Job title	Postdoctoral Researcher
Division	Social Sciences Division
Departments	Oxford Internet Institute (OII)
Locations	1 St Giles (OII)
Grade and salary	Grade 7: £32,817 – £40,322 per annum
Hours	Full time (37.5 hours per week)
Contract type	Available immediately on a fixed-term basis until 31 October 2020 – 6 months extension requested pending approval from Research Grant funder
Reporting to	Prof Phil Howard, Director (OII)
Vacancy reference	144290

Overview of the role

The Oxford Internet Institute (OII) is seeking to appoint one Postdoctoral Researcher to work on trends in misinformation, social media and elections, and the public understanding of science and politics.

This position is with the Computational Propaganda team at the Oxford Internet Institute, which has several research projects on the role of misinformation in public life. These projects involve researchers and partners from across Oxford, including the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism and the Oxford Martin School.

We are looking for colleagues who can help us develop an interdisciplinary approach to the problem at hand combining survey research, content analysis, image analysis, qualitative research, and computational social science and take responsibility for and deliver on distinct parts of this larger project. The position provides an exceptional chance to be part of a project tackling a pressing problem and part of one of the most dynamic centres of research on technology and public life. We are looking for candidates who can help us monitor and theorise about information operations, including visual ones, on elections and science-related issues over social media. Ideally, we would like to move beyond Twitter and Facebook to Instagram, YouTube, encrypted platforms and other new social media platforms where innovation in scientific method and theory is needed.

The purpose of the project is to understand the interplay between misinformation campaigns, news media, and social media in different contexts around the world, and on different platforms. We have two dominant domains of inquiry. The first involves investigating the impact of misinformation on public understanding of various scientific and technological

issues, such as climate science, public health, and artificial intelligence. By improving research on this topic, we seek to help scientists, journalists, policymakers and citizens have more constructive conversations around science, technology, and innovation in the future. The second involves investigating the impact of misinformation on public understanding of politics. Our team has led in the social science of misinformation on Twitter and Facebook, and now we seek to move to other platforms, like Instagram and YouTube, and even develop multi-platform methods. We seek data scientists who can both conceive of and built new analytical tools and contribute to a team driven effort to study current events and theorise the types of textual and visual information that are spreading over social media. The project output will include both academic publications and publications oriented primarily at professional and policymaker audiences and will emphasise public engagement as well as original research.

The individuals appointed will be working with the principle investigator behind the project, Professor Philip N. Howard from the Oxford Internet Institute, and will benefit from the larger collegial environment across the RISJ, the OII, the Oxford Martin School, and the University of Oxford.

Key Duties

The duties of the researcher include:

- To maintain and expand the data collection toolkit available to the Computational Propaganda team
- To propose and implement new data collection methods, under the PI's guidance
- Analyse quantitative data about public understanding of science and politics to answer questions relevant to the project's aims
- Provide regular support for other researchers, journalists, and stakeholders wishing to use data collected by the project
- In collaboration with the PI, liaise with external stakeholders to present results and develop plans concerning the future development of the project
- 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
- To work with other team members, the project coordinator, and the principal investigators on other aspects of the wider project, and work with the rest of the OII staff as part of the everyday life of the institute.

Selection Criteria

Candidates will be judged on the basis of the following criteria and should ensure that their letter of application provides evidence of how they meet the criteria. Candidates will be expected to give examples of relevant experience which need not be work experience. Candidates may wish to give examples from study, voluntary work or skills gained while bringing up a family.

Please provide an application letter of no more than two pages A4, a CV of no more than one page A4, and a list of publications of no more than one page A4. The application letter should clearly state how the candidate will contribute to the project.

