Digital economy telling tales of engagement competition 2020

Opportunity status:	Open
Funders:	[Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)](#)
Funding type:	Grant
Total fund:	£30,000
Maximum award:	£10,000
Publication date:	7 October 2020
Opening date:	7 October 2020
Closing date:	16 December 2020 16:00 UK time

Last updated: 24 November 2020

Start application

The digital economy (DE) theme is running a competition designed to help capture and promote impacts arising from DE research.

Three prizes of £10,000 (18 months, 100% full economic cost) are available to support researchers or users from any career stage and in any sector to fund an engagement activity that will further tell the story of their previously funded DE research grant impact in a creative way.

Competition aims:

- to capture the impacts and benefits of DE-funded research
- to disseminate examples of best practice in research and project partner engagement
- to engage the public with DE research.

Open all

Who can apply

Applications must be associated with a previously funded DE research grant supported by one of the DE theme partners, EPSRC, ESRC or AHRC.

Applications are welcomed from teams as well as individuals, from all career stages in academia (including PhD students), industry, users and the third sector.

If the applicant would not normally be eligible for EPSRC funding, please include the name of a mentor who is eligible, for example, the principal investigator of the previously funded associated grant.

Only one application for a telling tales of engagement (TTE) award will be accepted per DE research grant, and per applicant.

The funding will support projects of up to 18 months in duration, starting from April 2021. Please note that TTE awards are not eligible for extensions.

For information on the eligibility of organisations and individuals to receive EPSRC funding, see the **EPSRC funding guide**.

See a list of **eligible organisations**.

What we're looking for

Synopsis

The three aims of the TTE competition are:

- to capture the tangible impacts of DE theme-funded, how the impacts unfolded, and the benefits of the research to society and the economy, particularly highlighting any impacts that are relevant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic
- to help the wider research community learn examples of best practice in research and project partner engagement from your experiences
- to engage the public with DE research, focusing on ensuring audiences are diverse and activities are inclusive, and finding innovative ways to involve the public in the context of COVID-19 restrictions, while helping to address UKRI's equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) agenda.

The TTE has the ambition of promoting the impact of applied DE research. UKRI defines impact as 'the demonstrable contribution that excellent research makes to society and the economy'.

Impact embraces all the diverse ways that research-related skills benefit individuals, organisations and nations. These include, but are not limited to:

- fostering global economic performance, and specifically the economic competitiveness of the United Kingdom

- increasing the effectiveness of public services and policy
- enhancing quality of life, health and creative output.

A key aspect of this definition is that the potential impact must be demonstrable. It is not enough just to focus on activities and outputs that promote engagement, such as staging a conference or publishing a report.

Evidence of the research impact is required to demonstrate, for example, that it has been taken up and used by policy makers or has led to improvements in society.

Therefore, applicants are encouraged to carefully design their demonstrable public engagement activity. Please see appendix A and B in additional info.

In addition, careful consideration of how research impacts could benefit a diverse community and society could help to draw out even more demonstrable outputs from your activity. Please see appendix A, in additional, info for more information on previous TTE awards.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused fundamental changes in how we work, socialise, network and communicate as a society.

Increasingly rapid digitalisation of human communication has accelerated the transition to virtual socialising, online knowledge-sharing and technologically-mediated immersive cultural experiences.

We are keen to see examples of creative, innovative and inclusive public engagement in the context of COVID-19 restrictions.

We encourage applicants to consider the target audience(s) for their proposed engagement activities from an equality, diversity and inclusion perspective.

We are interested in seeing activities that engage with different community groups, ages, gender identities, ethnicities, abilities, neurodiversity characteristics, social classes, incomes, levels of digital literacy, and so on, where appropriate.

We are particularly interested in engaging digitally-excluded audiences, or those typically disenfranchised or underrepresented in the DE research space.

