

Institution:	Goldsmiths, University of London
Unit of Assessment:	36 - Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management
a. Context	

The Department of Media and Communications prides itself on undertaking research that is culturally and politically aware; that shapes artistic, cultural, political and economic debates at national and international levels; that actively contributes to the development of media and media art practices; and that functions in a symbiotic relationship with different kinds of media industries. The vast majority of staff working on different kinds of media, communications and cultural studies research explicitly position their work as a form of meaningful engagement with the world through research that encompasses the politics, problems and prospects of our times. Much of the research undertaken by the Department is therefore of a broadly political nature, an orientation which is in turn underpinned by a strong ethical commitment. Avoiding any narrow and instrumental understanding of impact, our work is driven by a desire to change the world for the better, to make it fairer and more just, to open up the production and circulation of social meaning to critique, to trace its history, to theorise its power and to make interventions that matter to a whole society – with a particular focus on those who are being disenfranchised by the dominant media representations and communication practices.

The work of the Department's staff finds a wide audience amongst journalists; politicians; arts organisations such as galleries, museums and cultural centres; publishers; media and fashion start-ups – but it also reaches those outside dominant media and political structures (grassroots activists, small artist collectives, NGOs, bloggers and independent publishers). As examples of this wide reach our research has in the outside world we can mention Ahmed's work on leadership and diversity conducted with and for the public sector; Curran's public defence of public sector broadcasting; Davis's influence on the Labour party's communication strategy and financial policy; Fenton and Freedman's foundational and policy-shaping work with the Media Reform Coalition, Hacked Off and the National Council of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom; Franklin's work with the UN's Internet Governance Forum; McRobbie's involvement with European fashion start-ups; Phillips's active contribution to the transformation of journalism practice in the digital age with the East London Lines project; Cubitt's and Zylinska's curatorial activities in the area of new media art in Peru and Mexico respectively (Cubitt as curator of the Telefonica Foundation-sponsored exhibition 'Art and Optics: The Speed of Communications' in Lima, Zylinska as Artistic Director of the new media festival *Transitio_MX05* 'Biomediations' in Mexico City funded by the Mexican Ministry of Culture); and Blackman's critical psychology/body studies that have been taken up in professional psychiatric practice (in the training of psychiatric professionals working in Hearing Voices Groups and by psychiatric user movements, significantly the Hearing Voices Network and Intervoice). The Department participated in the conference in February 2013 called Making a Difference, whose aim was to celebrate key impact projects at Goldsmiths and share our research with new partners. The audience of nearly 200 included companies, community groups, charities and funding agencies.

b. Approach to impact

An implicit impact agenda had already been shaping many of our research practices for years. However, the preparations for this round of REF have enabled us to articulate better – via the work of the Research Committee, ongoing Theory-Practice activities and regular collaborations with media industries, as well as annual Personal Development Reviews – the strategies and forms of support for conducting and promoting work that has significance and effect in the outside world. These have now been incorporated into the Department's broader research strategy. In line with HEFCE, we have adopted a wide understanding of impact for our work. Our main goal is to use our research to strengthen various aspects of civil society through enabling a better quality of media – and a better quality of life in the media world. We also pursue the practical implementation of our findings where appropriate. Our impact strategies include: organising public conferences and debates that involve speakers and audiences external to universities; speaking at public events outside the academy; meeting with non-academic users of the research such as art communities,

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public officials, policy makers and parliamentarians; taking research into spaces and forums that seek either a broad or a specific non-academic audience; writing for non-academic publications and the mainstream and alternative media; appearing/providing commentary in the mainstream and alternative media; curating and participating in exhibitions; using Twitter and other social media. Many staff regularly appear on, write for or are cited by Al Jazeera (Fenton, Freedman), BBC (McRobbie, Fenton, Curran), CNN (Freedman), The Huffington Post (Zylinska, Freedman), Sky News (Fenton); Open Democracy (Davis, Freedman, Fenton, Curran); Resonance FM (Fenton, Freedman); as well as Daily Telegraph, The Times, Daily Mail, Evening Standard (Curran, Fenton, Freedman). The department offers regular media training for all staff. We also encourage meaningful external involvement in the regular conferences we put on. The 'Media, War and Terrorism' conference in 2012, marking the publication of the book *Media and Terrorism: Global Perspectives* (co-edited by Freedman), was hosted by the Centre for the Study of Global Media and Democracy and co-organised by the Stop the War Coalition with the support of Sage Publications. Speakers included John Pilger, Peter Osborne (Telegraph), Jeremy Corbyn MP, Toby Miller (City), David Miller (Spinwatch) and Michelle Stanistreet (NUJ).

