

# Job Description



Job title	Researcher in Social Science
Division	Social Sciences Division
Department	Oxford Internet Institute
Location	1 St Giles – Oxford – OX1 3JS
Grade and salary	Grade 7: salary £32,236 - £39,609 p.a.
Hours	Full-time (37.5 hours/week)
Contract type	Fixed term 31 August 2020
Reporting to	Prof Vili Lehdonvirta (Principal Investigator)
Vacancy reference	142703
Additional information	n/a

## Overview of the role

We are looking for a quantitative social scientist with experience of web scraping to join Prof Vili Lehdonvirta's research group. The post holder is a member of the iLabour project, with responsibility for the Online Labour Index component of the project.

The Online Labour Index is a novel computational system that collects hundreds of thousands of data points per day from major online labour platforms representing approximately 60% of the global market, using automated API requests and web scraping. The system performs automatic analysis and classification tasks to turn these data points into a useful data set and an accompanying interactive visualisation on online supply and demand of work across countries and occupations. The methodology behind the Online Labour Index has been published in a high-impact peer-reviewed journal, and its data is being used in a growing number of academic publications to study the economic and geographic dimensions and trends of online freelance work. The data has attracted significant interest from national statistical agencies, policy makers, labour unions, think tanks, and international organisations struggling to measure new forms of work.

The post holder is responsible for taking over maintenance of the Online Labour Index. The post holder will also use the data to conduct novel research on topics relevant to the iLabour project's aims. The post holder will also provide guidance to junior members of the research group, including research assistants and graduate students. More information on the iLabour project and the Online Labour Index can be found at <https://ilabour.oii.ox.ac.uk>.



The contract starts as soon as possible and ends as the iLabour project ends on 31 August 2020.

## **Pre-employment screening**

All offers of employment are made subject to standard pre-employment screening, as applicable to the post.

If you are offered the post, you will be asked to provide proof of your right-to-work, your identity, and 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 so that we can discuss appropriate adjustments with you), and a declaration of any unspent criminal convictions.

We advise all applicants to read the candidate notes on the University's pre-employment screening procedures, found at: [www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/preemploymentscreening/](http://www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/preemploymentscreening/).

## **Responsibilities/duties**

- Maintain the Online Labour Index
- Propose and implement new features to the Online Labour Index under the PI's guidance
- Analyse quantitative data from the Online Labour Index and other sources to examine questions relevant to the project's aims
- Provide occasional support for other researchers, journalists, and stakeholders wishing to use data from the Online Labour Index
- In collaboration with the PI, liaise with external stakeholders to develop plans concerning the future development of the Online Labour Index
- Prepare blog posts and academic publications in collaboration with the PI and other research group members
- Prepare attractive visualizations and tables for use in publications
- Present papers at conferences or public meetings
- Represent the research group at external meetings/seminars, either with other members of the group or alone
- Act as a source of information and advice to other members of the group on quantitative methodologies
- Manage own academic research and administrative activities. This involves small-scale project management, to co-ordinate multiple aspects of work to meet deadlines
- Provide assistance to the PI in administering the project and the research group
- Contribute ideas for new research projects

## Selection criteria

### Essential

- Hold a PhD/DPhil (or have passed the viva) in a social science discipline with a focus on quantitative methods
- Proven interest in research on labour markets and the digital economy
- Experience of web scraping with Python
- Experience of data analysis in R
- Ability to manage own academic research and associated activities
- Experience of contributing to publications/presentations
- Excellent communication skills in English, including the ability to write for publication, present research proposals and results, and represent the research group at meetings

### Desirable

- Experience of independently managing a discrete area of a research project
- Experience of actively collaborating in the development of research articles for publication
- Language skills in major languages used on online labour markets

## 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. Income from external research contracts in 2016/17 exceeded £564m and we rank first in the UK for university spin-outs, with more than 130 companies created to date. 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](http://www.ox.ac.uk/about/organisation).

## Social Sciences Division

The Oxford Internet Institute is a department within the Social Sciences Division, one of four academic Divisions in the University, each with considerable devolved budgetary and financial authority, and responsibility for providing a broad strategic focus across its constituent disciplines.

The Social Sciences Division represents the largest grouping of social sciences in the UK. It is home to a number of outstanding departments and to the internationally ranked Law Faculty; all are committed to research to develop a greater understanding of all aspects of society, from the impact of political, legal and economic systems on social and economic welfare to human rights and security. That research is disseminated through innovative graduate programmes and enhances undergraduate courses.

For more information please visit <http://www.socsci.ox.ac.uk/>

## The Oxford Internet Institute (OII)

The Oxford Internet Institute has expanded rapidly since its founding in 2001 to become a world-leading centre for the multidisciplinary study of the Internet and society, with activities focusing on research, post-graduate teaching and policy-making and practice.

