



# Senior Research Fellow – Digital Societies and Technology

Ref.: SRFDST0524

Location: London with hybrid working in the UK

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*Candidates are strongly advised to study ODI's activities and objectives before completing an application form. Further information can be found on [odi.org](http://odi.org).*

## **An introduction to ODI**

### Who we are

ODI is an independent, global think tank, working for a sustainable and peaceful world in which every person thrives. We harness the power of **evidence** and **ideas** through research and partnership to confront challenges, develop solutions and create **change**.

ODI has around 200 staff, most of whom are researchers with the remainder providing a range of communications and professional expertise.

### What we do

- We undertake cutting-edge research and analysis to generate evidence, ideas and solutions.
- We act as trusted, expert advisers to those making change around the world.
- We bring people together to turn ideas into action.
- We communicate our work around the world to increase its reach and impact.

### Our work

Our work addresses four key global challenges, and explores the tools and approaches needed to enable progress and address risks.

### Our values

We are passionate about our mission and work as one to achieve our purpose.

We are committed to being the best, striving for quality and excellence in everything we do

We work strategically to deliver shared goals.

We are wholehearted in working to our stated values, codes of ethics & conduct.

We take care to work within the principles and boundaries set by the legislature, funders, regulators, and professional bodies.

We respect and celebrate the diversity of the places and cultures in which we operate.

We strive to be inclusive and are active in promoting a supportive work environment.

We are proud to work for ODI, promoting the good reputation and image of the organisation, wherever we may be in the world.

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# F.I.R.E

## ODI's Values-Behaviour Framework

| <i>Values</i>        | <i>Guiding Principles</i>   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Fearless</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We have the courage to take an independent perspective</li><li>• We are not afraid to challenge the status quo</li><li>• We are agile and prepared for change</li><li>• We speak out against injustice and unacceptable behaviour</li></ul>   |
| <b>Inspirational</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We are passionate about our mission and purpose</li><li>• We are truly international, working in partnership to tackle issues of global and local concern</li><li>• We strive for excellence and to be the best at what we do</li><li>• We aim to be a positive influence for change</li></ul>        |
| <b>Rigorous</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We are experts in our field</li><li>• We are socially and culturally aware</li><li>• We ensure high quality analysis and evidence that is robust</li><li>• We facilitate the transformation of ideas to policy</li></ul>  |
| <b>Ethical</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We act in accordance with our Codes of Conduct</li><li>• We are zealous in our safeguarding &amp; ethical research practices</li><li>• We abide by our written rules on business ethics</li><li>• We believe in transparency, openness, honesty, fairness and integrity in everything we do</li></ul> |

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## Job description

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <b>Job title:</b>        | <b>Senior Research Fellow – Digital Societies and Technologies</b> |
| <b>Department/group:</b> | <b>Politics and Governance Programme</b>                           |
| <b>Grade:</b>            | <b>Grade 6</b>   |
| <b>Responsible to:</b>   | <b>Director of Programme</b>                                       |
| <b>Responsible for:</b>  | <b>ROs, SROs (as required)</b>                                     |

### Overview of job

#### About us

ODI ([odi.org](http://odi.org)) is an independent, global think tank. We work to inspire people to act on injustice and inequality. Through research, convening and influencing, we generate ideas that matter for people and planet.

We are looking for a Senior Research Fellow (Digital Societies and Technology) to increase the impact and reach of ODI's research and policy engagement on politics, political economy and governance through planning, coordination and delivery of first-class communications and public affairs activities.

#### About the Programme

Digitalisation and digital technologies such as AI, have created a set of unprecedented possibilities for people's lives and wellbeing. The augmented power to gather, process and disseminate information through digital technology and systems can be a huge force for good. But the benefits are neither automatic nor evenly spread and as with all technologies, effective and ethical governance is key. Without it, the poorest and already most marginalised groups are least likely to benefit from digital transition, with the risk that it simply deepens marginalisation and entrenches existing inequalities. Digitalisation can also be misused, to misinform, to create conflict, to undermine democratic practice, and to enable acts of cyber attrition, to deny identities and to restrict privacy and liberty. For these reasons, digitalisation and technological innovations presents profound and pressing challenges and critical questions for societies at large, for policy makers, private sector actors and for researchers.

As part of ODI's commitment to making equity, inclusive growth, social justice and sustainability central to all our work, and acknowledging how digitalization has fundamentally reshaped our societies, ODI has created a dedicated Digital Societies Initiative to explore how technology can be harnessed for the greater good and to identify ways to monitor and reduce its potential to damage positive outcomes – justice, equality and inclusion.

