

Tristan Adam Hotham

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POLIS

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Research interests

Social media, communications, election campaigns, e-campaigning and political behaviour.

Education

PhD Politics

2016-2020

University of Bath, Bath

MRes Politics and International Studies

2014-2015

University of Bath, Bath

MA Politics and International Studies

2012-2013

University of Durham, Durham

LL.b Law

2009-2012

University of Exeter, Exeter

Research and relevant work experience

Founder

Social Media Research Centre, Bath

2020

I have founded the Social Media Research Centre, a research house and consultancy that strives to make social media research better. We do two things; we examine social networks developing reports to help the world understand the impacts of social media better, we also help others make the most of their social media research.

Research consultant

Whotargetsme, London

Oct 2019 – Mar 2020

For 5 months during the final year of my PhD I worked as a research consultant for WhoTargetsMe a pressure group focused on understanding and reforming targeted advertising. I worked on two projects, I was tasked with all the research WTM did during the 2019 General Election, and post-election was tasked in creating a transparency report released summer 2020.

- Undertook research from inception to conclusion, see my website for a record of articles.
- Created many stories, reports and features that gained national and international attention.
- Engaged in multifaceted research upon Facebook's Ad Library and WTM's data to tight deadlines.
- Organised a temporary intern and collaborated with Diga Communications in disseminating my research.
- Liaised with journalists and partners daily, creating research to demand.

Postgraduate researcher

POLIS, University of Bath, Bath

2016-2019

The project examined the use of Facebook across 2010-2019 in the UK by all major parties, with special focus on Labour and the Conservatives across the 2015 and 2017 General Elections, as well as satellite group Momentum. *Supervisors: Peter Allen and David Cutts, formerly included Nick Startin and Roger Awan-Scully.*

- Research was of my own inception and creation, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.
- Quantitative and qualitative analysis of social media data, coded data and content analysis.
- Analysis of Facebook big data, as well as traditional survey data including the BES.
- Worked to clear deadlines with my supervisors.
- Presented research at multiple conferences, talks, podcasts and via news media.

- Leadership role - POLIS Dept. Research Representative, POLIS Dept. Faculty Representative.
- Organising committee SWDTP Conference 2017, Team UACES Conference 2019.

Internship

Journeyman Pictures, London

Jan – Jun 2014

On completing my MA, I worked at Journeyman, a leading international documentary distributor and post production house. I initially worked organizing the footage library, cataloguing, transcoding, subtitling and adding metadata the Journeyman archive and then selling this clipped footage to documentary production houses. Later I worked to sell documentaries including the ‘Sundance’ winning ‘Return to Homs’, to international television and news networks, including Sky, BBC, Discovery, National Geographic, and Al Jazeera.

Teaching experience

Teaching assistant

2016-2019

POLIS and SPS, University of Bath, Bath

- Postgraduate teaching assistant on three first year modules, two positions on Introduction to British politics PL10417 from 2017-18 and 2018-19, alongside Introduction to politics: theory and analysis PL10967 from 2018-2019.
- I have managed over 40 hours of seminars, including creating teaching methods and organized lesson planning. We also engaged in yearly reflection sessions on our teaching.
- I have marked many essays and exams.
- I have given two full two-hour lectures on social media and traditional media campaigning 1st year students.
- Guided dozens of students in their essays as a peer mentor.

Teaching assistant

2018-2019

Widening Participation Office, University of Bath

- I also taught Criminology to underrepresented groups via Access Bath Summer School. A fulfilling experience teaching younger potential students.

