

Chris Elsdén

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[@ElsdenChris](#)

I am an interaction design researcher, with a background in sociology, and expertise in the *human experience of a data-driven life*. Using and developing innovative design research methods, I undertake diverse, qualitative and often speculative engagements with participants to investigate emerging relationships with technology – particularly data-driven tools and blockchain technologies. I have an excellent record of publishing my research at CHI and other top-tier HCI venues and I am seeking opportunities to transform this academic success into real-world impact.

Research Posts

Senior Research Assistant

May 2017 - Present

Co-Create Lab, IDEATE MDRT, School of Design, Northumbria University

I am a full-time post-doctoral researcher on the EPSRC-funded Ox-Chain project (EP/N028198/). Through this I am exploring the opportunities and implications of blockchain and distributed ledger technologies as new forms of data-driven technologies, in the context of international development and charitable giving. In this role, I have developed expertise in blockchain technologies and undertaken ethnographic fieldwork and design workshops, while leading a design process to enable interdisciplinary collaboration between project partners Oxfam, and technical development teams.

Visiting Researcher

May 2017 - Present

Design Informatics, Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh

I am a long-time collaborator with Design Informatics, and now a visiting researcher through the Ox-Chain project, led by Principle Investigator Prof. Chris Speed.

Research Intern, Microsoft Research Cambridge

Jan 2017 – Mar 2017

Digital Possessions Project, Human Experience & Design (HXD) Group

Working on the Digital Possessions project with Dr. Sian Lindley, I have designed, conducted and analysed fieldwork that will underpin future product development. I have also participated in multiple group activities, providing me with a broad understanding of industrial interaction design research.

Education

PhD, Computer Science

Sep 2013 – Sep 2017

Open Lab, Newcastle University, UK

I successfully defended my thesis '*A Quantified Past: Design for Remembering a Data-Driven Life*' in December 2017, examined by Dr. Alex Taylor (external) and Prof. Pete Wright (internal). My doctoral research was supervised Prof. David Kirk and Dr. Abigail Durrant.

My thesis brings together extant HCI research on technologies of memory and personal informatics to investigate the design opportunities and challenges in remembering one's life through self-tracking data. I undertook fieldwork of participants' long-term interactions with their data, employing a range of interaction design research methods. Innovating a novel speculative approach called 'Speculative Enactments', my PhD concluded with a Research-through-Design process to materialise this 'quantified past' through the speculative design of a service to document a wedding with quantified data.

MSc Social Media and Interactive Technologies

Masters with Distinction 2012 – 2013

University of York, UK

ERASMUS Génie Mécanique Développement

Erasmus Exchange 2009 - 2010

INSA de Lyon, Lyon, France

BEng Mechanical Eng. with International Study

First Class Honours 2007 - 2011

University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, UK

Research Publications ([Google Scholar](#))

I have an exceptional track record of publishing my research at leading HCI and IxD venues.

Selected Conference Proceedings

Making Sense of Blockchain Applications: A Typology for HCI

Chris Elsdén, Arthi Manohar, Jo Briggs, Mike Harding, Chris Speed, John Vines. 2018. *In Proc. CHI 2018 (forthcoming)*. ACM. (<https://chriselsden.files.wordpress.com/2018/01/elsden-making-sense-of-blockchain-applications.pdf>)

Designing Documentary Informatics

Chris Elsdén, Abigail C. Durrant, David Chatting, David S. Kirk. Designing Documentary Informatics. *In Proc. Conference on Designing Interactive Systems (DIS '17)*, 649-661. ACM. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3064663.3064714>.

On Speculative Enactments (*Honourable Mention - top 5% of papers*)

Chris Elsdén, David Chatting, Abigail C. Durrant, Andy Garbett, Bettina Nissen, John Vines, David S. Kirk. 2017. *In Proc. CHI 2017 (5386-5399)*, ACM. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3025453.3025503>

Abacus Datagraphy: A Speculative Enactment

Chris Elsdén, David Chatting, David Green, David Kirk, Abigail Durrant. 2017. *In Proc. 3rd Biennial Conference on Research through Design (RTD)* DOI: <https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.4746961>

Metadating: Exploring the Romance of Personal Data (*Honourable Mention - top 5% of papers*)