Successful applicants will be provided with guidance by UKRI for developing their EDI plans. Please refer to appendix B, in additional info, for examples of potential audiences to engage with.

Scope

Your entry must be associated with a previously funded DE theme research grant. It should focus on telling the tale of how this research grant's impact arose, and capture elements of any engagement with partners in an interesting and engaging way.

Your entry must address the following:

Your research and its impacts

- What was the main research challenge of the associated DE research grant? What were the key outputs?
- What has been the societal and economic impact of these outputs? What individuals or community groups did the research have an impact on?
- What positive changes have resulted from your research, and how did these changes come about? Can you showcase a diverse range of impacts resulting from your work? What evidence can you provide to demonstrate these positive changes or impacts?
- How did you go about engaging with any partners on the project?

Your proposed TTE activity(s)

- How do you propose to 'tell the story' of your demonstrable impact(s)?
- What kind of public engagement do you propose to have with your target audience?
- Which sectors of society or members of the public will you seek to engage with and why?
- How will you incorporate an element of audience interaction? How will you ensure that you engage with the public in a creative and meaningful way, for mutual benefit?
- How will you ensure your engagement is successful in the context of ongoing COVID-19 restrictions?
- How has equality, diversity and inclusion been taken into account in your public engagement activities? Are you engaging audiences that are, for example, diverse in age, gender identity, ethnicity, ability, neurodiversity, social class, income or digital literacy, or audiences that are typically disenfranchised or underrepresented in the DE space?
- How will your public engagement contribute to the further development of your research and impact?

Your plans for dissemination within the DE research community

- How do you plan to share your understanding of the overall impact process with other parts of the DE research community, who may not be so advanced in their thinking and practice?This could help researchers set impact-related goals and metrics and help UKRI provide further guidance on impactful research.

Your entry should tell the story of how your impact pathway unfolded in practice, clearly linking the research to its impact:

- describing how the impact arose
- explaining how you went about engaging with partners
- evidencing a diverse range of positive, demonstrable changes.

Your story should help the wider research community and public understand how engagement and impact occurs in practice. Allowing you to tell the story of your engagement should enable the spread of best practice within the research community.

A good TTE project will help others to stimulate their thinking on more imaginative and illustrative ways to tell the story of their engagement and enhance the impacts and benefits of their research.

Please see appendix B, in additional info, for some guidance from previous TTE award winners.

Funding available

Three awards of £10,000 each are available to support an activity, or activities, that will allow you to tell your impact story in a creative, interesting and engaging way to a wider audience and the general public.

Please note that funding is not available to conduct further research.

Activities could include, but are not limited to:

- video or podcast production
- outreach activities in schools
- in-person or online public lecture series
- community events
- artistic interpretation
- specialised media training or attendance at high profile, non-academic focused conferences
- online interactive or immersive experiences
- virtual reality, and so on.

Please refer to the appendices for further suggestions and examples of previously funded activities.

The funding will support projects of up to 18 months in duration, starting from April 2021.

If you are successful, payment will be made to your higher education institution, who will then be responsible for issuing the award and ensuring funds are released as required.

EPSRC reserve the right to retain 40% of the total funding until an account of the expenditure has been submitted from the university finance office.

How to apply

Applications should be submitted via **SmartSurvey** by 16:00, 16 December 2020.

The questions in the SmartSurvey are detailed below:

