Simona Bisiani

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Current position

2022-now   *Doctoral Researcher* in AI-Assisted Journalism, Surrey Institute for People-Centred AI, Centre for Vision, Speech, and Signal Processing, University of Surrey, UK. *Expected End Date: Spring 2026.*

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 methods (web scraping, text mining, LLM-based inference, clustering, geoparsing, statistical analysis); qualitative and critical 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.*

In Preparation

2026 Bisiani, S., Heravi, B. Who Gets the News? *Socioeconomic Patterns in the Geography of UK Local Coverage.*

2026 Bisiani, S., Heravi, B. *The Print Paradox: Local Anchoring and Content Homogenisation in Hub-Based Journalism.*

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. *Pending release.*

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

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 News 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   Natural Language Processing (COM3029), University of Surrey. Dr. Diptesh Kanojia.

2023   Machine Learning and Data Mining (COMM055), University of Surrey. Dr. Alireza Tamaddoni-Nezhad.

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)

Last updated: January 14, 2026