



**UNIVERSITY
OF WARWICK**

CIM Methods Hub Online Launch Event

Post-event Briefing

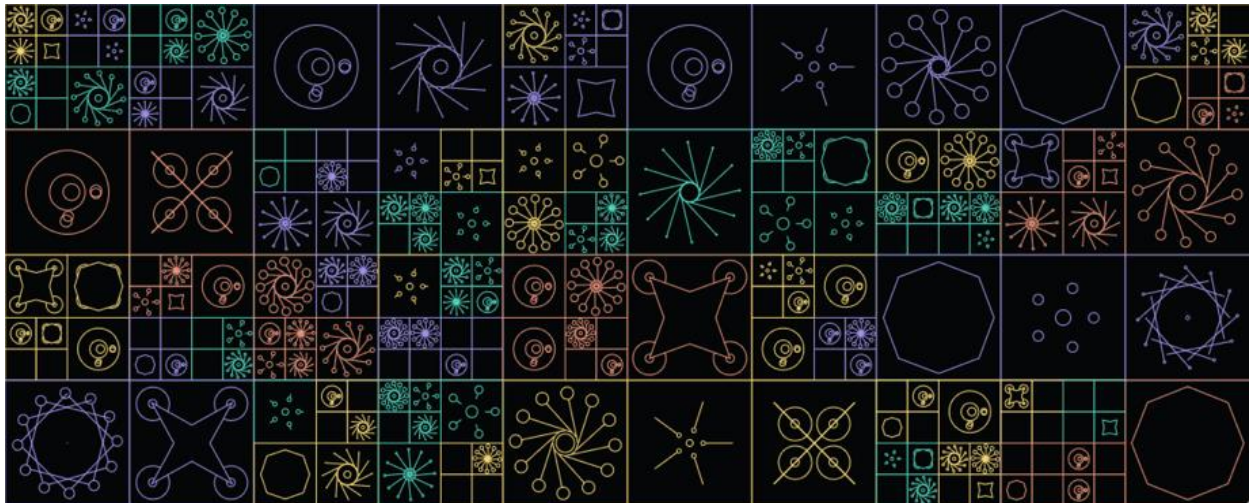


Image credit: Hazel Cyril, CIM MASc Data Visualisation student 2024/25

The University of Warwick Methods Hub

Led by the [Centre for Interdisciplinary Methodologies](#), the [University of Warwick Methods Hub](#) is a novel initiative, providing both a physical and virtual platform to foster, sustain, and scale methods-focused initiatives (projects, events, workshops, training, fellowships, demonstrators) across disciplines and sectors. In doing so, the Methods Hub is a shared space for methodological experimentation, collaboration, and future engagement.

The Methods Hub Launch Event

After a soft launch on 1st July 2025, the Methods Hub officially launched on 25th June 2026 with an online event to mark the occasion. Originally planned as a full-day, in-person gathering at the beautiful Warwick campus, it moved online at short notice after Coventry was placed under a red weather warning for extreme heat.

The launch event drew enthusiastic, insightful participation from over forty members of the international academic, public, private, and third sector and long-term collaborators in Warwick's methods-focused initiatives. Over 2.5 hours, participants heard from the Methods Hub team about its origins and development plans, and shared valuable feedback through interactive breakout sessions on the themes and methods the Hub could help shape. [The event marked the start of many ongoing, multi-faceted collaborations now taking shape within the Methods Hub community.](#)

The launch event helped demonstrate how methods-enabled research questions are framed, how partnerships are built and sustained, and how diversity of knowledge and lived experience is embedded in collaborations. Together, these show how methods connect research to the real world – informing policy, guiding practical application, delivering public benefit, and advancing environmental awareness and protection.