Section	Guidance
Applicant details	Full name, organisation, department, position

Applicant email address	
Mentor details (optional)	If applicant would not normally be eligible to apply for EPSRC funding, please provide details of an eligible mentor
Associated digital economy grant details	Grant title, grant reference number, principal investigator name
Research area relevance to DE theme priorities (up to 500 words)	Please describe the research area that you are working in, how it is related to the funding you have received from the DE theme (or relevant associated funding from EPSRC, ESRC or AHRC), and how it relates to the DE theme priorities (please refer to appendix C in the call document for the full priority descriptions).
Overview and key impacts and benefits arising from the associated DE Theme grant (up to 500 words)	Please provide an overview of the research carried out through the associated DE grant, and the impacts and benefits it has had, addressing the following questions. ■ What was the main research challenge of the associated DE research grant? What were the key outputs? ■ What has been the societal and economic impact of these outputs? What individuals or community groups did the research have an impact on? ■ What positive changes have resulted from your research, and how did these changes come about? Can you showcase a diverse range of impacts resulting from your work? What evidence can you provide to demonstrate these positive changes or impacts? ■ How did you go about engaging with any partners on the project?
Your proposed Telling tales of engagement activity(ies) (up to 1,000 words)	Please describe how you propose to use the award to further 'tell the story' of the research and enable further impact, addressing the following questions. ■ How do you propose to 'tell the story' of your demonstrable impact(s)? ■ What kind of public engagement do you propose to have with your target audience? ■ Which sectors of society or members of the public will you seek to engage with and why? ■ How will you incorporate an element of audience interaction? How will you ensure that you engage

with the public in a creative and meaningful way, for mutual benefit?

- How will you ensure your engagement is successful in the context of ongoing COVID-19 restrictions?
- How has equality, diversity and inclusion been taken into account in your public engagement activities? Are you engaging audiences that are, for example, diverse in age, gender identity, ethnicity, ability, neurodiversity, social class, income or digital literacy, or audiences that are typically disenfranchised or underrepresented in the DE space?
- How will your public engagement contribute to the further development of your research and impact?

Your plan for dissemination within the DE research community

(up to 500 words)

Please describe your plan for dissemination within the DE research community, addressing the following questions:

- How do you plan to share your understanding of the overall impact process with other parts of the DE research community, who may not be so advanced in their thinking and practice? This could help researchers set impact-related goals and metrics and help UKRI provide further guidance on impactful research.

Resources and management, and risk mitigation

(up to 500 words)

Please explain how you plan to spend the £10,000 award money, including a breakdown of costs required for various resources. (This may also cover details of any of savings made as a result of effective management.)

Costs must be specific to the project and should be justified to add demonstrable value to the project. Resources eligible under FEC can be requested, for example, to cover training in public engagement or communications, public engagement specialist staff expertise and support, materials/venue costs or travel expenses.

Please note that the TTE awards are not eligible for extensions beyond the 18 month funding period. Therefore, this section should also include a risk mitigation strategy for possible disruption due to further COVID-19 lockdowns or other unforeseen circumstances.

| One-page visual summary of research and impacts | Please provide a **one-page** summary (in PDF format) that visually (pictorially or diagrammatically) tells the tale of your research and the impact that it has had in an interesting, engaging and highly creative way. |

You will be notified of the result as soon as possible following on from the assessment panel.

Entrants should note that the visual summary PDF submitted may be made publicly available, and successful entries may be used in future TTE calls and engagement material. Therefore, it is advised that:

- no material that is confidential is included in the application
- the necessary permissions to share the information are sought in advance from the relevant individuals.

How we will assess your application

Entries will be assessed by the external Digital Economy **programme advisory board members** against the assessment criteria detailed below.

Assessment criteria

Strength of DE research impact and benefits evidenced from associated grant (primary criterion), including:

- evidence provided of a positive, demonstrable change and benefits arising as a result of this research
- fit of research to DE theme priorities (please refer to appendix C).

Potential scope for further impact (primary criterion), including:

- appropriateness of plan for 'telling the story' for the intended audience
- evidence of well-developed activities proposed to highlight the impact story
- evidence of how the engagement strategies will contribute to the development of their research and impact.

Creativity and quality of approaches to public engagement whilst addressing the UKRI EDI agenda (primary criterion), including:

- degree to which EDI has been considered in planning of engagement activities
- degree of creativity used in approach to public engagement with the community being targeted
- degree to which the proposed activity would add demonstrable value to the sphere of DE research.