The Senior Research Fellow (Digital Societies and Technology) sits within ODI's Politics and Governance Programme (PoGo) which brings together global leaders in political economy analysis, who generate evidence-based applied research and analysis to shape thinking and advise policy makers.

The Digital Societies Initiative brings a distinctly political economy lens to the study of evolving digital societies globally whilst working in partnership across ODI to leverage research expertise on a range of themes including conflict and crisis, the

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humanitarian system, gender norms, digital public infrastructure and public financial management. As part of the initiative, ODI also works with frontline actors, civil society advocacy and research organisations.

### **About you**

ODI is looking to appoint a highly motivated and experienced, well networked (across academic communities, policy communities, Global South partner communities) and widely recognised researcher, thought leader and excellent communicator, to lead its Digital Societies Initiative.

As Senior Research Fellow on Digital Societies and Technology, the successful candidate will lead, advance and increase the size, scope, visibility and viability of ODI's Digital Societies Initiative.

### **Digital Societies & Technologies in ODI Politics and Governance Programme**

This Senior Research Fellow on Digital Societies and Technology will be housed within the Politics and Governance programme but work in close collaboration with colleagues across other teams within ODI working on different aspects of the digital portfolio.

The Politics and Governance Programme (PoGo) brings together ODI's social and political scientists whose policy driven research on political and political economy questions notably: how contexts, societal trust, institutions that govern and the nature of political settlements, structure incentives for change and shape the ways in which change happens.

The Digital Societies Initiative within PoGo includes a portfolio of projects that seek to tackle three main questions:

- How can stakeholders come to grips with the existing and potential harms of digitalisation across different areas of people's lives and human rights?
- What are the possibilities for digitalisation to support greater inclusion, justice and equality, while mitigating the increasing potential for harm?
- Should there be limits on our digital worlds to ensure more just, equitable and inclusive futures, and if so, what should they be and who decides?

### **Main duties and responsibilities**

#### **1. Fundraising to grow the Digital Societies Portfolio and make it viable and visible**

- Develop new concepts and ideas to extend intellectual understanding and inform policy & practice; and to expand the team's research & analysis on digital issues
- Monitor and analyse developments in the external environment, building and managing relationships with potential funders
- Develop well budgeted expressions of interest, research proposals and full project proposals (both propositional and responsive)
- Seek funding for proposals to sustain your own professional activities, to contribute to the
- Institute's cost and to meet individual and collective financial targets.

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- Build and manage relationships with a wide range of potential collaborators (including from academia) across a range of countries
- 2. Project & programme delivery**
    - Deliver substantive pieces of research, analysis and public affairs that make best use of
      - your own skills and of the breadth of ODI's expertise and experience
    - Take responsibility for the implementation, administrative and financial management of research, advisory and public affairs projects
    - Manage the work of staff working on your own projects and other team members, including Research Officers, consultants and ODI associates as appropriate
  - 3. Policy advice, media/public affairs, engagement and communication**
    - Author and co-author a range of types of targeted research & advisory outputs (eg reports, policy briefs, webinars, e-consultations, blogs, other more innovative communications products) for different audiences
    - Maintain a watching brief on developments in the sector and be able to respond rapidly with insightful advice & analysis
    - Contribute to the development of innovative methods of reaching global audiences
    - Build the programme's position and reputation as a centre of excellence in understanding how to build successful digital societies
  - 4. Contribution to delivery of ODI corporate strategy and collegial life**
    - Overseeing integration of digitalization as a cross-cutting issue in each of PoGo's priority thematic areas of work (conflict/peacebuilding; governance & democratic backsliding; justice, human rights & rule of law)
    - Foster collaborative working with other ODI teams (in particular Development and Public Finance; Humanitarian Policy Group; Gender, Equity and Social Inclusion; Equity and Social Policy)
    - Advance and contribute to development of research practice informed by corporate objectives on decolonisation and equitable partnerships
    - Work with Director of Programme to advance integration of decolonisation principles in ways of working throughout the team

## **Person specification**

### **Experience, Knowledge and Qualifications**

- A post-graduate qualification (preferably PhD) in a relevant discipline (political science / political sociology / political studies / international relations) with 5+years' experience working on digital

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- Detailed knowledge of digital societies / tech in society questions (e.g., ethics, trust, equity and justice) in across low, middle and high income economies,
  - A strong track record of academic and policy-oriented research publications / briefings to inform policy and practice around the opportunities, risks and challenges associated with digitalisation
  - Demonstrated ability to communicate effectively to a range of public and private sector organisations and with the private sector
  - A proven track record in business development and fundraising from different types of funding agency
  - An established network of public, private and civil society / activist partnership globally and in a specific number of countries
  - Experience of conducting research, living and in one or more low, middle-income or / and high-income countries