Methods Hub

Where Methods Meet the World



[A glimpse of the Methods Hub soft launch in July 2025](#)

The **opening remarks** gave the launch a clear intellectual and institutional framing. CIM Director Professor Cagatay Turkey introduced the Methods Hub, emphasising the vision for its collaborative and organic role in supporting methods innovation and development as ways of knowing and being in the world rather than as neutral producers of information and facts. The University of Warwick Provost, Professor Caroline Meyer, delivered the opening address, positioning the Hub as a key platform for strengthening research with purpose, reach, and impact. Her remarks also framed [the Hub as an invitation to collaborate, experiment, share, and imagine new ways of working together across boundaries](#).

The launch featured two snapshots. Dr Carlos Cámara-Menoyo presented the [Methods Hub Showcase](#), and Professor Briony Jones and Dr Geoffrey Lewis presented the [Reflections on the Methods Repository](#). This helped demonstrate what the Hub's tagline "[where methods meet the world](#)" can look like in practice. The showcase focused on projects spanning digital health and rights, urban AI, cybersecurity and trust, green economy futures, data visualisation, and participatory work with communities. The repository continues to evolve as a resource curating how researchers navigate interdisciplinary methods, collaboration, positionality, social justice, and the democratisation of knowledge.

The [Methods Hub Fellows](#) gave the launch a forward-looking dimension. [Dr James Stockman](#) presented work on critical AI sprints and LLM-based computational social science, raising questions about society being treated as a computable object and about the tension of using LLMs critically while also using them as part of the research process. [Mayel de Borniol](#) discussed co-designing digital social spaces through Bonfire, emphasising that meaningful co-design requires care rather than tokenistic consultation. [Dr Nadia Jude](#) presented work on online safety infrastructures, content detection/review and accountability, positioning methods themselves as objects of study in relation to platform governance, algorithmic violence and harm. Across the

three presentations, methods appeared as critical, practical, technical, relational and political.

Dr Kavin Narasimhan outlined the **five pillars of the Hub**: experimentation, knowledge brokerage, training, infrastructure and resources, and collaboration.

Experimentation

The Methods Hub will facilitate the development of creative methodologies and experimentation in methods by working with stakeholders across sectors. Activities will take the form of workshops with stakeholders, focused on co-designing and testing new methods, rapid prototyping, co-designing, and critical making. The Hub will host visiting scholars and practitioners as Methods Fellows to engage in methods experimentation projects.

Infrastructure and Resources

The Methods Hub will act as a one-stop shop for creating, hosting, and maintaining methods research and training artefacts, including a repository for sharing code, software, and tools; methods protocols; a data repository; and policy briefs and reports.

Knowledge Brokering

The Methods Hub will serve as a conduit for knowledge exchange across disciplinary and sectoral boundaries, supporting science communication, networking, and workshops that bridge methods and methods research with real-world use cases.

Training

The Methods Hub will develop and deliver training in interdisciplinary methodologies for students, professionals, policymakers, and members of the public, and will support capacity-building initiatives for its partners and stakeholders. Training will be offered through recorded webinar series, bespoke sessions, and training in the wild.

Collaboration

At the core of the Methods Hub is the drive to growing and sustaining healthy and thriving professional methods-centred relationships with a diverse range of academic and non-academic communities. The collaboration pillar is the engine driving this vision through a range of activities including open days, methods spring school, methods retreats, and methods seminar series.

The **panel discussion**, chaired by Dr Carla Washbourne, explored cross-sector collaboration and inclusive, situated and contextually aware methods. [Dr Matt Spencer](#) challenged the idea that methods are simply the backstage processes of research, arguing that methods have a social life of their own and can be central to policy engagement and knowledge brokering. [Emma Roberts](#) connected methods to innovation, problem definition, co-design and prototyping, especially in relation to developing solutions that work in context. [Professor Sanjay Sharma](#) reflected on the ethical tensions of participatory and community-based research, including the need to treat community partners as co-design and developers, resource their involvement appropriately and avoid extractive institutional practices. [Professor Meg Davis](#) highlighted anti-oppressive approaches, community advisory teams, power-sharing and institutional barriers in digital health and rights work.

