

Simona Bisiani

Surrey Institute for People-Centred AI

University of Surrey

Guildford, UK

Email: s.bisiani@surrey.ac.uk

URL: www.simonabisiani.github.io

Academic webpage: www.surrey.ac.uk/people/simona-bisiani

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/simona-bisiani-847763b7/

Current position

2022-now

Doctoral Researcher, Institute for People-Centred AI, University of Surrey, UK. Thesis submission: 31st July 2026. Title: "*Computational Study of UK Local Journalism: Measuring Infrastructure and the Relationship Between Media Ownership and Journalistic Performance*". Expected End Date: Fall 2026.

Research Interests

My research interests focus on how news narratives develop across media channels, how public discourse and sentiment shift over time, and how emerging issues gain attention. I'm particularly interested in identifying patterns across large volumes of information, evaluating source credibility, and translating complex media coverage into clear, actionable insights.

Research Methods

Computational social science and quantitative methods (web scraping, text mining, social network analysis, machine learning, geoparsing, surveys, descriptive and inferential statistics); 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

2023-2026

- 2024 *Research Assistant*, School of Creative Arts and Industries, University of Canterbury, Kent, UK, under Professor Agnes Gulyas.
- 2021-2023 *Data Architect*, Public Interest News Foundation, London, UK. Managing and maintaining the local media database architecture, integrating AI solutions, and developing automation scripts.
- 2022 *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

- 2026 Bisiani, S., Gulyas, A., Moore, M., & Heravi, B. The hollowing out of local newspapers: A longitudinal study of journalistic performance decline and content homogenisation at a major UK publisher. *Journalism*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1177/14648849261474910
- 2025 Bisiani, S., Gulyas, A., & Heravi, B. Towards efficient and accessible geoparsing of U.K. local media: A benchmark dataset and LLM-based approach. *Computational Humanities Research*, 1, e10. doi:10.1017/chr.2025.10012
- 2025 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*, 19(3), 502–522. doi:10.1080/17512786.2023.2191866
- 2023 Bisiani, S., & Heravi, B. Uncovering the state of local news databases in the UK: Limitations and impacts on research. *Journalism and Media*, 4(4), 1211–1231. doi:10.3390/journalmedia4040077

UNDER REVIEW

- 2026 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 ICA (Cape Town, June 2026).

CONFERENCE PAPERS

- 2025 Bisiani, S., Gulyas, A., & Heravi, B. Mapping news geography: A computational framework for classifying local media through geographic coverage patterns. *Anthology of Computers and the Humanities*, 3, 861–882. doi: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. doi: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. Paper presented at *Digital Humanities 2025*. doi:10.31235/osf.io/zsxdg

INDUSTRY REPORTS

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

TALKS

- 2026 *Local in Name Only: Computational Methods to Mapping the Hollowing Out of UK Local News*. Invited talk at the [Impresso Seminar Series](#), 7 May 2026. [Slides](#)
- 2026 *Reforming Public Subsidy: Evidence on Corporate Ownership and Newsroom Proximity's Impact on Local News*. Local Journalism Researchers Workshop 2026, Duke University, Washington, DC, USA.
- 2025 *Toponym Disambiguation of Local News Articles: An LLM-Based Approach*. Invited lecture and live coding session for a multidisciplinary audience at the [Data Methods Initiative](#).
- 2025 *Computational Tools for Mapping and Measuring Local News at Scale*. Local Journalism Researchers Workshop 2025, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA.
- 2024 *News Deserts and the State of Local Media*. Panel discussion with Philip Napoli, Agnes Gulyas, and Pedro Jerónimo, 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 for Culture, Media and Sport, Westminster, London.
- 2023 *Data Journalism Today: A Comparative Analysis of Two Consecutive Surveys*. Computation + Journalism Conference, ETH Zurich, Switzerland.

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

Technical Skills

- **Programming and data analysis:** Python, R, SQL, Excel

- **Computational text analysis:** NLP, computational content analysis, text classification, geoparsing, clustering, and large-scale media analysis
- **Machine learning and statistical tools:** scikit-learn, quanteda
- **Large language models:** prompt engineering, retrieval-augmented generation (RAG), LoRA fine-tuning, OpenAI API, Ollama, LangChain, and LangSmith
- **Data visualisation:** ggplot2, Matplotlib, Tableau, Datawrapper, and Flourish
- **Research environments:** JupyterLab, Google Colab, RStudio, Positron, and Visual Studio Code
- **Version control and reproducibility:** Git, GitHub, GitLab, YAML, and Jupyter notebooks
- **High-performance computing:** Slurm
- **Web technologies:** HTML, CSS, R Shiny, Streamlit

Languages

- Italian (native); English and Swedish (fluent); French and Spanish (intermediate); German (beginner)