Technical skills

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|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| • Quantitative social media analysis | • Microsoft packages especially Excel | • Data gathering software |
| • Qualitative social media analysis | • R/Stata/SPSS statistics | • Video, music and photo editing software |
| • Content analysis | • Text analysis, text as data | • Marketing/social media management |
| • Quantitative content analysis | • Report writing/copywriting | • Typology |

Funding and awards

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| • ESRC studentship
Valued at £15,000 for three years with £700 per annum research funds | 2016-2019 |
| • Travel grant from EPOP
Bursary at £150 to attend the Conference in Glasgow | 2019 |
| • Free invitation to Digital Leaders Conference
Bursary £150 ticket to attend the Conference in London | 2018 |

Courses of note

Grand Innovation Challenge (30h)

2019

University of Bath

Media and outreach

I have provided commentary for news sources including on BBC TV and radio, Sky News, The Economist, New York Times, Independent, Financial Times, New Statesman and Telegraph among others. I have also been on the Social Minds podcast as a guest. I have also created a YouTube channel where I discuss social media campaigning.

Work that formed basis of other's media content

Murphy, Joe. "Tories hiding Boris Johnson from London voters in Facebook ads". *Evening Standard*, 2019. [[link](#)]

Doward, Jamie. "Voters 'used as lab rats' in political Facebook adverts, warn analysts". *Observer*, 2019. [[link](#)]

Various. Targeted advertising section, "ITV election night", *ITV News*, 2019. [[link](#)]

Standley, Nathan. "Spending on Facebook political ads reveals 'complicated battleground' as Hull heads to the polls", *Hull Daily Mail*, 2019. [[link](#)]

I also (with Rowland Manthorpe of *Sky News*) broke the story of Facebook's missing adverts before the General Election [[link](#)]. This story was later published via *Reuters* into the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *The Guardian* and others.

Professional affiliations

PSA, 2016-present, EPOP, 2016-present, ICA, 2020-present

Publications

Articles in books

Hotham, Tristan. "Behind the curtain of the targeting machine: political parties A/B testing in action." *UK Election Analysis*. The Centre for Comparative Politics and Media Research, 2019. p88-90. [[link](#)]

Articles in research blogs

Hotham, Tristan. "Brexit in GE2019 political advertising: an asset for some, a liability for others." *LSE Brexit* (2020). [[link](#)]

Hotham, Tristan. "We need to talk about A/B testing: Brexit, attack ads and the election campaign." *LSE Brexit* (2019). [[link](#)]

Hotham, Tristan. "The Digital Campaign: targeted advertising in the 2019 General Election." *Political Studies Association Blog*, (2019). [[link](#)]

Hotham, Tristan. "General Election 2019: What are the parties telling us via their targeted adverts?" *Political Studies Association Blog*, (2019). [[link](#)]

Hotham, Tristan. "Facebook risks starting a war on knowledge." *The Conversation*, 2018. [[link](#)]

Hotham, Tristan. "Facebook is restricting search results—is this taking transparency seriously?" *The Conversation*, 2018. [[link](#)]

Working papers

Hotham, Tristan. "A/B testing: what it is and how it worked during the 2019 General Election."

Hotham, Tristan. "What are party leader pages for? A case study of the 2015 and 2017 General Elections."

Hotham, Tristan. "Momentum on Facebook, how the group campaigned during the 2017 General Election and permanently in 2018"

Hotham, Tristan. "How do parties campaign using Facebook? Janus-faced campaigning in the 2017 General Election"

Hotham, Tristan. "Labour and the Conservatives content approaches across the 2015 and 2017 General Elections"

Conference presentations

Oral presentations

Hotham, Tristan. "*What do party leader pages do on UK Facebook?*" Political Studies Association Conference 2019.

Hotham, Tristan. "*Is it party leader pages or party pages that matter most on UK Facebook?*" Elections, Public Opinion and Parties Conference 2019.

Hotham, Tristan. "*Researching Facebook in troubled times*" SWDTP Conference. 2018.

Hotham, Tristan. "*So who exactly are party's reaching on Facebook?*" SWDTP Conference. 2017.

Hotham, Tristan, and Cutts, David. "*Facebook and Big Data: Has it changed party campaigning in Britain forever?*" Elections, Public Opinion and Parties Conference. 2016.

Invited talks

Hotham, Tristan. *Social media and politics today.* Invited lecture for Introduction to Social Theory a 1st year Sociology module. University of Bath. 2019.

References

Available upon request