A key message from the panel was that collaboration is not only about involving people in a project. It also requires asking who frames the problem, who has resources, who benefits, and what institutional structures make equitable partnership possible or difficult. The Q&A developed this further through questions about urgency, scale, funding and university infrastructures. The discussion suggested that the Hub could play an important role in creating the conditions for slower, more accountable and better-resourced collaborations, while also helping researchers respond to real-world problems without narrowing the methodological space too quickly.

Interactive breakout sessions

While registering for the event, participants were invited to nominate their preferred topics for an interactive breakout session from the following: participatory methods; making decisions with AI; methods for exploring possible futures; applied workshop methodologies; interactive visualisations; interpretive methods in computational settings; computational sandboxes to test policy interventions; creating impact stories and narratives; and working with urban data for policy. We then ran parallel virtual breakout sessions on three of the most popular topics.

Participatory Methods

Framed broadly around the [Spectrum of Public Participation](#) – a widely used five-scale framework describing the public’s role in participatory processes, [this session captured](#) how participants use participatory methods in their work, the opportunities and challenges involved, and how the Methods Hub could support work in this area.

Participants drew attention to challenges like limited time and resources, which often stop them experimenting with participatory methods, and a hesitancy about where to begin. Here, they suggested the Methods Hub could offer a safe space to try these methods (and sometimes fail), backed by support mechanisms like training and funding. They also noted that examples of the methods in practice would help, and

some expressed specific interest in making policymaking more participatory. One open question concerned the sustainability of participatory methods, namely how long collaborations should last and what kind of engagement is realistic.

Making decisions with AI

This [session captured participants' collaborative inputs](#) on how they use AI to make decisions and about using AI to make decisions efficiently, ethically, and reliably in a hypothetical scenario. One point raised was that AI users need to know how the algorithm works, how it was trained, and whether the system can be inspected in some way. Another was to ask not only “Can AI do this?” but also “What is it replacing?” In other words, to think about what current methods already do and why, and whether AI is really the best alternative. There was also discussion about different levels of automation. Some systems only support human decisions, while others act almost independently. Examples included algorithmic trading, where events move too fast for human consultation, and agentic AI tools, where the system proposes an action and the human simply says yes or no. This fed a major theme of the session, agency, and three questions around it. Where it sits, how it is shared between humans and AI, and how people can retain meaningful control.

The group noted that transparency alone may not be enough. They noted that simply making source code available may not solve the problem, since most users could not make sense of it. AI explanations can be tricky too, because even when a system explains its reasoning, the account may sound convincing without being reliable. Privacy was raised as a practical issue as well, since users cannot always upload sensitive datasets into AI systems.

Methods for exploring possible futures

Given that most research aims to explore or prepare for the future in some way, [this interactive breakout session captured](#) which futures methods are more or less commonly used, which are discipline-specific versus cross-disciplinary, and how the Methods Hub could champion underused or cross-cutting methods.

Four groupings emerged. Less commonly used but cross-sector methods included co-designing, popular media, and arts-based future imaginaries, futures wheels with policymakers, foresight exercises, visual analysis that favours aesthetics, speculative design, companion modelling using board and computer games, and citizens assemblies. Less commonly used discipline-specific methods included agent-based modelling, creative writing, ethnography-based futures articulation, utopian studies, and immanent critique. More commonly used cross-sector methods included Delphi, seven questions, collective imagining and storytelling, facilitated conversations, and horizon scanning. And more commonly used discipline-specific methods included narrative approaches, pre-mortems, and visions as shared representations of the future.

The range and diversity here suggested that many different futures methods are in use within and across disciplines, often loosely connected and drawn from different specialisms. Part of the Methods Hub's value could lie in mapping and organising this kind of methods landscape, one that belongs to no single discipline.

The **closing remarks** returned to the launch as an invitation to continue shaping the Methods Hub. Despite the last-minute move online, the event remained active and productive, and generated practical ideas for future activities, including training, showcases, demonstration spaces, methods-in-practice sessions and spaces for methodological experimentation.

