



## Bursary Application

**Name:** Dr Rhiannon Markless, PhD

**General subject area:** Social and Political Reputation Online

**Title of case study:** Think small and look for unexpected results: an analysis of material relating to economist, Vicky Pryce, from records stored in the UK Web Archive and Legal Deposit Web Archive at the British Library.

### **Description of case study** (max. 500 words)

The aim of this study is to develop a theoretical and methodological framework within which to study and analyse the data from the UK Web Archive and Legal deposit Archive at the British Library (BL), highlighting its value for research.

The objective is to gather data available on both the public UK Web Archive (2004-2013) and the Legal Deposit Web Archive (2013) relating to a single national figure and examine possibilities for researching changes in their online reputation over a period of time. The proposed subject is Vicky Pryce, economist, former wife of a government minister, and recent convict. Data gathered will be analysed for evidence of changing reports of Pryce's public reputation in relation to specific events during the period 2004-2013, including: her role as Chief Economist at the Department of Trade and Industry; the general elections 2005 and 2010; the Euro Crisis from a UK perspective; the Euro Crisis and Greece (Pryce is Greek); her marriage with, and subsequent divorce from, MEP, Liberal-Democrat MP and Government minister, Chris Huhne; the 2013 court case in which Pryce and Huhne were each convicted of perverting the course of justice. The study is based on the notion, 'think small and look for unexpected results'.

In examining archived web pages relating to one person, it should be possible to gain a detailed understanding of the results of a crawl profile, broken down by each year data was archived and sub-divided by individual domain and format (image, html, pdf, etc.).

*Please send this document, accompanied by a current CV, to [jonathan.blaney@sas.ac.uk](mailto:jonathan.blaney@sas.ac.uk) or Jonathan Blaney, Institute of Historical Research, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU. The closing date for applications is 25 April 2014.*

A small study allows for the analysis of expected results within the areas of, say, politics and the economy and any erroneous or unexpected results, for example, within categories of medicine and science, which are not necessarily subject areas associated with Pryce. At the same time, the study of a single public figure concerned in politics, divorce and crime lends itself to the area of sentiment analysis.

The results found from a trawl of the BL Web Archives will be compared with the results obtained from a similar trawl of The National Archive (TNA), Web Archive (using the same search terms) in order to identify inconsistencies between those results and highlight problems with 'blink' analysis.

This case study will help in the development of research methodologies, while problems identified in undertaking this study will test existing search tools and identify other tools needed to support research requirements.

**Proposed methodology** (up to 200 words)

Source material.

Data will be gathered from 'text' trawls of the UK Web Archive, Legal Deposit Web Archive and TNA Web Archive for each of the terms "Vicky Pryce" and a combination of 'Pryce and Huhne'.

Presentation of results.

Using a combination of tables and N-grams, results will be broken down by each of the Web archives trawled, and within each of the text terms searched. This will allow for analysis of different results for the subject in her own right and as the former wife of an M.P.

In order to understand the crawl profile from the two BL Web Archives, data gathered will be broken down in a tabulated format by results of a browse by 'subject' search under the seven available headings on the BL site: this will enable the examination and analysis of both expected and unexpected results.

The same results will be examined in a tabulated format within each of the existing search tool categories, that is: domain suffix; individual domain results; results by year; and format (image, html, pdf and 'other') in order to examine changing interests in the case subject.

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**The main scholarly benefits of your project** (up to 100 words)

By using a small study base, this project will test the scope of existing search tools on the UK and Legal Deposit Web Archives. The method of recording the results obtained from that search will demonstrate a theoretical and methodological framework within which to record and analyse that data. The study will demonstrate research and recording strategies for both small and big data research.

By comparing the results of the UK Web Archive, Legal Deposit Archive and TNA Web Archive, using the same search terms, it will identify any inconsistent results between archive repositories and the problem of 'blink' analysis.

**The broader benefits of your project**, e.g., will others be able to build on it? Is it of interest to a wider public? (up to 100 words)

This study will demonstrate the possibilities of researching an individual topic from web archives and the scope of material available. It will also highlight its limitations, for example, the absence of any body with responsibility for archiving the domain .eu (as Pryce is Greek and Huhne was an M.E.P). The results will also raise the question of archiving social media and blogs, which play an increasingly greater role in single issue campaigns and political commentary. Because this project concerns a high profile court case, the results of the case study will be of interest to the wider public.