Clear plan for sharing understanding of the research impact process with the wider DE research community (primary criterion), including:

- strength of plans to disseminate best practice, lessons learnt and features of a successful research project to the wider research community.

Resource management (secondary criterion):

- appropriateness and justification of resources requested
- appropriateness of mitigation plans for identified risks.

Grant additional conditions (GACs)

Grants will be subject to the standard UKRI grant conditions, however, the following additional grant conditions will be added to this call. The additional grant conditions include:

GAC 01 Publication and acknowledgement of support

The grant holder must make reference to DE TTE 2020 and funding supported by any of the UKRI Councils which are partners in the theme, and include the DE theme logo and relevant branding on all online or printed materials (including press releases, posters, exhibition materials and other publications) related to activities funded by this grant.

GAC 02 EDI plan

The grant holder is expected to prepare an EDI plan for the duration of this grant to demonstrate good practice in equality, diversity and inclusion throughout the lifetime of this funding award. This must be recorded through the grant reporting process.

Feedback

Feedback will not be provided.

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Additional info

Supporting documents

- **Appendix A: TTE award legacy**
- **Appendix B: Guidance from previous TTE award winners**
- **Appendix C: Digital economy theme priorities**
- **Equality impact assessment (PDF, 725KB)**

Background

The DE theme strives to rapidly realise the positive transformational impact of digital technologies on aspects of community life, cultural experiences, working lives, future society and the economy.

Led by EPSRC in partnership with ESRC and AHRC, the DE theme is about much more than just digital technologies. It's about how we as human beings interact with the digital world: how we live with it, and how it affects us.

This is why a defining feature of the DE theme has been the way that it brings researchers together across a wide range of very different disciplines, uniting information and communication technology (ICT), mathematical science, engineering, social sciences, economics, arts and humanities with stakeholders in different application domains to create digital technologies, platforms and solutions that are designed with and for users of the digital technology.

The DE theme aims to address key societal challenges and enable social change across a wide number of different key sectors (including, but not limited to, energy, transport, healthcare, education and skills, services, government, and the creative industries).

In its **first 10 years**, the DE theme has invested more than £200 million in outstanding research. And because the theme is all about real-world impact, it has brought researchers together with businesses, government bodies, charities and public organisations, bringing in over £80 million in additional funding, and supporting work with direct, practical applications.

The **DE theme** has developed the following five priority areas:

- trust identity privacy and security
- content creation and consumption
- beyond a data driven economy
- sustainable digital society
- equitable digital society.

The priority areas reflect the broad relevance and remit of DE research and form the basis for the majority of DE theme funding. Please refer to appendix C for the full priority descriptions.

People and societal challenges are at the heart of DE research, and public engagement and other impact activities play a significant role in the DE research process.

Research conducted in this area should have an impact on users and society and increasing the public engagement activities with the DE community is important.

The DE theme has recognised the importance of impact and has conducted significant **review exercises** around this.

We also recognise that telling the story around the economic and societal benefits arising from DE theme-funded research, and how researchers went about making their research impactful, can provide an opportunity for other researchers to learn elements of best practice as well as provide inspiration to the next generation of researchers.

The latter is important, because the long term strength of the UK research base depends on harnessing all the available talent.

This will help to connect the research landscape to accelerate impact, which can also be leveraged from accessing talent through EDI, both of which are two of the 12 priorities of the **EPSRC delivery plan**.

Please see our website for more information about **EPSRC's portfolio and strategies**.

Timeline

○ **7 October 2020**
Opening date

○ **16 December 2020 16:00**
Closing date

○ **February 2021**
Assessment panel

○ **1 April 2021**
Grant start date, up to 18 months' duration

○ **1 October 2022**
Latest grant end date

Related content

DE TTE competition further details and previous award winners

NOTE This is the first phase of our new website – let us know if you have **feedback** or would like to **help us test new developments**.