Helpful links shared during the launch event – organised by theme

Methods Hub resources and follow-up

[Methods Hub Showcase](#): The Methods Hub Showcase brings together examples of methods-focused work connected to the Hub. It demonstrates how methods are used in practice across interdisciplinary, collaborative real-world contexts.

[Reflections on Methods Repository](#): This repository, presented during the launch by Professor Briony Jones and Dr Geoffrey Lewis, gathers reflections on methods, collaboration, positionality, power, voice, social justice and knowledge production.

[Where next? form](#): A follow-up form inviting participants to share further thoughts on where the Reflections on Methods Repository could go next, including future priorities, activities and opportunities for collaboration.

Methods and projects shared during the launch

[CAPTURED / Imagining and Mapping UK Green Economy Futures](#) project involving researchers, policymakers, and practitioners in participatory futures work. It connects to questions of green economy futures, cross-sector collaboration and methods for imagining possible futures.

[Paying the Costs of Connection](#): A report from the Digital Health and Rights Project exploring the costs, risks and rights issues associated with digital health access, especially for marginalised young adults and communities.

[Meaningful Participation in Digital Governance Consultations research brief](#) based on young people's and civil society reflections on meaningful participation in digital governance consultations. It connects to launch discussions on participation, power-sharing, inclusion and non-tokenistic engagement.

[Inclusive Futures](#): A project connected to Professor Sanjay Sharma's work on AI, inclusion and social justice. It is relevant to discussions on troubling AI, responsible innovation, minoritised communities, participatory methods and transformative justice.

[New Warwick spinout](#): A Warwick news item about a new spinout connected to real-world impact, environmental policy and innovation. This relates to launch discussions on problem definition, co-design, prototyping and developing practical solutions that work in context.

[Sociotechnical Factors for Principles Based Assurance \(PBA\)](#): A RISC/CIM report by Matt Spencer exploring how social, economic and institutional factors shape the adoption of Principles Based Assurance in cyber security. It offers an example of sociotechnical methods being used to support policy reasoning and intervention planning.

Digital infrastructure and open science communities

[Bonfire introduction video](#), [Bonfire Networks](#), [CIM Bonfire server](#): Bonfire is an open-source platform for creating federated and community-led digital spaces. It connects to discussions from the launch on digital social spaces, community ownership and alternative online infrastructures.

[Open Science Network](#) and [Open Science Network invitation link](#): The Open Science Network provides further information about Bonfire for researchers and open science communities. It is relevant to discussions about researcher-led, community-based and open digital infrastructures.

Interactive breakout session boards

[Participatory Methods Miro board](#): A collaborative Miro board used during the Participatory Methods breakout session. It captures participants' reflections on how participatory methods are used in practice, the challenges and opportunities involved, and how the Methods Hub could support experimentation, training, funding and examples of participatory work in action.

[Making Decisions with AI Miro board](#): A collaborative Miro board used during the Making Decisions with AI breakout session. It records discussion points on how AI is used to support or automate decision-making, including questions of transparency, agency, accountability, privacy and meaningful human control.

[Methods for Exploring Possible Futures Miro board](#): A collaborative Miro board used during the Methods for Exploring Possible Futures breakout session. It captures participants' reflections on futures-oriented methods, including commonly and less commonly used approaches, discipline-specific and cross-sector methods, and how the Methods Hub could help map, organise, and champion underused and cross-cutting futures methods.

Related initiatives and external resources

[Future of Social Sciences](#) (6–7 July 2026): A related Warwick initiative exploring the future of the social sciences, including technological disruption in teaching and learning, the academic endeavour of the social sciences, and the purpose of social sciences today and tomorrow

[TOWN Observatory](#): A digital observatory connected to Dr Robert Harland's work on urban graphic heritage and place-based research. It offers an example of how urban, visual and place-based data can be gathered, organised and shared.

Get in touch with us

Please email the Methods Hub at CIMMethodsHub@warwick.ac.uk for any questions about the ongoing and planned future activities of the Hub.

