

Research summary

Aims—to design, build, and evaluate design strategies that help people exercise self-control over use of smartphones and laptops.

Methods—controlled studies, user surveys, interviews, co-design workshops, web scraping, behaviour logging.

I am passionate about open and transparent research. Since 2016, I have shared materials, analysis scripts, and data for all my work, and written my papers as reproducible documents in R Markdown¹.

Education

- 2016 — 2020 **DPhil in Computer Science**, University of Oxford
- 2012 — 2013 **MSc in Cognitive and Evolutionary Anthropology**, University of Oxford
- 2011 — 2016 **MA in the Study of Religion & Cognitive Psychology**, Aarhus University
- 2007 — 2011 **BA in the Study of Religion & Psychology**, Aarhus University

Awards & honours

- 2020 **Winner of the 2020 Oxford Three Minute Thesis competition²**, Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division, University of Oxford
MPLS Impact Awards³ Commendation Certificate for the Reducing Digital Distraction Workshop, University of Oxford
- 2019 **Best Talk Award**, 2019 Oxford Computer Science Conference, University of Oxford
Best Paper Honorable Mention Award for "Self-Control in Cyberspace...", CHI'19: ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems
- 2018 **Best Paper Award for "Third party tracking..."**, WebSci'18: ACM Conference on Web Science, Amsterdam
- 2017 **DOMUS Prize for Outstanding Research Communication**, Linacre College, University of Oxford

Grants

- 2020 **van Houten Fund⁴** (~£12k), The Reducing Digital Distraction (ReDD) Workshop for Oxford University students.
Supervisor: Maureen Freed.
- 2019 **EPSRC Doctoral Prize⁵** (~£28k), Supporting End-User Autonomy Over Digital Device Use.
Supervisor: Nigel Shadbolt. Mentor: Max Van Kleek.

2018	Student Research Competition Grant (\$500), CHI'18: ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems
2017	Workshop Grant, Designing for Curiosity (€400), CHI'17: ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems
	Student Research Competition Grant (\$500), CHI'17: ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems
2013	Lienhard & Bagby Research Grant (£1,000), Institute of Social & Cultural Anthropology, University of Oxford
2008	Summer School Scholarship (~€1000), University of Helsinki
	Undergraduate Travel Grant (DKK 1200), Aarhus University

Publications

Conference publications

(fully reviewed, archival)

In computer science, top-tier conferences (<30% acceptance rate) are as, or more impactful than journals, see doi.org/fgjt2h

2020	C5	From Ancient Contemplative Practice to the App Store: Designing a Digital Container for Mindfulness K. Lukoff, U. Lyngs, S. Gueorguieva, E. S. Dillman, A. Hiniker, S. A. Munson DIS'20: ACM conference on Designing Interactive Systems
	C4	"I Just Want to Hack Myself to Not Get Distracted": Evaluating Design Interventions for Self-Control on Facebook U. Lyngs, K. Lukoff, P. Slovak, W. Seymour, H. Webb, M. Jirotko, J. Zhao, M. Van Kleek, N. Shadbolt CHI'20: ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems
2019	C3	Self-Control in Cyberspace: Applying Dual Systems Theory to a Review of Digital Self-Control Tools U. Lyngs, K. Lukoff, P. Slovak, R. Binns, A. Slack, M. Inzlicht, M. Van Kleek, N. Shadbolt CHI'19: ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems 🏆 Best paper honourable mention (top 5%)
2018	C2	Third party tracking in the mobile ecosystem R. Binns, U. Lyngs, M. Van Kleek, J. Zhao, T. Libert, N. Shadbolt WebSci'18: ACM Web Science Conference 🏆 Best paper award (top 2 papers)
	C1	"It's Reducing a Human Being to a Percentage": Perceptions of Justice in Algorithmic Decisions R. Binns, M. Van Kleek, M. Veale, U. Lyngs, J. Zhao, N. Shadbolt CHI'18: ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems

Journal articles (fully reviewed, archival)

