

**COLLABORATIVE DTP STUDENTSHIP 2019**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Pathway title | Journalism and Democracy |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Title of proposed PhD research project | Journalism, Data Literacy and Democratic Futures |
|  |  |  |  |
| Main supervisor | Dr Joanna Redden reddenj@cardiff.ac.uk |
| For this Action Research project the PhD student will work with Privacy International and be supported by Cardiff University’s School of Journalism, Media and Culture as well as the Data Justice Lab located within the School. Throughout the project dialogue and knowledge exchange will be facilitated through by-monthly research meetings between the student, academic supervisors and Privacy International’s executive team. These meetings will be held at PI’s office. Project design and development will be collaborative. Semi-annual workshops will be hosted by PI and held at their offices so the student can present research in progress and gain feedback. The student will spend 25 percent of their work-time at PI’s London office to take advantage of formal and informal opportunities for knowledge sharing. The student will be a contributor and participant in the data literacy events hosted by Privacy International.  This project is informed by Journalism Studies, Critical Data Studies, Politics and Computer Science. The project combines social science methods by analytically mapping current data literacy tools and by using questionnaires, interviews and pre and post use testing to assess the effectiveness of these tools. Critical media making will be employed as the student develops and uses data journalism skills to produce a data literacy package. The project will build upon and advances action research for good by providing a reflexive narration of the strengths and limits of action research to realize data literacy goals. New algorithmically driven systems are being introduced by government and corporate bodies faster than we, as a society, have the capacity to understand and engage with them. This is a problem because research shows that algorithmically driven systems **always** come with risk and error as well as the potential to exacerbate inequality and discrimination. Therefore, datafied societies require more, not less, debate. The challenge is that democratic institutions are struggling to comprehend the implications of changing systems and the legal and regulatory requirements needed. Journalists are struggling with how to research and communicate about these changes in ways that engage and inform citizens who have been largely left out of ongoing debates. Research shows that citizens care about these issues but that they feel powerless to effect change. Without high quality reporting and increased data literacy efforts it is difficult to see how citizens will be empowered to participate in the datafied societies they are part of.Data literacy efforts are underway, but we know little about what works to engage and empower users. The research that does exist suggests that online interactive media tools can be more effective than conventional content in influencing knowledge development and behaviour. The research questions informing this project are: How should journalists communicate about changing data practices to better engage and inform citizens? What role can data literacy tools play in this effort? What are the strengths and limits of current data literacy tools available? What lessons can be learned from reflexive and iterative critical media making about how to build effective data literacy tools and about action research more generally?This project employs a multi-method approach:Stage one will involve surveying previous research and theory to outline what data literacy tools for citizen engagement should do. This involves considering democratic and design principles. Stage two will employ mapping, interviews, questionnaires and pre and post use testing to assess the strengths, limitations and gaps of the online data literacy tools presently available. Stage three the student will enhance their data journalism skills and produce a data literacy package that can be posted online.  |