (if we haven't done so already) we will contact the referees you have nominated. You will also be asked to complete a health declaration so that you can tell us about any health conditions or disabilities for which you may need us to make appropriate adjustments.

Please read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures at:

<https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/pre-employment-checks>

About the University of Oxford

Welcome to the University of Oxford. We aim to lead the world in research and education for the benefit of society both in the UK and globally. Oxford's researchers engage with academic, commercial and cultural partners across the world to stimulate high-quality research and enable innovation through a broad range of social, policy and economic impacts.

We believe our strengths lie both in empowering individuals and teams to address fundamental questions of global significance, while providing all our staff with a welcoming and inclusive workplace that enables everyone to develop and do their best work. Recognising that diversity is our strength, vital for innovation and creativity, we aspire to build a truly diverse community which values and respects every individual's unique contribution.

While we have long traditions of scholarship, we are also forward-looking, creative and cutting-edge. Oxford is one of Europe's most entrepreneurial universities and we rank first in the UK for university spin-outs, and in recent years we have spun out 15-20 new companies every year. We are also recognised as leaders in support for social enterprise.

Join us and you will find a unique, democratic and international community, a great range of staff benefits and access to a vibrant array of cultural activities in the beautiful city of Oxford.

For more information, please visit www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation.

The Department of Politics and International Relations

Politics and International Relations at Oxford University have a long and distinguished history in the education of leading figures in academia, politics, the media and public life, both in the UK and internationally. Teaching and research activities in this area were combined in 2000 to create a Department of Politics and International Relations. With around 90 academic staff, the Department is one of the largest departments internationally and consistently ranks first in The Times and The Guardian university guides for the subject. It is home to major research projects, a vibrant community of academic visitors, and a strong group of post-doctoral researchers, supported by highly competitive research fellowships, working in the full range of disciplinary sub-fields.

The department attracts some of the best academics in the field to work here as permanent faculty, as part of major research projects or as academic visitors. There is a strong post- doctoral group supported by highly competitive research fellowships and working across a broad range of fields.

The Department is located in the Social Sciences building at Manor Road, along with the Department of Economics, the Centres for Criminology and Socio-Legal Studies, and the integrated Social Science Library. The building provides excellent facilities including a lecture theatre, a large computer laboratory and a range of seminar rooms as well as a cafeteria and common room for use by both staff and students. The Manor Road Building is served by a shared IT and web team.

An experienced Professional Services function supports the department's research and teaching activities. The department's core Professional Service is grouped into teams that provide dedicated support for: Courses, Research, Finance, HR, and Communications & Alumni Relations. The administrative teams work closely with each other as well as with staff in other parts of the University, in particular with the Social Sciences division, Personnel Services, and Research Services, as well as with the University's many colleges.

For further information, please visit: <https://www.politics.ox.ac.uk>

The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism

The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism was established in 2006 with core funding from the Thomson Reuters Foundation to bring to the University the study of journalism and its relationship to matters of public policy, politics and wider social and cultural trends.

The Institute is an integral part of the Department of Politics and International Relations. The Institute incorporates the Journalist Fellowship Programme which began in 1983 and is affiliated with Green Templeton College. The Institute is located in Green Templeton College premises in Norham Gardens and is supported by its own administrative staff. The Institute has a Steering Committee, which includes representatives outside the University from the world of journalism. It is accountable to the General Purposes Committee and to the Head of the Department of Politics and International Relations.

The Institute is committed to the rigorous, international, comparative study of journalism. It pursues this through:

- **Research Programmes**, which provide timely, accessible, and evidence-based independent analysis of issues facing journalism and news media around the world, and include a series of RISJ publications, as well as more specialised academic articles and book-length treatments of important topics.
- The **Journalist Fellowship Programme**, which brings high calibre mid-career practising journalists to Oxford and offers them a period of reflection and an opportunity to carry out a piece of relevant in-depth research, away from the pressure of tight deadlines.
- **Leadership Programmes**, which gather editors, executives, and journalists in leadership roles in small, intimate, off-the-record settings to engage with each other, exchange best practices and lessons learned, and benefit from current research relevant to the challenges they face.

Research:

The Institute is expanding its research activity and its research strategy is currently organised around three broad areas of focus:

- *Relationships between Journalism and Democracy and Accountability* – including journalism's role in holding power to account; issues around international news providers and the trust placed in them; the

role of the media in societies undergoing radical political transformation; identifying the most important elements of journalism for the functioning of a democratic society; and examining the impact of different political systems on the ability of journalism to perform its role.

- *The Business of Journalism* – involving comparative assessment of the financial pressures on journalism in a range of countries, the responses to those pressures, and the implications of each for the long term future of quality journalism and its democratic functions. This area also includes work on regulatory frameworks for and different forms of intervention in journalism and media markets.
- *The Evolving Practice of Journalism* – including issues such as journalism as a profession and what that means in different countries; the impact of the rise of citizen journalism; blogging and social media; the particular issues posed by specific forms of journalism, e.g. business journalism; journalism and PR; and science and environmental reporting, where journalists often have to act as translators between specialists and a wider public.

The news media have, within the last decade or so, been disrupted by huge and fast-moving changes in the economic and technological models that had been in place for generations or more. The growth of social media, new players and new platforms has changed journalism forever as well as creating an existential threat to forms of news. The ability of billions of people to publish has created a vast amount of unreliable - and fake - news which now competes with more established forms of journalism. The RISJ must have a powerful voice in the debates around where journalism is going and how it is practised. In addition to chronicling these dramatic changes, RISJ should help illuminate the road ahead by communicating directly with communities of journalists who are at the sharp end of the digital revolution.

