

Research communications, impact and AI

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Outline

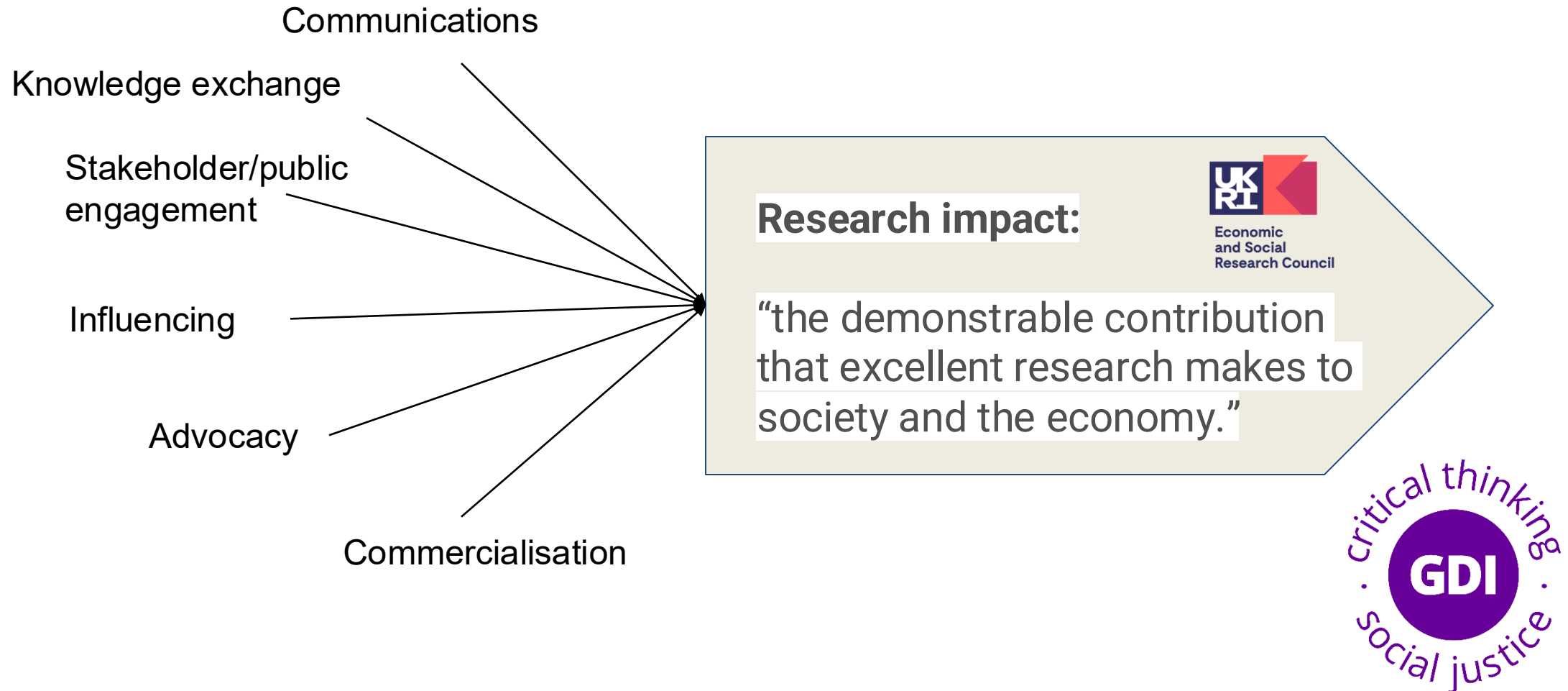
- What's the relationship between communications and impact?
- Raising your profile and communicating your work
- Emerging opportunities and pitfalls of AI
- Discussion

A virtuous circle:

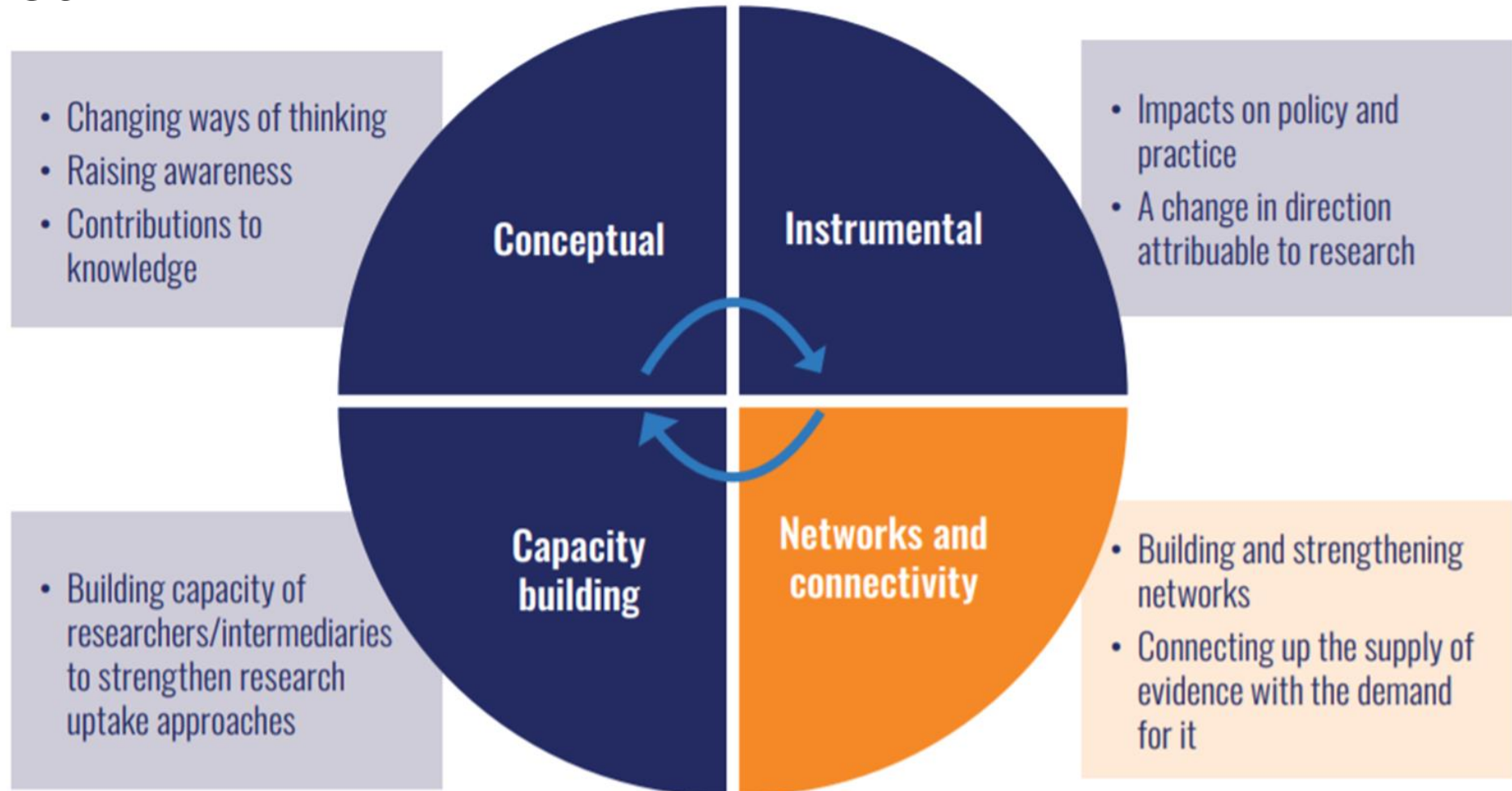
The relationship between
communications and
impact



Defining (external) impact



What is impact?