The OII aims to bring about a greater understanding of the various social factors that are shaping the Internet and their implications for society. Central to this vision is a view of the Internet as a phenomenon that goes far beyond its technical capabilities to encompass all the people, services, information, and technologies that are intertwined in this 'network of networks'. Excellence in research underpins the Institute's collaborative and teaching activities. Wide-ranging collaborative relationships with experts from academia, government, business, and industry in the UK and around the world also play a central role in its strategic drive.

The OII's research strategy has targeted areas critical to the public interest, where the design and use of the Internet and related technologies are likely to contribute to a substantial restructuring of social practice and institutional arrangements. Having developed critical mass in these areas, the OII's strategy for the next five years is geared towards deepening and extending the range of grant-funded research around each theme and disseminating the outputs in high-quality journals, while ensuring that research helps inform and shape policy and practice.

Research at the OII focuses on 8 research clusters:

- **Connectivity, Inclusion & Inequality:** understanding the shifts in the power dynamics caused by information and communication technologies.
- **Digital Knowledge and Culture:** charting the on-going digital transformations of the sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities, and their implications.
- **Digital Politics & Government:** investigating political behaviour, digital government and government-citizen interactions in the age of the internet, social media and big data.
- **Education, Well-Being and Digital Life:** addressing the psychological, social and educational implications of the Internet, for people of all ages, across the full lifespan, with a particular focus on children and young people.
- **Ethics and Philosophy of Information:** investigating the ethical, epistemological, logical and ontological aspects of information, its sciences, phenomena and dynamics.
- **Internet Economics:** understanding the economic and social implications of new business models, new market structures, and new types of economic activity.

- **Information Governance & Security:** analysing the challenges created by the digitisation of information, seeking solutions through new governance rules, processes and institutions, and investigating the relationship between emerging technologies, their design, and information security and privacy.
- **Social Data Science:** seeking a quantitative understanding of how individuals behave and interact in society.

In all its research, the OII aims to operate at the cutting edge in both quantitative and qualitative methodologies that cut across disciplines and topics. Methodological innovation is vital given the changing nature of the Internet and advances in ICTs which both necessitate and facilitate the development of new techniques. OII researchers are developing methodologies such as the embedding of ICTs for real time observation of social phenomenon; webmetric techniques for observing the underlying structure of the web presence of social institutions; artificial intelligence design; experimental research; on-line action research; content analysis; investigation of virtual environments; and online survey research.

For more information about the Oxford Internet Institute please visit <http://www.oii.ox.ac.uk>

## How to apply

Before submitting an application, you may find it helpful to read the 'Tips on applying for a job at the University of Oxford' document, at [www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/supportandtechnical/](http://www.ox.ac.uk/about/jobs/supportandtechnical/).

If you would like to apply, click on the **Apply Now** button on the 'Job Details' page and follow the on-screen instructions to register as a new user or log-in if you have applied previously. Please provide details of two referees and indicate whether we can contact them now.

You will also 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).

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

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

All applications must be received by **midday** 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).*

Should you experience any difficulties using the online application system, please email [recruitment.support@admin.ox.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment.support@admin.ox.ac.uk). Further help and support is available from [www.ox.ac.uk/about\\_the\\_university/jobs/support/](http://www.ox.ac.uk/about_the_university/jobs/support/). To return to the online application at any stage, please go to: [www.recruit.ox.ac.uk](http://www.recruit.ox.ac.uk).

Please note that you will receive an automated email from our e-recruitment system 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: [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/privacynotices/job/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/privacynotices/job/). The University's Policy on Data Protection is available at: [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/universitypolicyondataprotection/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/gdpr/universitypolicyondataprotection/).

### The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for all academic posts and some academic-related posts. The University has adopted an EJRA of 30 September before the 69<sup>th</sup> birthday for all academic and academic-related staff in posts at **grade 8 and above**. The justification for this is explained at: [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/acrelretire8+/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/acrelretire8+/).

For **existing** employees, any employment beyond the retirement age is subject to approval through the procedures: [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/acrelretire8+/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/end/retirement/acrelretire8+/).

There is no normal or fixed age at which staff in posts at **grades 1–7** 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 [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/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](http://www.club.ox.ac.uk) and [www.sport.ox.ac.uk/oxford-university-sports-facilities](http://www.sport.ox.ac.uk/oxford-university-sports-facilities).

### 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 [www.welcome.ox.ac.uk](http://www.welcome.ox.ac.uk). There is also a visa loan scheme to cover the costs of UK visa applications for staff and their dependents. See [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/permits/reimburse&loanscheme/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/permits/reimburse&loanscheme/).

### 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 My Family Care, 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 [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits/family/mfc/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/staffinfo/benefits/family/mfc/).

### Childcare

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 [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/childcare/).

### 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 [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/staff](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/disab/staff).

### 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 [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/inpractice/networks/](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/inpractice/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](http://www.newcomers.ox.ac.uk).