Chris Elsdén, Bettina Nissen, Andrew Garbett, David Chatting, David S. Kirk, John Vines. 2016. *In Proc. CHI 2016 (pp685-698)*. ACM. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2858036.2858173>

It's Just My History Isn't It?: Understanding Smart Journaling Practices

Chris Elsdén, Abigail C. Durrant, David S. Kirk. 2016. *In Proc. CHI 2016 (pp5015-5027)*. ACM. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2858036.2858103>

ResViz: Politics and Design Issues in Visualizing Academic Metrics

Chris Elsdén, Sebastian Mellor, Patrick Olivier, Pete Wheldon, David S. Kirk, Rob Comber. 2016. *In Proc. CHI 2016 (pp2819-2831)*. ACM. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2858036.2858181>

Journal Articles

A Quantified Past: Toward Design for Remembering with Personal Informatics

Chris Elsdén, David S. Kirk, Abigail C. Durrant. 2015. *Human-Computer Interaction* 6: 1-40. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/07370024.2015.1093422>

Academic Leadership and Reviewing

Organised International Workshops

HCI for Blockchain: Studying, Critiquing, Designing and Envisioning Distributed Ledger

Technologies Chris Elsdén, Bettina Nissen, Karim Jabbar, Reem Talhouk, Caitlin Lustig, Paul Dunphy, Chris Speed, John Vines. (*CHI EA'18*), (forthcoming). ACM. <http://www.hciforblockchain.org/>

Quantified Data and Social Relationships

Chris Elsdén, Aisling O'Kane, Paul Marshall, Abigail C. Durrant, Rowanne Fleck, John Rooksby, Deborah Lupton. (*CHI EA'17*), 644-651, ACM. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3027063.3027065>

Beyond Personal Informatics: Designing for Experiences with Data

Chris Elsdén, Mark Selby, David S. Kirk, Chris Speed. 2015. *In Proc. of CHI Extended Abstracts (CHI EA'15)*, (pp2341-2344). ACM. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2702613.2702632>

Conference Reviewing

CHI 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 (Papers & Notes); CHI 2018 (Late-Breaking Work Program Committee)
CSCW 2017, 2018 (Papers & Notes)
DIS 2016, 2017 (Papers & Notes); DIS 2018 (Program Committee: Design Theory)

Journal Reviewing

TOCHI, The HCI Journal, Journal of CSCW

Research Skills

With a sociological background I have a strong knowledge and experience of qualitative and design research methods. I have designed, conducted and analysed numerous innovative studies, often supplementing traditional data collection techniques such as interviewing and design workshops with participatory, design-led and speculative approaches. I am familiar with multiple modes of analysis to inform and iterate further research and design inquiries. Specific research skills and experience include:

Narrative Interviews	Design Workshops
Elite Interviewing	Experience-Centred Design
Organisational Studies	Speculative Methods
Diary Studies	Design Fiction
Design Ethnography	Research through Design
Thematic Analysis	Annotated Portfolios
Grounded Theory	Cultural Probes
Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)	Ideation Cards

Design Skills

I have developed a range of practical design skills to complement my research, especially in supporting engagements and workshops with participants and stakeholders. These include for example the design of Cultural Probes, branding and advertisements, ideation cards and speculative design artefacts. I have particular expertise in print and graphic design, most recently designing and publishing a 24-page wedding brochure as a Design Fiction artefact. Particular skills include:

- Proficient user of Adobe Creative Suite (Illustrator, InDesign, Photoshop)
- Photography and image processing
- Media creation methods (professional printing, laser cutting, bookbinding, basic web design)

Selected Research Projects

Abacus Datagraphy: A Quantified Wedding (2016) (Proc. RTD 2017; Full Paper, DIS 2017)

This Research-through-Design project proposed a speculative service to document a wedding, in the mode of the quantified self. Rather than tools to analyse or gain 'insight' about the big day, 'Abacus Datagraphy' considers how and when to design quantified data for remembering. As part of this speculation, two engaged couples met a 'wedding datagrapher' and discussed how they would record and present data from their upcoming weddings. This 'Speculative Enactment' was the basis for the publication of a Design Fiction wedding magazine. This batch-printed brochure showcased the range of speculative services offered, the design of wedding data artefacts, and featured 'real wedding' style stories about each couple and their quantified wedding.