2016	J1	Hearing in Colour: How Expectations Distort Perception of Skin Tone U. Lyngs, E. Cohen, W. Hattori, M. Newson, D. Levin JEP:HPP: Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance, 42 (12), 2068-2076
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Extended abstracts and workshop papers

(lightly reviewed)

- 2020 A9 **The ReDD Workshop: A Template for Supporting People in Regaining Control Over Digital Device Use**
U. Lyngs, M. Freed, K. Lukoff, P. Slovak, M. Van Kleek
CHI'20 workshop: *Rethinking Mental Health Resources*, Workshop at the ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems
- A8 **Further Exploring Communal Technology Use in Smart Homes: Social Expectations**
M. Kraemer, U. Lyngs, H. Webb, I. Flechais
CHI'20 EA: ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems
- A7 **"What Could Possibly Go Wrong?" Logging HRI Data for Robot Accident Investigations**
K. Winkle, M. Jirotko, U. Lyngs, C. Macrae, H. Webb, A. Winfield
HRI'20 Companion: ACM/IEEE International Conference on Human-Robot Interaction
- 2019 A6 **Putting Self-Control at the Centre of Digital Wellbeing**
U. Lyngs
CHI'19 workshop: *Designing for Digital Wellbeing*, Workshop at the ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems
- 2018 A5 **So, Tell Me What Users Want, What They Really, Really Want!**
U. Lyngs, R. Binns, M. Van Kleek, N. Shadbolt
CHI'18 EA (alt.chi): ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems
- A4 **A Cognitive Design Space for Supporting Self-Regulation of ICT Use**
U. Lyngs
CHI'18 EA: ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems
- 2017 A3 **'It's More Fun With My Phone': A Replication Study of Cell Phone Presence and Task Performance**
U. Lyngs
CHI'17 EA: ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems
- A2 **'It's More Fun With My Phone': A Replication Study of Cell Phone Presence and Task Performance**
U. Lyngs, R. McKay
CogSci'17: 39th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society
- A1 **Curiosity, ICTs, and Attention Management**
U. Lyngs
CHI'17 workshop: *Designing for Curiosity: An Interdisciplinary Workshop*, ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems

Poster presentations

- 2018 P7 **Connected Life 2018, Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford, What the Anti-Distraction Market Tells Us About Digital Technology and Self-Regulation**
- P6 **3rd Symposium on Computing and Mental Health, CHI'18, ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, Montreal, Canada, A Cognitive Design Space for Supporting Self-Regulation of ICT Use**

2017	P5	CogSci'17, 39th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, London , "It's More Fun With My Phone": A Replication Study of Cell Phone Presence and Task Performance
	P4	Connected Life 2017: Digital Inequalities, Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford , Ulysses in Cyberspace: Evaluating the Anti-Distraction Market
	P3	Designing for Curiosity, workshop at the CHI'17, ACM Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, Denver, Colorado , Curiosity, ICTs and Attention Management: Evaluating the Emerging Anti-Distraction Market
2014	P2	Morality: Evolutionary Origins and Cognitive Mechanisms, Central European University, Budapest , Wild Cooperation: Studying Real-World Reciprocity Using Couchsurfing.org
2011	P1	CogSci'11, 33rd Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society, Boston, MA , Priming Effects of Religious Concepts on Moral Judgment – Between Mean Values and Variation

Talks and panels

All first-author conference publications listed above were also given as presentations at their respective conferences and are not listed again in this section.

