

Simona Bisiani

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Current position

2022-now

Doctoral Researcher, Institute for People-Centred AI, University of Surrey, UK. Expected End Date: Fall 2026. Thesis Title: *"Computational Infrastructure for Local News Research: Methods, Data, and Evidence of Geographic Disembedding and Diminished News Performance in UK Print and Digital Journalism"*

Research Interests

Sociotechnical perspectives on data representation, media power and information inequalities, computational journalism studies, algorithmic systems and transparency, digital research methods, big data analytics and ethics.

Research Methods

Computational and quantitative methods (web scraping, text mining, machine learning for text classification, clustering, geoparsing, statistical analysis, surveys); qualitative methods (thematic coding, interviews, critical discourse analysis).

Teaching

2023-2025

MANM519 - Topics in People-Centred AI, MSc in Artificial Intelligence, University of Surrey. Module Leader: Dr Bahareh Heravi. Class of 2023, 2024, 2025.

2025

AI Engineering Bootcamp, Saudi Digital Academy, Riyadh (on behalf of Ironhack).

2025

MANM574 - Topics in People-Centred AI, Online MSc in Artificial Intelligence, University of Surrey.

Reviewer

(1) Journalism Studies, (2) Journalism and Media, (3) Problemi dell'Informazione, (4) International Communication Association Conference (ICA)

Professional Experience

- 2024 *Research Assistant*, School of Creative Arts and Industries, University of Canterbury, Kent, UK, under Professor Agnes Gulyas. Literature Review work culminating in an industry report about salient findings from local media research with relevance to policymakers and industry stakeholders.
- 2024 *Data Architect*, Public Interest News Foundation, London, UK. Managing and maintaining the local media database architecture, integrating AI solutions, and developing automation scripts.
- 2023 *Research Assistant*, School of Creative Arts and Industries, University of Canterbury, Kent, UK, under Professor Agnes Gulyas. Digital Data Collection of local media articles following strategic sampling design. Testing of GIS tools to extract toponyms from text.
- 2021-2023 *Lead Researcher*, DataJournalism.com, European Journalism Centre, Maastricht, The Netherlands. Longitudinal Quantitative Survey Design, Analysis, and Report of "The State of Data Journalism" Survey, since the survey inception in 2021.
- 2022 *Data Journalist*, Sheldon.studio, Bolzano, Italy.

Grants & Awards

- 2022-26 £81,900 Scholarship, Surrey Institute for People-Centred AI, University of Surrey
- 2022-26 £65,917 Studentship, University of Surrey
- 2022-26 £3,000 Training Grant, University of Surrey
- 2016 Best Student Award, Journalism BA Year 3, Robert Gordon University

Publications

JOURNAL ARTICLES

- 2025 Bisiani, S., Gulyas, A., & Heravi, B. Towards Efficient and Accessible Geoparsing of UK Local Media: A Benchmark Dataset and LLM-based Approach. *Computational Humanities Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/chr.2025.10012>
- 2023 Bisiani, S., Heravi, B. Uncovering the State of Local News Databases in the UK: Limitations and Impacts on Research. *Journalism and Media*, 4, 1211-1231. <https://doi.org/10.3390/journalmedia4040077>
- 2023 Bisiani, S., Abellan, A., Arias Robles, F., & García-Avilés, J. A. The Data Journalism Workforce: Demographics, Skills, Work Practices, and Challenges in the Aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journalism Practice*, 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17512786.2023.2191866>

UNDER REVIEW

- 2025 Bisiani, S., Stonbely, S., & Heravi, B. *Local in Name Only? The Impact of Ownership and Newsroom Proximity on Local and Original News Coverage*. Accepted at ICA26 (Cape Town, June 2026).

IN PREPARATION

- 2026 Bisiani, S., Gulyas, A., Moore, M., and Heravi, B. *Print Newspapers in Regional Hubs: An Empirical Assessment of Local News Performance and Resource Sharing at Reach plc*.