This project was also an opportunity to refine the methodology of 'Speculative Enactments' as a new, more participatory and action-oriented approach to speculative design research.

Understanding Smart Journaling (2015) (Full Paper, CHI 2016)

Smart journals describe an array of applications to keep an enhanced digital journal of one's life. Previously unstudied, these novel digital possessions provide an excellent site to understand the sorts of everyday records that are meaningful for people to remember. However, they also raise numerous questions about how people manage, blend and curate burgeoning digital possessions and personal data. Interviewing long-term traditional diarists, and users of different journaling apps, this study revealed situated practices and motivations for everyday remembering and curation.

Metadating: Exploring the Romance and Future of Personal Data (2014) (Full Paper, CHI 2016)

Metadating was a future-focused research and speed-dating event where single participants were invited to 'explore the romance of personal data'. Participants created 'data profiles' about themselves, and used these to 'date' other participants. In the rich context of dating, this study investigated *data-in-conversation* – in particular, how data mediates identity. I conceived Metadating, and worked collaboratively with colleagues at Culture Lab to design the event. I then led the analysis; this study relied on ethnographic methods, a close analysis of participants' discourse and choices of representation with relation to data. The findings deepened understanding of 'lived informatics' and proposed new directions for the design of data *with*, rather than data *of*, people.

ResViz: Politics and Design of Metrics in Academia (2015) (Full Paper, CHI 2016)

ResViz provided a visualization of funded academic projects and collaboration at Newcastle University. Designed in collaboration with university management, ResViz is an example of making workplace metrics public. The university hopes that this transparency will both foster new collaboration, and encourage 'healthy competition' between staff. Following the pilot deployment of ResViz, and working in an inter-disciplinary team, I led the qualitative work; interviewing 20 key stakeholders, including senior university managers, administrators and academics. ResViz was employed as a critical artefact, to question the broad politics and use of metrics in academic life and management. Our findings revealed a range of politics and design issues in making metrics public.

Fieldwork for A Quantified Past (2014) (Journal Article, Human-Computer Interaction, 2015)

In this fieldwork I conducted narrative interviews with long-term users of different self-tracking tools; from activity monitors to records of music listening habits. I invited participants to talk through their data 'from the start' and captured rich narratives of participants remembering with data. These informed a conceptualisation 'data-work' – the rhetorical work required to make meaning from data – and six characteristics of a 'quantified past' which have been a foundation for much of my work.

Teaching Experience

Principles of Interaction Design (Seminars) 2017

1st Year Interaction Design, Northumbria University

I undertook two seminars teaching introducing classic interaction design and prototyping methods from personas and scenarios, through to wizard-of-oz and mock-ups.

Advanced Interaction Design (Seminars & Guest Lecture) 2013 – 2016

3rd Year Computer Science, Newcastle University

With a fellow PhD student, I prepared and led seminar teaching for this interaction design module. The seminars comprise of critical reading and discussion of core papers and concepts in interaction design, to support practical design work using Microsoft .NET Gadgeteer, Arduino and Raspberry Pi modules.

Introduction to HCI (Demonstrating) 2013 – 2016

3rd Year Computer Science, Newcastle University

I supported the teaching and coursework marking in the practical classes for this module, which gives 3rd year Computer Science students their first introduction to HCI and interaction design.

Media Coverage & Invited Talks

My work has resulted in media articles in the New Scientist, the LSE Social Impact Blog, Metro, and Mic magazine amongst others. I have also been invited to deliver a number of academic talks:

Wolfson HAT Annual Symposium on Digital Personhood

Designing for Identity in a Data-Driven Life

(March 2017, HAT Project, Wolfson College, Cambridge, UK)

UCLIC Seminar Series

Fitter, happier, more productive: What to ask of a data-driven life?

(March 2016, UCLIC, University College London, London, UK)

Power, Acceleration and Metrics in Academic Life

Designing and Reflecting on ResViz

(December 2015, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czech Republic)

What Works in Digital Health?

Understanding the Experience of a Data-Driven Life

(July 2015, University of Glasgow, UK)

Temporal Design: An Interdisciplinary Workshop

A Quantified Past?

(May 2014, Design Informatics, Edinburgh College of Art, Edinburgh, UK)

Referees

Prof. Chris Speed

Chair of Design Informatics
University of Edinburgh
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Dr. Abigail Durrant

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