Source:
The Impact
Initiative

bit.ly/42D259x

For policy impact, relationships are key

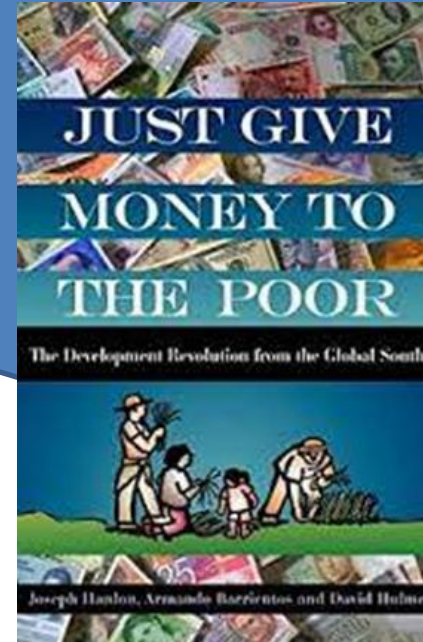
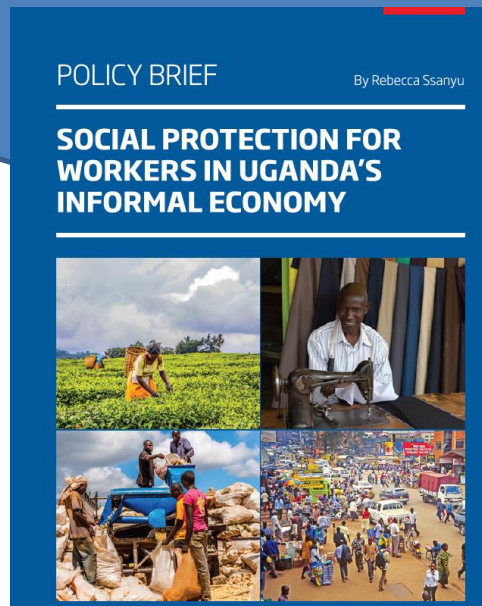


bit.ly/3nbbKyW

Start with a strategy (not tactics!)

1. What do you want to influence or communicate?
 - Focus on the problem, not the issue – be specific
2. Who can change it, or who do I want to engage?
 - Stakeholder mapping – power and influence
3. How can you persuade them, or what's relevant for them?
 - Windows of opportunity? Allies? Different comms activities?

Change often takes time - and a variety of approaches



It's not about what you want to say.



It's about what your audience understands.

Don't be a submarine

Wonk Comms blog:
bit.ly/2KeMBF4



What are your experiences of (research) communications and impact?

Are there any issues or techniques you'd like to know more about?

Raising your profile – the basics

If someone googles you – make sure it's what you want them to see.

- Institutional profile
- Google scholar
- LinkedIn
- Academia edu/research gate
- Personal website
- Blogs/media articles



Why do profiles matter?

- Credibility
- A way for people to find out what you work on
- Forge connections - especially with social media profiles
- Official tie to institution
- One-stop shop for what you research, publications etc

About 73,500 results (0.42 seconds)

<https://www.research.manchester.ac.uk/portal/khalid...>

Prof Khalid Nadvi | The University of Manchester

I am a Political Economist specializing on issues relating to trade and industrial development. In particular my work has focused on small enterprise clusters, ...

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Khalid Nadvi The University of Manchester - ResearchGate

Khalid Nadvi currently works at the Global Development Institute (GDI). The University of

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Researcher



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Books: [Local Clusters in Global Value Chains: Exploring Dynamic Linkages Between Germany and Pakistan](#), [MORE](#)

Research interests: Globalisation, Industrialisation, Global Value Chains, International Trade, Labour

Profiles



Twitter



Google Scholar

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Nicholas



Stephanie



Tania



John

Be your own
'influencer'...

...but do it in
a way that is
authentic to
you – and let
your institution
help too.



LinkedIn is the new Twitter?



Blogging <> social media continuum

- > Short/longform content constantly merging and shifting
- > Social media platforms – especially LinkedIn
- > Cross-posting on social media – eg threads, summary posts
- > Instant feedback on blogs/articles



African Cities Research Consortium

@AfricanCities_



Get to know more about our eight **#urbandevelopment** domains and the research our teams are conducting with our domains blog series



African Cities Research Consortium
Blog series | Urban development domain



NEW | What lessons can we learn from Covid-19 responses in African cities?

As part of the **#CovidCollective**, research by **@IIED** and **@GlobalDevInst** have been a series of responses to the **#Covid19** crisis across a range of African cities.

1/7



african-cities.org

What lessons can we learn from Covid-19 responses in African cities? - J
For low-income residents in African cities, the Covid-19 pandemic has often been experienced less as a health crisis and more in terms of the devastation of the economic crisis.