The Practice aspects of the Department are particularly engaged with the more local community, which we also see as a key element of our approach to impact. East London Lines (ELL; an outward-facing 24/7 online news service for local boroughs served by the East London overground train, staffed entirely by our journalism students and supported by staff) seeks to speak to and connect with local people and issues. In 2012 ELL organised a *People Question Time* election debate at Oxford House in Bethnal Green. The debate followed the style of BBC Question Time, and brought together Labour Assembly member John Biggs with Green Party's Chris Smith, UKIP's Steven Woolfe, the Liberal Democrats' Richard MacMillan and the Conservative Party's John Moss. An audience of local residents and political partisans pitched their questions to the panel chaired by Goldsmiths staff. Wherever possible we endeavour to take our research to the appropriate forums or communities where it will be best heard and most relevant. For example, Cubitt's four-year research project into the history of video as an art form (resulting in a co-edited anthology based on an archive of interviews, ephemera and archive copies of tapes and installations from the pioneering period of British video art) was launched at Tate Modern; while the work of Henriques (as part of the Topology Research Unit) has brought conceptual ideas to art-in-practice also at Tate Modern, engaging directly artists such as Ernesto Neto. From a different perspective, Kember's work on rethinking forms of media publication and distribution has taken a critical contemporary issue in our field out to industry and other public forums (e.g. talk at the Watermans International Festival of Digital Arts organised to celebrate the 2012 Olympic and Para-Olympic Games; public debate at Goldsmiths with new-media editor at MIT Press Doug Sery on the future of publishing). This work has also had a very practical outcome with the development of the iTunesU platform for Goldsmiths, enabling many thousands more people to engage with ideas and debates coming from the Department and the College.

c. Strategy and plans

Developing research that has impact in the outside world is now part of our departmental research strategy. As detailed in our REF5, this involves continuing the legacy of the Leverhulme project and the work of the Goldsmiths Leverhulme Media Research Centre through further collaborative work (not just within academia but also within larger civil society) on plurality and the public interest as well as alternative models of news. The aim is to provide a better mainstream understanding of the changing nature of journalism, including the management and governance of news organisations, content, ownership, business models, consumption patterns and public attitudes. This work has now developed into an ESRC bid for a UK-wide Centre for News and Citizenship in association with the universities of Westminster, Glasgow and Cardiff. The approach, supported by many in industry, aims to establish longitudinal research on the economics, governance, production, content and reception of news media. We also have plans to develop a European bid to extend this UK-based work across Europe.

We plan to spread the work of the East London Lines to establish a community hub in New Cross along the lines of the findings of the research undertaken on News Needs in Local Communities funded by the Media Trust. The work of the Centre for Global Media and Democracy will, in its next

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phase, concentrate on linking more directly to civil society groups to engage them in debates on successful social/political campaigns worldwide and the role of the media therein. This work will be highlighted through podcasts and commentary pieces published on the Centre's website. The newly formed Feminist Research Centre plays a key part in our impact strategy. Here, the intention is to further link work on media and gender to renewed interest in the public sphere on feminist issues. We aim to deepen our connections with civil society groups, the Equalities Commission and other online feminist platforms such as Feminista in order to enhance public understanding of feminist and gender issues. This will be progressed through public debates, symposia and conferences that involve non-academic participants.

Impact is monitored via the Department's Research Committee, which oversees the enactment of the Departmental Research Strategy: external and internal funding applications are assessed also with 'impact' in mind. External partners from our recent successful grant bids include BBC, Ofcom, Science Museum, Serpentine Gallery, British Council, British Library, Random House and Open Humanities Press. Our impact work is supported in the Department through a 0.5 academic post designated as an industry link; through a competitive Research Initiatives Fund and through liaising with the College Communications and PR team. We will continue to increase staff confidence and expertise in dealing with the media through offering regular media training via the College's Communications and PR team. Several staff have already drawn on their impact work to support their successful application for promotion (e.g. Phillips, Freedman, Fenton, Franklin, Kember, Zylinska). We intend to encourage this further via annual Performance and Development Reviews in which all staff participate. The Department aims to develop further its presence on iTunesU in order to disseminate its work more widely. We will continue with our social media activities through Facebook, Twitter and the departmental blog Spotlight.

d. Relationship to case studies
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The impact evidenced in the case studies is underpinned by the above discussed principles and strategies, including our ethically-driven efforts to make media and the wider public sphere a better, more fair and more just space. The **Spaces of the News** case study arises out of the Leverhulme-funded project that developed into the work on media reform and contributed to the Leveson enquiry. The subsequent debates placed public and policymaker engagement at the core of its practice – *a relationship that is key to all our research activities in the Department, not just those discussed in the case studies*. Regular public events were held with speakers from industry and political circles (journalists, political bloggers, MPs). The project led to the founding of the Media Reform Coalition to engage a wider range of actors in the debates. With over 30 civil society groups taking part in meetings and online discussions, a dedicated website and its own raft of public events (e.g. public rallies such as 'Our Media – Not Theirs' in 2013), the group focuses on developing approaches to media policy and public outreach.

The case study entitled **Is Another Internet Possible? Power Struggles for the Ownership and Control of Cyberspace** shares some of the same ambitions as well as modes of impact, but it is focused more clearly on the regulation, control and democratisation of online spaces in the global context. Informed by Franklin's work on Internet design, access and use, it shows her involvement in the United Nations-level institution-building with regard to facilitating better global internet governance. Specific recommendations have arisen from this work into how public, private and civil society actors look to reconcile conflicting agendas for how users access and use the internet, and on whose terms and conditions, while a document as significant as the Charter of Human Rights and Principles for the Internet is now in the process of being considered by the global actors in response to this work.

The **Influencing the Growth of 'Fashion Start-ups' and 'Young Creative' Self-Employment in Europe** evidences McRobbie's impact on policy and thinking at the DCMS and London Fashion Week, and at the newly established Fashion Lab at Trampery as well as her role in the development of start-ups in Germany, Austria and Italy across the full range of creative industries. Part of a wider social-theory-driven effort to address high youth unemployment across Europe, the work underpinning the case study has proposed a more politically-engaged approach to the rise of 'new fashion cities' and to urban cultural policies in times of neoliberalism, zero-hours contracts and the marketisation of creativity.