Essential:

- A completed doctorate in a substantive area of social data science including computer science, journalism/media studies, sociology, political science, or other data-intensive doctoral programme;
- experience working with relevant quantitative and computational methods;
- familiarity with existing work on public understanding of science and politics;
- substantive interest in one or more domains of science and public policy, including but not limited to artificial intelligence in the public interest, evidence based policy making, public understanding of climate change, public policy around genetically modified organisms, algorithms and discrimination in public services, technology and social inequality, public understanding of current events and international affairs;
- A record of relevant research and writing achievement at an international level, including peer-reviewed publications;
- Excellent written, editing and verbal communication skills to demonstrate a 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;
- Excellent skills at advanced data collection, management, and manipulation for large teams;
- The demonstrated ability to build tools or customize and extend existing applications for such collection, management, and manipulation;
- The skills, flexibility and commitment to be a fully participating member of the project team and to be willing to help build its international presence and research output.

Desirable:

- Detailed knowledge of existing literature and work on misinformation, social media, and public understanding of science and/or politics;
- Familiarity with the existing literature and work in the field of social data science, the methods of inquiry comparative/international media research;
- Documented active involvement in relevant international academic communities;
- A record of work on digital media and the public understanding of science;
- Experience of combining different relevant methods;

- An interest in international comparative research that bridges academic, practitioner, and policy communities;
- Proficiency in several European languages.

Please note that the appointment of the successful candidate will be subject to standard compulsory pre-employment screening, such as right to work 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. Income from external research contracts in 2014/15 exceeded £522.9m 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

The Social Sciences Division

The University's academic departments and faculties are organised into four large groups, known as Academic Divisions (Social Sciences, Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences (MPLS), Medical Sciences, and Humanities). The academic divisions are responsible for academic oversight of the teaching and research of their constituent departments and faculties, for strategic and operational planning, and for personnel and resource management. The Head of the Social Sciences Division is Professor Roger Goodman, who is a member of the University's Council.The Social Sciences Division is a world-leading centre of research and education in the social sciences. The social sciences at Oxford are distinctive for both their depth and breadth, with activity spanning fourteen departments and faculties and two cross-divisional units. (These are as follows: Law, the Saïd Business School, Economics, Politics and International Relations, the Blavatnik School of Government, the School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, International Development, Sociology, Social Policy and Intervention, the Oxford Internet Institute, Archaeology, the School of Interdisciplinary Area Studies, Education, the School of Geography and the Environment, the Oxford Martin School and the Oxford-Man Institute of

Quantitative Finance). Interdisciplinary links within and beyond the university are strong, extending to the humanities, natural sciences, and medical sciences.

Academic and research staff and research students are engaged in world-leading research that challenges current ideas and theories and is tackling some of the major challenges facing humanity, such as sustainable resource management, migration, governance, poverty and development, and justice. REF 2014 confirmed Oxford as the UK powerhouse for research in the social sciences, where Oxford accounted for more world-leading (4*) research than any other institution, across the social sciences units of assessment to which it made submissions. The division has an extensive portfolio of external funders and collaborators, with competitively-awarded external research income exceeding £40million per year. Researchers in the division engage actively beyond academia and their research has influence in many spheres from innovation in public policymaking to practitioner communities such as law, business, education, social welfare and NGOs.

The division also delivers an exceptional range of high quality educational programmes (undergraduate, postgraduate taught and postgraduate research), all of which are underpinned by the innovative research being undertaken by our academics. Programmes range from those at the interface of the natural sciences, through to professionally-oriented provision in areas such as business, law and education. The division is home to several of Oxford's most widely recognised teaching programmes, such as Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE); the BCL; the MPhils in International Relations, in Economics, and in Development Studies; the MBA and EMBA; and the nationally regarded PGCE.

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/.

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 departments.

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. Further help and support is available from 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.

Please note that you will be notified of the progress of your application by automatic emails from our e-recruitment system. **Please check your spam/junk mail** regularly to ensure that you receive all emails.

Important information for candidates

Pre-employment screening

Please note that the appointment of the successful candidate will be subject to standard pre-employment screening, as applicable to the post. This will include right-to-work, proof of identity and references. 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/.

The University's policy on retirement

The University operates an Employer Justified Retirement Age (EJRA) for all academic posts and some academic-related posts. From 1 October 2017, the University has adopted an EJRA of 30 September before the 69th 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+/.

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+/.

From 1 October 2017, 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.