

RESEARCH STUDENTS AND POSTDOCS

ThinkLab and BBC: Researching the Future of How We Work Online

Develop and apply your research skills to work on a real-world challenge alongside academic and industry experts through the University of Cambridge ThinkLab.

What will we be working on?

As many organisations identify and develop their approaches to a ‘hybrid’ working future, the need to maintain a sense of community and belonging across geographically dispersed teams has become a challenge. Typically, the response has been directed toward existing digital platforms to offer this community experience for colleagues, which historically have been used in tandem with office-based working, to share ideas, knowledge and offer a conversational platform.

However, as organisations increasingly lean on these platforms as a means of creating collaborative, co-design community environments, often in lieu of office-based interaction, are these platforms merely assumed to offer the inclusive, equitable platform in which all employees can collaborate? While these platforms -- take for example, Microsoft Teams or Zoom -- offer benefits, might they also present challenges and pitfalls that can hinder community building efforts? Why might employers assume these platforms to be inclusive, equitable environments in which everyone can contribute? Questions such as these will be the focus of our latest project for the University of Cambridge ThinkLab.

Who is this opportunity for?

We are looking for up to twenty motivated and ambitious Cambridge University research graduate students or postdocs to help explore the challenges and opportunities for access and community building on digital platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams. Alongside researchers at the BBC, this project will investigate factors that ultimately shape how we work and connect in a hybrid world.

We welcome researchers from a diverse range of backgrounds and areas of expertise. This should be an exciting and unique opportunity to apply your research skills and experience to a topic that impacts a great deal of our daily experience, as well as to work closely with members of the world's oldest national broadcast organisation.

How it works

Over an approximately 12-week period you will work alongside our project leaders and various other stakeholders on the research project and develop innovative solutions to accomplish the project goals, facilitated by the ThinkLab team. Besides our weekly 2-hour meetings where we develop ideas, plan our research, and provide updates on our progress, the additional individual workload of participating in a ThinkLab project may involve 1-2 hours in some weeks, depending on the stage of the project. Collaboration is central to the ThinkLab model, and every member of the team is expected to contribute to the final outputs in order for the project to succeed, so please do consider your other commitments before applying.

Programme Outline (PRELIMINARY)

Week 1: Introduction to ThinkLab and project plan discussion	Week beginning Monday, 13th March
Week 2: Establish project roadmap & work plan	Week beginning Monday, 20th March
Week 3: Partner meetings: engagement and plans	Week beginning Monday, 27th March
Week 4: Research & data collection	Week beginning Monday, 3rd April
Week 5: Research & data collection	Week beginning Monday, 10th April
Week 6: Partner check-ins	Week beginning Monday, 17th April
Week 7: Finalise research & data collection	Week beginning Monday, 24th April
Week 8: Discuss final outputs	Week beginning Monday, 1st May
Week 9: Finalise outputs	Week beginning Monday, 8th May
Week 10: Final team meeting and presentation prep	Week beginning Monday, 15th May
Week 11: Presentations & project wrap-up	Week beginning Monday, 22nd May
Week 12: Project debrief & next steps (TBC)	Week beginning Monday, 29th May

Note: Dates and times for the ThinkLab schedule are provisional, but you should ideally be able to attend all sessions once dates and times are fully confirmed. The meetings will either be in person, online, or a hybrid of the two - venues etc TBC. Please inform us about any access requirements you might have.

How do I apply?

Fill out the online application form (link below) no later than **5pm GMT, Monday, 6th March 2023**. If you have any further questions about the project or require a specific accessible format of the application form, please feel free to contact us at thinklab@admin.cam.ac.uk.

Link to the **application form**: [please click here](#)