

Interdisciplinary PhD Scholarships on the Theme of AI & Society

Have you recently completed or expect very soon to complete an MA/MSc in Social or Political Science or Media/Communications? Are you interested in carrying out interdisciplinary research on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Anti-Corruption during the next few years, commencing in September 2023?

The School of **Law and Government** and School of **Communications** are offering a fully funded, four year fees waiver + stipend (19,000 per annum for four years) scholarship in the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences at Dublin City University. The student will be registered in the School of **Communications**. The project will be supervised by [Michael Breen](#) and [Alessio Cornia](#). This is one of four interdisciplinary PhD Scholarships being offered in the Faculty from 2023. Note that candidates may apply for **one** of these thematic scholarships only.

TITLE: AI in the Fight Against Corruption: Leveraging Digital Technologies to Enhance Media Integrity and Prevent Media Capture

DESCRIPTION:

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to curb corruption and produce good quality journalism has many applications. These include analysing public procurement data to find possible cases of corruption, introducing automated fact-checking and text generation procedures to facilitate journalistic work, and analysing large corpora of media texts to investigate and research corruption.

How can the use of AI enhance media integrity and prevent media capture? Media capture is a situation in which news media are controlled by the government or vested interests linked to specific political groups (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2008, 2013). It is often achieved through mechanisms such as takeovers, clientelism, and the strategic use of government or state advertising. Interest in this phenomenon has grown significantly in recent years, as it is considered central to the decline of the democratic function of journalism in both autocratic states and more established democracies.

The project will study the subjects of AI, anti-corruption and media capture from an interdisciplinary perspective, drawing from the theories and empirical methods developed in the fields of political science and media studies, and using/developing the practical tools and indicators applied in computer science and economics. Innovative and original projects are welcome. Possible projects can address (some of) the following questions: what are the social, political and economic implications of the growing adoption of AI technology in the fields of anti-corruption and investigative/data journalism? Which indicators (red flags) can be used/developed to better analyse media capture and its main dimensions (such as changes in media ownership and political editorial lines, the selective use of government advertising, and self-censorship)? What are the implications of media capture for trust in the media and government?

Particularly appreciated are proposals that adopt a cross-country comparative scope, aim at defining new indicators and apply them to assess media capture, and advance policy proposals for protecting and enhancing the integrity of individual media outlets and the broader media system.

Candidate profile

The ideal candidate must have recently completed or expect very soon an MA/MSc or equivalent degree in **Social Sciences (Political Science, Politics, International Relations) or in Media, Communications, Journalism** (or a closely related area). The candidate is expected to have first class or upper second-class honours bachelor's (or equivalent) degree. In addition, the applicant should:

- Have a strong interest in anti-corruption; media capture; AI.
- Have a strong background in political and/or media studies.
- Have excellent skills in quantitative and/or qualitative research methods.
- Desirable: have familiarity with R² and Python (standard packages that will give them access to a range of advanced machine learning tools) or willingness to acquire the knowledge as a doctoral student.
- Have excellent knowledge of written and spoken English (See [DCU's requirements](#) for English language skills; applicants must ensure that they meet these requirements **before submitting an application**).
- Meet DCU's entry requirements in general (see general entry requirements [here](#))

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS:

Deadline:

The strict deadline for application is: **April 24th, 5 pm Irish Time**. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered. Shortlisted candidates will be invited for interview around the middle of May.

What to submit:

Candidates should email their applications in a **single pdf file** to michael.breen@dcu.ie and alessio.cornia@dcu.ie with "Interdisciplinary PhD in AI & Society" in the subject line. This application must include:

1. A brief cover letter outlining your motivation for applying
2. A complete version [of this form](#).

Note: Incomplete applications will be deemed ineligible.

Process:

Applications will be reviewed by the supervisory panel and short-listed. Short-listed candidates will be called for interview (online). If successful at the interview stage, candidates will then be invited to make a formal application to DCU via the [Student Application Portal](#). Applicants are expected to read the information available [here](#) on the general process for PhD

applications to DCU. Please note that the offer of a scholarships is not a formal offer of a place for PhD studies at DCU. The latter is made only after successful application via the Student Application Portal and verification of eligibility.

For queries contact: michael.breen@dcu.ie and alessio.cornia@dcu.ie