Talks

2020	T26	DISTRACT⁶, Copenhagen Center for Social Data Science, University of Copenhagen , Self-Control in Cyberspace: Examining Tools of Resistance in the Battle for Online Attention
	T25	COINACT⁷, Institute of Psychology, University of Copenhagen , Cognitive Control in Cyberspace
	T24	Seminars at Linacre College⁸, University of Oxford , 'I Just Want to Hack Myself to Not Get Distracted': Do Design Interventions for Self-Control on Facebook Work?
	T23	Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, University of Oxford , What Can Digital Humanities Offer Hindu Studies?, online lecture series (6 videos) ⁹ for a general audience
	T22	Śākta traditions project¹⁰, Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, University of Oxford , Deus ex Machina: What Can Digital Humanities Offer Hindu Studies?
	T21	University of Washington DUB Shorts¹¹ , 'I Just Want to Hack Myself to Not Get Distracted': Evaluating Design Interventions for Self-Control on Facebook
	T20	Google Digital Wellbeing¹² , Digital Wellbeing in Practice: Designing for Digital Self-Control
	T19	Dept. of Computer Science, University of Copenhagen , Digital Wellbeing in Practice: Examining the Effectiveness of Digital Self-Control Strategies
	T18	Digital Ethnography Group (OxDEG)¹³, Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford , Digital Wellbeing in Practice: Examining the Effectiveness of Digital Self-Control Strategies
2019	T17	R user group Oxford¹⁴, St. Peter's College, University of Oxford , Reproducible research with R Markdown, featuring paper and PhD thesis writing

	T16	Best of CHI2019, IIT Bombay, Mumbai (videolink), Q&A: Self-Control in Cyberspace
	T15	2019 Oxford Computer Science Conference¹⁵, University of Oxford, Self-Control in Cyberspace: Applying Dual Systems Theory to a Review of Digital Self-Control Tools
	T14	Dept. of Computer Science, University of Oxford, “Owning” Your DPhil, workshop for 1st year DPhil (PhD) students
	T13	Designing for Digital Wellbeing, workshop at the 2019 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, Glasgow, UK, Putting Self-Control at the Centre of Digital Wellbeing
2018	T12	BBC Radio Theatre, New Broadcasting House, London, So, Tell Me What Users Want, What They Really, Really Want!, BBC conference on AI, Society, and the Media ¹⁶
	T11	Hackathon at CodeBase, Edinburgh, organised by the UnBias¹⁷ project, University of Oxford, Hacking the Attention Economy
	T10	Human Centred Computing research seminar, Dept. of Computer Science, University of Oxford, Evaluating Anti-Distraction Browser Extensions for Facebook
2017	T09	PubhD¹⁸, science communication and pints, St Aldate’s Tavern, Oxford, How to Build Minimally-Distracting Technology
	T08	SOCIAM: The Theory and Practice of Social Machines, Jesus College, University of Oxford, Distraction and Self-Regulation in Social Machines
	T07	DOMUS Research Communication Competition, Linacre College, University of Oxford, Ulysses in Cyberspace: How Anti-Distraction Apps Can Guide Digital Design
	T06	Oxford Computer Science Conference¹⁹, University of Oxford, ICTs and Attention Management: Evaluating the Emerging Anti-Distraction Market
	T05	Human Centred Computing Group, University of Oxford, Battle of the Social Machines: Attention Management in the Information Age, workshop on research ethics: <i>Being Responsible in Research: Opportunities and Challenges</i>
	T04	SOCIAM: The Theory and Practice of Social Machines, all-hands meeting in Brockenhurst, UK, Attention Management in the Information Age
2015	T03	‘Religion, Cognition and Culture’ research unit, Institute of Culture and Society, Aarhus University, Religion: A Culturally Evolved Tool for Self-Control
2014	T02	26th Annual Human Behavior and Evolution Society Conference, Natal, Brazil, Fundamental Motivations and Risk-Taking: Loss Aversion in Context
2012	T01	Homo Experimentalis: Experimental Approaches in The Study of Religion, Brno, Czech Republic, Effort, Loss Aversion and Religion

Discussion panels

2019	D2	Futures Thinking Conference²⁰, Wolfson College, University of Oxford, Psychology and Futurity, roundtable discussion on mental health
	D1	2019 Oxford Computer Science Conference²¹, University of Oxford, Computing Everything? The Limits of Algorithmic Learning, moderator for panel discussion with Richard Evans (Deepmind), Peter Millican, Hao Ni, and Luba Elliott

Podcasts

2020 Pod1 **University of Oxford Podcasts**[22](#), Your Digital Life During Lockdown

Press

2018 Our paper “Third Party Tracking in the Mobile Ecosystem” [C2] covered in the Financial Times[23](#), BBC[24](#), The Times[25](#), Business Insider[26](#), and more

Teaching experience

2020 **Teaching assistant, Big Data Analytics**[27](#), Oxford Internet Institute, University of Oxford
20 master’s students. Taught the practical part of the class on analysing and visualising non-normally distributed data in R and RStudio

2019 **Instructor, Reproducible research with R Markdown**[28](#), TIER Faculty Development Workshop[29](#), St. Anne’s College, University of Oxford
20 staff and faculty from research institutions across Europe. Developed and taught a 2-day master class in reproducible research

2013 **Introduction to Evolutionary Psychology**, Oxbridge International Summer School[30](#)
10 high school students. Organised and taught a 2-week course with group and individual tutorials

2010 — 2011 **Philosophy, theory of science, and university history**, Dept. for the Study of Religion, Aarhus University
20 undergraduate students. Taught a weekly supplementary seminar to the main lecture series

Service

2018 — 2020 **Steering group member**, Transparent Statistics in Human-Computer Interaction[31](#)

2016 — **Reviewer**, ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction (TOCHI)[32](#), ACM CHI Conference[33](#), Computer-Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing[34](#), International Journal of Human-Computer Studies[35](#)

2018 **Main conference organiser and General Chair**, Oxford Computer Science Conference 2018, Dept. of Computer Science, University of Oxford

2017 — 2018 **President of the Computer Science Graduate Society (CoGS)**, Dept. of Computer Science, University of Oxford

2016 — 2017 **DPhil representative in the Computer Science Graduate Society (CoGS)**, Dept. of Computer Science, University of Oxford

2012 — 2016 **Executive committee member in the London Evolutionary Research Network**[36](#) (LERN), London, UK

2008 — 2012 **Chairman of the Society for the Study of Religion (RvF)**[37](#), Dept. for the Study of Religion, Aarhus University

Selected work experience

- 2020 — present **Data Scientist and Digital Humanities Consultant**, Śākta Traditions³⁸, Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, University of Oxford
I provide practical support and consultancy on natural language processing methods for analysis and visualisation of large text corpora, using reproducible workflows in R Markdown.
- 2019 — 2020 **Research Assistant**, RoboTIPS: Developing Responsible Robots for the Digital Economy³⁹
Developed accident scenarios and investigation processes to inform responsible innovation in social robotics, with researchers at the Dept. of Computer Science in Oxford (lead: Prof. Marina Jirotko), and the Bristol Robotics Facility (lead: Prof. Alan Winfield).
- 2017 — 2019 **Web developer**, SOCIAM: The Theory and Practice of Social Machines, Dept. of Computer Science, University of Oxford
Built www.sociam.org⁴⁰, which archives outputs of a 5.5 year EPSRC research project involving 55+ researchers, 40+ projects, and 400+ publications). Developed from scratch in Drupal 7, assisted by two summer interns. Ongoing maintenance, feature development, and content curation.
- 2017 — 2019 **Bartender**, Linacre College bar, University of Oxford
- 2013 — 2016 **Festival Producer and Manager**, Institute of Art and Ideas, London
Generated ideas and wrote programme copy for 250+ panel debates for the internationally renowned philosophy and music festival [HowTheLightGetsIn](#)⁴¹; interviewed (600+) and booked (150+) speakers, including Cory Doctorow, Aubrey de Grey, and Simon Baron-Cohen; led and managed a research team division of two full-time staff plus a music team of three full-time staff.

Professional development

- 2018 Invited participant to the Global Dialogue for Happiness, World Government Summit⁴², Dubai
- 2017 Leading for Impact⁴³ fellow, 4-month leadership training programme at Saïd Business School, University of Oxford

R packages

- 2019 [oxforddown](#)⁴⁴, for writing reproducible research theses in R Markdown, formatted with a traditional University of Oxford LaTeX template
[pagedown-cv](#)⁴⁵, for dynamically generating a curriculum vitae from data held in a spreadsheet into a variety of output formats, using R Markdown and the [pagedown](#) R package
- 2018 — 2020 [chi20-papers-rmarkdown](#)⁴⁶, [chi-proc-rmd-template](#)⁴⁷ and [chi-ea-template](#)⁴⁸, for writing reproducible submissions in R Markdown to the ACM CHI conference

Personal skills & volunteering

- 2017 — present **Founding Band Member**, The Karaoke Collective⁴⁹
 Inventor, MC and drummer; the KC is a group of seasoned musicians in Oxford and London where we blend the fun of karaoke with the magic of a live band.
- 2017 — 2019 **Computer Science Ambassador**, Dept. of Computer Science, University of Oxford
 I gave regular talks about my group's and my personal research to 14-18 year old students from schools in the UK visiting the Dept. of Computer Science
- 2013 — 2016 **Interview Coach**, Oxbridge Interviews, Oxfizz⁵⁰
 Provided interview training to 30+ teenagers from families not traditionally going to university wishing to apply to Oxford or Cambridge.

Links

1. <https://rmarkdown.rstudio.com>↵
2. <https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/three-minute-thesis-competition>↵
3. <https://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/news/mps-impact-awards-2020-winners-announced-at-winter-reception>↵
4. <https://governance.admin.ox.ac.uk/van-houten-fund>↵
5. <https://epsrc.ukri.org/skills/students/dta/doctoralprize/>↵
6. <https://sodas.ku.dk/projects/distract/>↵
7. <https://psychology.ku.dk/coinact/>↵
8. <https://www.linacre.ox.ac.uk/event-type/linacre-seminar>↵
9. https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLklUogDmN_nAEqQphmDffOMBp5ljN-jXA↵
10. <http://saktatraditions.org>↵
11. <https://dub.washington.edu/seminar.html>↵
12. <https://wellbeing.google>↵
13. <https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/research/projects/oxdeg/>↵
14. <https://twitter.com/rusersoxford>↵
15. <https://oxfordcsc.com>↵
16. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/academy/en/events/evt20180704115336827>↵
17. <https://unbias.wp.horizon.ac.uk/>↵
18. <http://pubhd.org>↵
19. <https://oxfordcsc.com>↵
20. <https://www.torch.ox.ac.uk/event/futures-thinking-conference-details>↵
21. <https://oxfordcsc.com>↵
22. <https://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/your-digital-life-during-lockdown>↵

23. <https://ig.ft.com/mobile-app-data-trackers/>
24. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-45952466>
25. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/personal-data-harvesting-by-mobile-phone-apps-is-out-of-control-pb2m2kwkj>
26. <https://www.businessinsider.com/google-and-facebook-big-data-apps-oxford-study-finds-2018-10?r=UK&IR=T>
27. <https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/study/courses/big-data-analytics/>
28. <https://ulyngs.github.io/rmarkdown-workshop-2019/>
29. <https://www.projecttier.org/fellowships-and-workshops/faculty-development-workshops/>
30. <https://oxfizz.org/>
31. <https://transparentstatistics.org>
32. <http://tochi.acm.org/>
33. <https://sigchi.org/>
34. <http://cscw.acm.org/2019/>
35. <https://www.journals.elsevier.com/international-journal-of-human-computer-studies>
36. <https://londonevolution.org>
37. <https://studerende.au.dk/studier/fagportaler/arts/religionsvidenskabelig-forening/>
38. <http://saktatraditions.org/people/>
39. <https://www.cs.ox.ac.uk/projects/RoboTIPS/index.html>
40. <https://www.sociam.org>
41. <https://howthelightgetsin.org/>
42. <https://www.worldgovernmentsummit.org>
43. <https://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/research/skoll-centre-social-entrepreneurship/social-impact-education/leading-impact>
44. <https://github.com/ulyngs/oxforddown>
45. <https://github.com/ulyngs/pagedown-cv>
46. <https://github.com/ulyngs/chi20-papers-rmarkdown>
47. <https://github.com/ulyngs/chi-proc-rmd-template>
48. <https://github.com/ulyngs/chi-ea-rmd-template>
49. <https://karaokecollective.com>
50. <https://oxfizz.org/>