Writing for non-academics

- > Pack a punch in the first paragraph
- > Headline and lede key for grabbing attention
- > Focus on one key argument
- > Match tone/style to others

FINANCIAL TIMES

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Opinion **beyondbrics** + Add to myFT

Rural women are biggest victims of Africa's energy shortfall

Pioneering solutions that are already in use offer hope for change

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A worker at a solar plant in Senegal, one of the potential solutions for Africa's energy shortfall © Bloomberg

Tumusiime Rhoda Peace JANUARY 15 2020 4

African countries suffer from [shortages of energy supply and access](#), with negative effects on social and economic progress. As a result, the majority of energy expended across farms in Africa comes from manpower. But in truth, this is mostly “woman power”.

Structure / style / tone

Inverted pyramid structure:

Need to know
(Most important info)



Nice to know
(Least important
info)

Possible op-ed structure:

Headline

Lede (introduction to catch readers' attention, often bringing in a news hook)

Argument statement (the main "thread" of your op-ed)

- > Point 1 + evidence
- > Point 2 + evidence
- > Point 3 + evidence

Conclusion (link back to your lede; ideally include a call to action)

Podcasts:

Getting into the details – long(er) conversations

Global Development Institute podcast



Alumni Discussion: Navigating Development Careers in the Twenty-First Century

Global Development Institute podcast

In this episode, Dr Natalie Cunningham, Senior Lecturer in Leadership for Development at GDI, speaks to three UoM alumni about their experiences navigating the contemporary development and humanitarian...

12 Nov 2025 • 57 min 41 sec



In Conversation: Gindo Tampubolon on healthy ageing around the world

Global Development Institute podcast

A conversation with Gindo Tampubolon, GDI's Reader in Global Health, to discuss his research on global healthy ageing and his work as a lead expert for the World Health Organization's Life Course & Healthy...

5 Nov 2025 • 26 min 2 sec

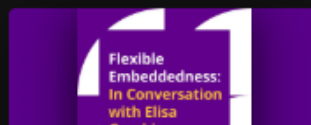


In Conversation: Luis Eduardo Pérez Murcia on home and internal displacement in Colombia

Global Development Institute podcast

In this episode, we speak to GDI alumnus and research fellow Luis Eduardo Pérez Murcia about his recent open access book, A Long Journey Home: Losing and Remaking Home Following Conflict and Displacement....

