

Research Associate: *UNLOCKING OUR DIGITAL PAST: Engagement with policy makers to improve the preservation, access and usability of born-digital archives*

The post is fixed term from 1 June 2021 – 31 October 2021 and part-time (0.5FTE)

REQ210192

As part of the University's ongoing commitment to redeployment, please note that this vacancy may be withdrawn at any stage of the recruitment process if a suitable redeployee is identified.

Department summary:

School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Loughborough University:

<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/socialsciences/>

Project Description

The UK Government's National Data Strategy (2020) emphasises the importance of policy makers learning from experience and of external users being able to hold government to account. The proliferation of documents and emails that have only ever existed in digital form ("born digital") poses new challenges for government in preserving a collective memory. This includes issues of preservation and storage but also of access respectful of privacy and data protection.

AI could expand the proportion of government records (currently only 5%) sent to The National Archives, while improving access and avoiding the release of sensitive materials. But it is crucial to avoid biases in the selection and processing of data, which could discriminate against certain groups and impact the collective memory. This requires policy makers to engage with algorithms rather than treating AI as a "black box."

The objectives of the project are to (1) engage with policy makers to set out key principles affecting policy and practice in the application of AI to digital archives; (2) facilitate evidence-based discussion about preservation, access and use of digital data; (3) connect policy makers with scholars (including computer scientists) and archivists to make archives more accessible;

The deliverables of the project include: (1) two virtual events with policy makers (Workshop 1 and 2); (2) an article for the Government Knowledge and Information Management (KIM) Group; (3) qualitative interviews of workshop participants; (4) a policy paper.

The project is funded by the EPG (Enterprise Projects Group) at Loughborough University, and is led by Dr Lise Jaillant, Senior Lecturer in Digital Humanities. The researcher will work closely with the PI to deliver this project.

Job Description

Job Grade: Specialist and Supporting Academic Grade 6

Job Purpose

The researcher's primary responsibilities will be to conduct qualitative research including data collection, analysis and management, to manage communications with the stakeholders involved in the project, and to contribute to the organisation and delivery of the project events.

Job Duties

- To collect and analyse qualitative data – including via interviews with stakeholders after obtaining Ethics Clearance.
- To assist in preparing the policy paper and other project outputs.
- To contribute to the organisation and delivery of two project workshops.
- To manage communications with stakeholders.
- To contribute to the project promotion and dissemination using appropriate channels.
- To attend and make presentations to stakeholders during the two project events.
- To support the project by enhancing relationships with existing collaborators and by assisting the establishment of relationships with new collaborators.
- To contribute ideas for new research and enterprise directions.
- To maintain confidentiality at all times and ensure that intellectual property (IPR) agreements are not violated.
- To transcribe interviews conducted as part of the project.
- To assist the PI in copyediting/ proof-reading content and other tasks needed to deliver high quality project outputs.
- To provide general administrative support for the project, including submitting expenses claims.
- Undertake other duties as may be reasonably requested and that are commensurate with the nature and grade of the post.

Points to Note

The purpose of this job description is to indicate the general level of duties and responsibility of the post. The detailed duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character or level of responsibility entailed.

Special Conditions

All staff have a statutory responsibility to take reasonable care of themselves, others and the environment and to prevent harm by their acts or omissions. All staff are therefore required to adhere to the University's Health, Safety and Environmental Policy & Procedures.

All staff should hold a duty and commitment to observing the University's Equality & Diversity policy and procedures at all times. Duties must be carried out in accordance with relevant Equality & Diversity legislation and University policies/procedures.

Successful completion of probation will be dependent on attendance at the University's mandatory courses which include Respecting Diversity and, where appropriate, Recruitment and Selection.

Organisational Responsibility

Reports to Dr Lise Jaillant, Senior Lecturer in Digital Humanities

Person Specification

Your application will be reviewed with respect to meeting the essential and desirable criteria listed below. Your application will be reviewed against the essential and desirable criteria listed below. Applicants are strongly advised to explicitly state and evidence how they meet each of the essential (and desirable) criteria in their application. Stages of assessment are as follows:

- 1 – Application
- 2 – Test/Assessment Centre/Presentation
- 3 – Interview

Essential Criteria

| Area | Criteria | Stage | |
|--|---|--|---|
| Experience | Background in social sciences or humanities | 1,2,3 | |
| | Experience in qualitative data collection and analysis | 1,2,3 | |
| | Experience in conducting, transcribing and analysing interviews for research projects | 1,2,3 | |
| | Substantial knowledge in an area in social sciences or humanities relevant to the project focus | 1,2,3 | |
| | Authoring original work for academic journal papers, conference papers or specialised reports | 1,2,3 | |
| | Experience of promoting research projects using appropriate channels | 1,2,3 | |
| | Skills and abilities | Ability to organise complex events involving multiple stakeholders | 1,2,3 |
| Competence in IT skills, Internet usage and digital media | | 1,2,3 | |
| Excellent written and oral communication skills | | 1,2,3 | |
| Self-motivated with ability to meet deadlines | | 1,2,3 | |
| Excellent interpersonal, administrative, and organisational skills | | 1,2,3 | |
| Ability to write project reports and make presentations to groups | | 1,2,3 | |
| Substantial experience of copyediting/ proofreading | | 1,2,3 | |
| Ability to work on own initiative and organise workload effectively | | 1,2,3 | |
| Ability to work cooperatively with others both inside and outside the School and to build and participate in internal and external networks in order to enhance individual, project and Loughborough profile | | 1,2,3 | |
| Training | | A willingness to undertake further training as appropriate and to adopt new procedures as and when required. | 1,3 |
| | | Qualifications | PhD in social sciences or humanities (or near completion) |
| Other | | | Commitment to observing the University's Equal Opportunities policy at all times. |

Desirable Criteria

| Area | Criteria | Stage |
|----------------------|--|-------|
| Experience | Developing proposals for funding from external agencies | 1,3 |
| Skills and abilities | Authoring original work, in the highest quality refereed academic journals | 1,3 |
| | A strong publication track record | 1,3 |

Conditions of Service

The position is **part-time** (0.5FTE) and **fixed-term** from 1 June 2021 – 31 October 2021. Salary will be on Specialist and Supporting Academic Grade 6, (£30,942 - £31,865 pro rata per annum) at a starting salary to be confirmed on offer of appointment.

The appointment will be subject to the University's Terms and Conditions of Employment for Grade 6 and above staff, details of which can be found [here](#).

The University is committed to enabling staff to maintain a healthy work-home balance and has a number of family-friendly policies which can be found [here](#).

The University offers a wide range of employee benefits which can be found [here](#).

We also offer an on-campus nursery with subsidised places, subsidised places at local holiday clubs and a childcare voucher scheme (further details are available at: <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/a-z/childcare-information---page.html>)

In addition, the University is supportive, wherever possible, of flexible working arrangements. We also strive to create a culture that supports equality and celebrates diversity throughout the campus. The University holds a Bronze Athena SWAN award which recognises the importance of support for women at all stages of their academic career. For further information on Athena SWAN see <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/hr/athena-swan/>