CONFERENCE PAPERS

- 2025 Bisiani, S., Gulyas, A., & Heravi, B. (2025). Mapping News Geography: A Computational Framework for Classifying Local Media Through Geographic Coverage Patterns. *Anthology of Computers and the Humanities*, 3, 861–882. <https://doi.org/10.63744/PmuIcNvSnDuo>
- 2025 Bisiani, S., Gulyas, A., Wihbey, J., & Heravi, B. UKTwitNewsCor: A Dataset of Online Local News Articles for the Study of Local News Provision. *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media*, 19(1), 2371–2384. <https://doi.org/10.1609/icwsm.v19i1.35940>
- 2025 Bisiani, S., Mitchell, J., Gulyas, A., & Heravi, B. A Semi-Automated Directory System for the UK Local News Landscape: Supporting Policy and Research. *Digital Humanities Conference 2025*. <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/zsxdg>

INDUSTRY REPORTS

- 2025 Bisiani, S. and Mitchell, J. *UK Local News Report 2025*. Public Interest News Foundation. London, UK. Accessible [here](#).
- 2025 Bisiani, S. and Gulyas, A. *Challenges and opportunities for UK local media: Insights from academic research*. Canterbury: Canterbury Christ Church University. Accessible [here](#).
- 2024 Bisiani, S. and Mitchell, J. *UK Local News Report 2024*. Public Interest News Foundation. London, UK. Accessible [here](#).

TALKS

- 2026 *Reforming Public Subsidy: Evidence on Corporate Ownership and Newsroom Proximity's Impact on Local News*. Local Journalism Researchers Workshop 2026, Duke University in Washington DC, USA.
- 2025 *Toponym Disambiguation of Local News Articles: an LLM-Based Approach* [Data Methods Initiative](#). Invited Speaker to deliver a lecture and live coding session to a multidisciplinary audience.
- 2025 *Computational Tools for Mapping and Measuring Local News at Scale*. Local Journalism Researchers Workshop 2025, UNC Chapel Hill, North Carolina.
- 2024 *News deserts and local media state of play*. Panel discussion with Philip Napoli, Agnes Gulyas, and Pedro Jeronimo organised by the European University Institute.
- 2023 *Local News Roundtable*. Invited speaker at a closed expert panel organised by the Public Interest News Foundation at the Department of Culture, Media, and Sports in Westminster, London.
- 2023 *Data Journalism Today: A Comparative Analysis of Two Consecutive Surveys*. Computation + Journalism Conference, ETH Zurich. [Link to talk](#)

Education

- 2019-2021 MSc COMPUTATIONAL SOCIAL SCIENCE, Linköping University. **Thesis:** *Measuring the impact of state financial support for local journalism on the critical information needs of citizens in Swedish journalistically fragile municipalities*. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.24788.10880>
- 2013-2017 BA(HONS) JOURNALISM, Robert Gordon University. **Thesis:** *Impact of citizen journalism platforms on social capital in Aberdeen*. Grade First Class (1:1).

Extracurricular Modules

2024

2023	NATURAL LANGUAGE PROCESSING (COM3029), University of Surrey. Dr. Diptesh Kanojia. MACHINE LEARNING AND DATA MINING (COMM055), University of Surrey. Dr. Alireza Tamaddon-Nezhad.
2022	DATA SCIENCE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES (COMM054), University of Surrey. Tom Thorne.

Technical Skills

- Programming: R, Python, SQL, YAML, HTML
- Frameworks: quanteda, scikitlearn, Ollama (LLMs), OpenAI API, Langchain, Langsmith.
- LLM Toolkit: Prompt Engineering, RAG
- Environments: Jupyter Notebooks, Google Colab, Jupyter Lab, Positron, RStudio, Visual Studio Code, Excel
- Data Visualisation: Tableau, Datawrapper, Flourish, ggplot2, matplotlib
- Version Control: Git, GitHub, GitLab
- High-Performance Computing: Slurm
- Italian (Native), Swedish and English (Fluent), French and Spanish (Intermediate), German (beginner)