23 Oct 2025 • 36 min 51 sec



Flexible Embeddedness: In Conversation with Elisa Gambino

Global Development Institute podcast

Guaging the success of your efforts

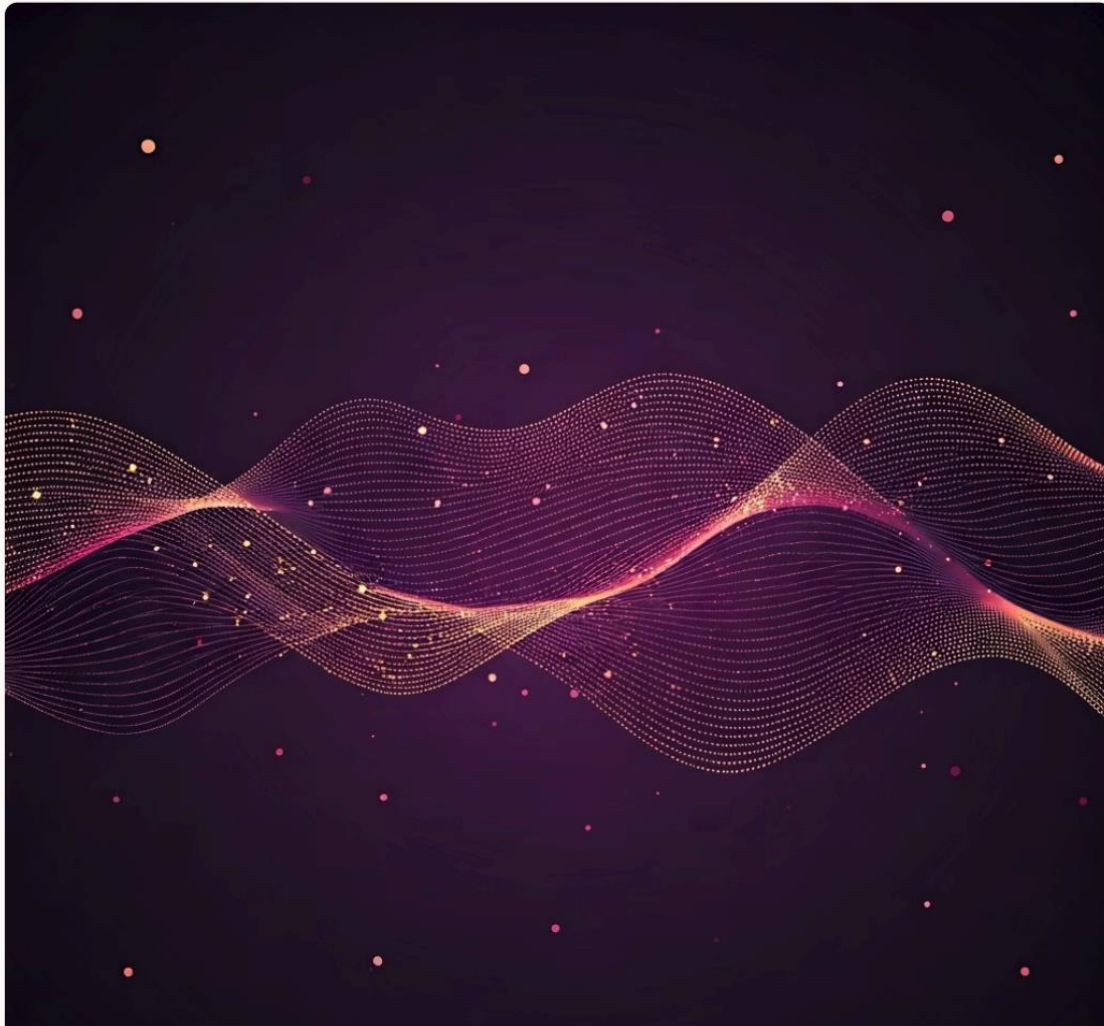
- Progress against your strategy
- Citations:
 - ...But there's a big lag and they may not tell you much about the impact of your work beyond academia.
- Altmetrics:
 - ...Will give you a better sense of where your papers are being discussed.
- Metrics
 - ...Check your own social media / online comms performance
- Anecdotal feedback
 - ... Keep as notes/on document (not just with in an email).

What works best for you when communicating your research?

What doesn't?

AI's Acceleration Effect

Artificial intelligence isn't just another trend—it's a powerful catalyst intensifying all existing shifts in our information environment.



Personalisation

AI enables unprecedented content targeting, accelerating fragmentation of audiences



Content Creation

Lower barriers to production fuel disintermediation of traditional channels



Synthetic Media

Deepfakes and AI-generated content further challenge shared reality

www.linkedin.com/in/jonathan-tanner-rootcause/
www.rootcause.global/

AI as Your Strategic Partner



Rather than fearing disruption, policy communicators should strategically leverage AI to enhance their work.

Strategic Thought Partner

Use AI to test assumptions, explore alternative framings, and identify blind spots in your communications planning and message development.

Dialogue Aid

Deploy thoughtfully designed AI systems to maintain meaningful conversations with stakeholders at scale whilst preserving the human touch where it matters most.

Sense-Making Tool

Leverage AI's ability to analyse vast amounts of text, social media content, and feedback to identify emerging narratives and audience concerns.

What Stays the Same

Despite technological transformation, fundamental principles of human communication remain constant.



Human Nature

People still respond to the same emotional triggers and psychological patterns that have always driven engagement and persuasion.



Trust Mechanisms

Authentic relationships remain the foundation of credibility and influence, regardless of technological mediation.



Narrative Power

Stories that emotionally resonate and create meaning continue to be more persuasive than raw facts or data alone.

Are you using AI to help communicate your research?

What's it most useful for?

Where do we need to be careful?

(Some) take aways:

- There isn't a single blueprint for building your profile or achieving impact. Focus on what works for you.
- Decide what you want to achieve (strategy) and then on comms activities (tactics).
- To achieve policy impact, relationships are key. You can build them via effective communications (though this isn't always necessary).
- Think carefully about what your audience understands – not just what you want to say.
- Make sure your online profile(s) are up to date.
- If you're going to use one social network, LinkedIn might be your best bet (at the moment).
- Practice writing for different audiences – and getting people's attention up front.
- Podcasts (and video) are growing.
- Review and adapt your activities.
- Make intelligent use of AI – but don't use it to outsource your public engagement.
- Have fun!