### **Skills / Abilities**

- Ability to work (research design and implementation) in partnership with variety of constituencies (research institutes, universities, civic organisations in global north and south)
- Strong quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods research skills and an ability to support others to build that capacity through practical experience
- The ability to write clearly for a range of audiences, with excellent oral communication skills
- Good organisational and project management skills
- A demonstrated capacity for policy advisory or public affairs work, based on an analytical approach and an innovative and creative communications ability
- Experience of managing interdisciplinary research teams and demonstratable line management experience
- Though leadership on new and complex issues relating to digital societies
- Quality control of research and advisory work
- Project management and financial planning for complex projects/ programmes
- Excellent ability to build cross-cultural relationships with partners and colleagues at various levels of seniority.
- Multitasking skills in a high-pressure environment
- Ability to work to own initiative with minimum supervision

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## Desirable

- A PhD in politics or relevant discipline
- Experience of conducting research, living and in LMICs
- Competence in a second language
- Demonstrated alignment with ODI corporate values and strategic ambitions (decolonising knowledge production and research through just and equitable partnerships)

## Key Relationships and Contacts

**Internal:** Director of ODI, Director of Programmes, Group staff, staff in Finance as relevant Associates and Interns as appropriate

**External:** Major donors: Foundations, bi-laterals, multilateral organisations, including, governments international and national NGOs. Partnerships with academic institutions – think tanks and universities in global north and south and individual researcher. Public institutions with an interest in development (schools, professional groups). Media as appropriate. Policy and advocacy staff at civic organisations, activists, nationally and internationally

**Closing date: 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2024 at 11:59pm**

**Written test: w/c 2<sup>nd</sup> September**

**Interview date: w/c 9<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and w/c 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024**

All staff are expected to:

- Positively support equality of opportunity both within ODI and externally
- Help maintain a safe working environment and take responsibility for own and colleagues' Health and Safety
- Undertake such other duties within the scope of their post as may be requested by their Manager



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## Application process

**ODI job site:** <https://odi.org/en/careers/>

**Expenses:** It is our policy to only support the travel expenses to attend an interview for those who are travelling from outside the UK. Please contact the HR Department to discuss this and to ensure their approval prior to booking.

## Terms of employment

**Location:** ODI hub is based at 203 Blackfriars Road, London SE1 8NJ, UK

**Salary: £58300 – £75260 per annum** on ODI's pay structure. Starting salary will be dependent on qualifications and experience, and subject to review.

Salary will be payable by equal monthly instalments (half in advance, half in arrears) on the 15th day of each month.

**Hours:** 09:30–17:30, Monday to Friday, 35 hours per week.

**Contract: Permanent** All contracts of employment are subject to a six-month probationary period.

**Leave:** 25 days per annum, plus statutory holidays and 3 days' paid leave for the office closure during the Christmas and New Year period. Maternity, paternity, adoption and parental leave. Full-pay sick leave after a qualifying period.

**Pension:** Generous company pension scheme. The Institute offers a contributory pension scheme with the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS).  
[www.ussq.co.uk](http://www.ussq.co.uk)

**Union:** ODI recognises UNITE and all staff have the right to become members.

## Additional benefits

**Flexible working options:** Support in maintaining a healthy work-life balance, e.g. part-time working, compressed hours, term-time.

**Hybrid working:** Working at the hub/remotely within the UK.

**Maternity, paternity and adoption leave:** Enhanced pay for eligible employees after a qualifying period.

**Loans:** The Institute offers an interest-free season ticket loan on completion of probationary period.

**Cycle to Work Scheme:** Save up to 42% on the value of a bike and accessories for commuting and pay monthly through your salary.

**Employee assistance programme:** Confidential Health and wellbeing support.

**Relocation:** Assistance is available towards employees who have been recruited from a place outside the UK.

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**ODI Groups:** A number of social and cross-department work groups, e.g. Podcast Society, Book Club, The Anti-Racist Reading Group, Softball Team, Diversity Forum and others.

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## Other information

ODI hub is based at: 203 Blackfriars Road, London, SE1 8NJ.

The hub is close to a wide range of cafes and bars, and to Waterloo, Waterloo East and Southwark stations. Central location with good transport connections to all parts of London.

ODI hub is within easy walking distance of South Bank Concert Halls, the Old Vic and National Theatres.



ODI is an equal opportunities employer.

The ODI is a Charitable Company limited by guarantee:  
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