Further information about the RISJ can be found at: <https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/>.

Social Sciences Division

Oxford is a world-leading centre for research across the disciplines of the social sciences. Characterised by a wide range of methodologies, themes and fields of scholarship, multi-disciplinary research and innovative ideas thrive in an environment underpinned by excellence across the disciplines of the social sciences.

Our approach to supporting research across the Social Sciences Division has been highly successful in the last ten years, with the volume of research awards continuing to rise and the development of a large number of research centres and groupings. Researchers at Oxford receive significant support and guidance in the development of their research, including career development, research and impact funding, research project design and management, and research outputs from academic and administrative colleagues across the University, division and departments.

More information please visit: www.socsci.ox.ac.uk

How to apply

Applications are made through our online recruitment portal. Information about how to apply is available on our Jobs website <https://www.jobs.ox.ac.uk/how-to-apply>.

Your application will be judged solely on the basis of how you demonstrate that you meet the selection criteria stated in the job description.

As part of your application you will be asked to provide details of two referees and indicate whether we can contact them now.

You will be asked to upload a CV and a supporting statement. The supporting statement must explain how you meet each of the selection criteria for the post using examples of your skills and experience. This may include experience gained in employment, education, or during career breaks (such as time out to care for dependants)

Please upload all documents **as PDF files** with your name and the document type in the filename.

All applications must be received by **midday** UK time on the closing date stated in the online advertisement.

Information for priority candidates

A priority candidate is a University employee who is seeking redeployment because they have been advised that they are at risk of redundancy, or on grounds of ill-health/disability. Priority candidates are issued with a redeployment letter by their employing department(s).

If you are a priority candidate, please ensure that you attach your redeployment letter to your application (or email it to the contact address on the advert if the application form used for the vacancy does not allow attachments).

If you need help

Application FAQs, including technical troubleshooting advice is available at:

<https://staff.web.ox.ac.uk/recruitment-support-faqs>

Non-technical questions about this job should be addressed to the recruiting department directly

vacancies@politics.ox.ac.uk

To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: www.recruit.ox.ac.uk.

Please note that you will receive an automated email from our online recruitment portal to confirm receipt of your application. **Please check your spam/junk mail** if you do not receive this email.

Important information for candidates

Data Privacy

Please note that any personal data submitted to the University as part of the job application process will be processed in accordance with the GDPR and related UK data protection legislation. For further information, please see the University's Privacy Notice for Job Applicants at:

<https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/job-applicant-privacy-policy>. The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: <https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/data-protection-policy>.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for very senior research posts at **grade RSIV/D35 and clinical equivalents E62 and E82**, which with effect from 1 October 2023 will be 30 September before the 70th birthday. The justification for this is explained at:

<https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

For **existing** employees on these grades, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/the-ejra>.

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in posts at other grades have to retire. Staff at these grades may elect to retire in accordance with the rules of the applicable pension scheme, as may be amended from time to time.

Equality of opportunity

Entry into employment with the University and progression within employment will be determined only by personal merit and the application of criteria which are related to the duties of each particular post and the relevant salary structure. In all cases, ability to perform the job will be the primary consideration. No applicant or member of staff shall be discriminated against because of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Benefits of working at the University

Employee benefits

University employees enjoy 38 days' paid holiday, generous pension schemes, travel discounts, and a variety of professional development opportunities. Our range of other employee benefits and discounts also includes free entry to the Botanic Gardens and University colleges, and discounts at University museums. See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/staff-benefits>

University Club and sports facilities

Membership of the University Club is free for all University staff. The University Club offers social, sporting, and hospitality facilities. Staff can also use the University Sports Centre on Iffley Road at discounted rates, including a fitness centre, powerlifting room, and swimming pool. See www.club.ox.ac.uk and <https://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/>.

Information for staff new to Oxford

If you are relocating to Oxfordshire from overseas or elsewhere in the UK, the University's Welcome Service website includes practical information about settling in the area, including advice on relocation, accommodation, and local schools. See <https://welcome.ox.ac.uk/>

There is also a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependants. See <https://staffimmigration.admin.ox.ac.uk/visa-loan-scheme>

Family-friendly benefits

With one of the most generous family leave schemes in the Higher Education sector, and a range of flexible working options, Oxford aims to be a family-friendly employer. We also subscribe to the Work+Family Space, a service that provides practical advice and support for employees who have caring responsibilities. The service offers a free telephone advice line, and the ability to book emergency back-up care for children, adult dependents and elderly relatives. See <https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/my-family-care>

The University has excellent childcare services, including five University nurseries as well as University-supported places at many other private nurseries.

For full details, including how to apply and the costs, see <https://childcare.admin.ox.ac.uk/>

Disabled staff

We are committed to supporting members of staff with disabilities or long-term health conditions. For further details, including information about how to make contact, in confidence, with the University's Staff Disability Advisor, see <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/disability-support>

Staff networks

The University has a number of staff networks including the Oxford Research Staff Society, BME staff network, LGBT+ staff network and a disabled staff network. You can find more information at <https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/networks>

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club

The University of Oxford Newcomers' Club is an organisation run by volunteers that aims to assist the partners of new staff settle into Oxford, and provides them with an opportunity to meet people and make connections in the local area. See www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk.