

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 and honours

- 2020 **Winner of the 2020 Oxford Three Minute Thesis competition**², 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 Fund**⁴ (~£12k), The Reducing Digital Distraction (ReDD) Workshop for Oxford University students.
Supervisor: M. Freed.
- 2019 **EPSRC Doctoral Prize**⁵ (~£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 publications

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, Montreal, Canada**, A Cognitive Design Space for Supporting Self-Regulation of ICT Use
- 2017 P5 **CogSci 2017, 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 workshop at the 2017 CHI 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 2011, 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 papers 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	Department 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	Department 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

Media coverage

2018 Our paper 'Third Party Tracking in the Mobile Ecosystem' 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, Department 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.org⁴⁰, Dept. of Computer Science, University of Oxford
Built sociam.org (archiving outputs of a 5.5 year EPSCR research project involving 55+ researchers, 40+ projects, and 400+ publications) 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 HowTheLightGetsIn⁴¹; interviewed (600+) and booked (150+) speakers, including Cory Doctorow, Aubrey de Grey, and Simon Baron-Cohen; led and managed a research team of two full-time and 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-cv⁴⁵, for dynamically generating a curriculum vitae from data held in a single spreadsheet into a variety of different output formats, using R Markdown and the **pagedown** 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 Computer Science Department
- 2013 — 2016 **Interview Coach**, Oxbridge Interviews, Oxfizz⁵⁰
Provided interview training for 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=PLkIUogDmN_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/>