On the journey to impact: developing an impact strategy plan for the PRIME project

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Workshop: Creating an impact strategy

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About PRIME

The Protecting Minority Ethnic Communities Online (PRIME) project is a UKRI-funded transdisciplinary, cross-sectoral, and cross-institutional project involving a consortium of Cranfield University, Universities of Glasgow and York, The Open University and community organisations, led by Heriot Watt University. Launched in April 2022, the 36-month project will increase understanding of minority ethnic communities’ experiences of online services; capacity for responding to these communities; and how online harm can be mitigated for these communities.

The OU team is leading Work Package 6 in PRIME – impact & dissemination
STEP 1: Conceptualising impact from existing literature:

Impact is “the good that researchers can do in the world” (Reed, 2018, preface).

(1) **Instrumental** (leading to changes in practice/policy)

(2) **Conceptual** (understanding / awareness raising)

(3) **Capacity-building** (increasing skills of colleagues/others)

(4) **Attitudinal or cultural** (change in attitudes / behaviour)

(5) **Lead to enduring connectivity** (building / establishing partnerships)
Impact Levels Model (FitzGerald et al, 2023)

STEP 2: Conceptualising impact from the letters of support and advisory board meetings:

INSTRUMENTAL: inform system design of digital public services; inform the development of policy frameworks; work with civil society organisations to develop an evidence base for their campaigning and lobbying work to ensure safe spaces online.

CONCEPTUAL: investigate the nature and scale of online harms experienced by ethnic minority communities in the UK; identify gaps in sectoral knowledge; raise awareness of the importance of ensuring equal access among policy makers and the wider public; develop a Harm Protection Conceptual Framework that will pinpoint how digitalised services and other systems intersect with ethnicity and other identity dimensions in creating harm.

ENDURING CONNECTIVITY: promote cross-sector collaboration

TRANSFERABILITY of the PRIME findings: e.g. can the recommendations made by PRIME for service providers be applicable to universities to fight the inequalities magnified by the pandemic?
STEP 3.1: Multi-layered stakeholder and knowledge user analysis

- Policy makers
- Ethnic minorities
- Civil society and NGOs, REPHRAIN
- Service providers
- Tech companies
- Ethnic Minority organisations
- Wider general and academic public
STEP 3.2: Multi-layered stakeholder and knowledge user analysis
STEP 4: Impact strategy document

Example 1. Policy makers: large-scale change in policy, attitudes, practice, behaviours

Outputs: Recommendations on how public services, data curation and data management can be made more ethical and inclusive; sharing good practice

Route to impact: government meetings, consultation, evidence report, influencing important bills and frameworks in the field (e.g. online safety bill)

Evidence of impact: reference to and citations of our research on government websites and documents
Example 2. **Service providers**: awareness, more ethical and inclusive services, informed system design

*Outputs*: Guidelines for service providers on the accessibility, inclusion, ethics of their tech solutions, sharing good practices

*Route to impact*: co-design workshops, training workshops (upskilling and reskilling the experts designing the systems), blog posts on tech platforms, publishing research protocols, open-access coding/prototype tools

*Evidence of impact*: letters of testimony, interviews, pre- and post-training questionnaires
Questions and challenges to be addressed:

• Impact has a strong connection to deliverables, and deliverables come later in the project – how to generate impact from the start?

• How to make impact goals less abstract (high-level) and more specific?

• How to effectively engage with stakeholders to reach impact (e.g. to secure the incorporation of a specific PRIME project guidance into the policy of a government body), when this requires an in-depth understanding of the internal processes and org structure of this stakeholder?

• How can we evidence the ‘difficult to measure’ type of impact: e.g. awareness raising among the public?
Please, stay in touch

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