Can AI help us brief the Prime Minister?

What's in a briefing?

- When the PM is on a visit making an announcement we will give him a communications briefing.

- We cover the announcement in detail so he's ready to answer any questions about the policy – from the media, key industry stakeholders and directly from the public

- We'll give him a snap shot of what's the news that day that he could be asked about. And we prepare answers to questions he'll get asked.

- The PM is also interested in what audiences might think about policies or topics he's speaking about. So the briefing should include a summary of what's on the minds of audiences too, and what they might ask.

So what's the challenge?

- We've spotted two areas where manual sorting, shuffling and summarising is the rate determining step. And where we think AI could give us a hand so we can use more of our time interpreting and explaining what it all means.

  1. **Challenge 1: Polling** – summarising what different audiences think and feel about the topic we're announcing policy on.

  2. **Challenge 2: The news** – summarising what's in the news nationally, locally and on the topic we're talking about that day.

Challenge 1: Polling data

- We get insight about what audiences think, feel and do from lots of different places – including published reports, focus groups, polling and social listening.

- Getting to grips with polling data can be particularly tricky because:

     1. The data tables are pretty complex

     2. You need to look at a lot of different sources to build a complete picture

Challenge 1: Polling data

- Polling data is usually reported in long and complicated data tables – and not everyone knows how to get to grips with reading them.

- They're usually excel files or CSV. And the formatting is similar but not identical between different pollsters.

- Usually there's 30ish multiple-choice survey questions with Qs down a left-hand column followed by As. And audiences across the top – around 20 age groups regions, socioeconomic groups etc. There's standard audiences that all pollsters include.

- Then it's a matter of reading across and down to find the result for the audience. The UK average is usually in the first column. Knowing if our audiences are significantly above/below/close to that average is something we include in summaries too.

- Not all sheets are the same, which complicates it further! Some tables have 1 Q per sheet in a workbook. And some have 1 audience per sheet….

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BBC 5Live - December 2023

Table 3

Q3. To what extent, if at all, has anti-social behaviour in your local area had a negative impact on your mental health?

BASE: All respondents

	Total	Gender		Age									
		Male	Female	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	NET: 18-34	NET: 35-54	NET: 55+
Significance Level: 95%		a	b	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
Unweighted Total	2300	1115	1172	272	362	322	366	466	509	634	688	975
Total	2300	1117	1172	252	393	364	402	336	525	645	766	861
A significant impact	160	56	98	25	37	36	24	20	12	63	59	32
	7%	5%	8%	10%	10%	10%	6%	6%	2%	10%	8%	4%
			a	efi	fi	efi	f	f		defi	fi	
Some impact	584	286	293	91	139	111	105	64	70	230	216	134
	25%	26%	25%	36%	35%	31%	26%	19%	13%	36%	28%	16%
				defhi	defhi	efi	efi	f		defhi	efi	
Not much of an impact	582	271	311	80	98	91	125	85	104	177	217	188
	25%	24%	27%	32%	25%	25%	31%	25%	20%	27%	28%	22%
				fi			fi	f		fi	fi	
No impact	853	458	395	42	97	102	129	150	333	139	231	483
	37%	41%	34%	16%	25%	28%	32%	45%	63%	22%	30%	56%
		b			a	ag	abg	abcdgh	abcdeghi		ag	abcdegh
Don't know	121	46	75	15	22	23	20	18	7	36	43	25
	5%	4%	6%	6%	6%	6%	5%	5%	1%	6%	6%	3%
			a	fi	fi	fi	f	fi		fi	fi	
NET: Significant or some impact	744	342	391	116	177	147	129	84	82	293	275	166
	32%	31%	33%	46%	45%	40%	32%	25%	16%	45%	36%	19%
				defhi	defhi	defi	efi	fi		defhi	efi	
NET: Not much/no impact	1435	729	706	121	195	194	254	234	437	316	448	671
	62%	65%	60%	48%	50%	53%	63%	70%	83%	49%	58%	78%
		b				a	abcg	abcdgh	abcdeghi		abg	abcdegh

Columns Tested: a,b - a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h,i - a,b,c,d,e,f,g,h,i,j,k,l,m - a,b,c,d - a,b

Challenge 1: Polling data

- You might need to look at several sheets of polling data to find relevant insight, which is time consuming, especially when working to a short sharp deadline.

- And that's if you know where to look in the first place!

- To find out if there is relevant data in there you might have to scour the list of Qs first to see if there's a question on – e.g. crime or policing, or healthcare.

- We need to keep track of the source of data we're using too and include references in summaries.

Challenge 2: The news

- Before the PM goes on a visit or makes an announcement, we'll brief him on a snapshot of what's in the news.

- That would include what's in the national news on the topic he'll be speaking about – i.e. if he's making a speech about policing we'll make sure he's briefed on any big crime stories breaking that day.

- It also includes what's in the local or regional news for the place he's visiting so he understands the issues likely to come up with local people and reporters.

- What sources? We'll search through all the major national and regional news to get a full picture. Which means 10s of outlets – including print, online, TV and radio.

- From the summary of the news we'll also suggest what Qs the PM might be asked so we can prepare responses.

The 'size of the prize'

- These problems aren't unique to No.10 – they're common for all departments. And they're not unique to briefings either.

- Take our polling challenge:

Now	If we could crack this problem
Polling tables sit in departments somewhere. Once a dept has reported on findings they might not ever be looked at again.	All the data in polls from across government could be mined for usefulness and reused for other challenges.
Only people with training can understand data tables. Lack of access means limited use of data.	AI summaries would unlock polling data for everyone – and the experts could sense check/ use their skills on more complex challenges
Departments might duplicate research which costs.	Eradicated needless duplication

Can AI help us put together a briefing for the PM?

He's going on a (fictional) visit to the North East where he'll make an announcement about local policing.

Resources

- You have access to the Newscatcher API – a briefing of how to use this will be held from 14:30 - 15:00. Teams with the option of coms task should remain in the theatre. Newscatcher can be found here HERE. Zoom Link HERE.

- Polling Data and Instructions of how to use them are linked with the problem statements on the evidence house website. Link HERE.

- The Problem Statement Owners – Talk to them!