

# Sam Illingworth, PhD

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I build tools and programmes that help people evaluate AI output critically. I founded [Slow AI](#), a 12-month critical AI literacy curriculum with 8,000+ subscribers and 0% paid churn. I design interactive applications that train users in AI output evaluation: distinguishing human from machine-generated text ([Bot or Not](#)), identifying hallucinated academic citations ([Dead Reference](#)), and stress-testing AI compliance culture ([Good Employee](#)). I advise the Council of Europe on AI literacy for human rights and democracy, and have given expert evidence to the European Commission, UK Parliament, and House of Lords. My current Leverhulme-funded research investigates how university students interact with generative AI systems. I use Claude daily in my own research and development workflow.

## BUILT

[Slow AI](#): 8,000+ subscribers, 0% paid churn · 5 deployed AI literacy applications · 1 published board game

## ACADEMIC

100+ publications · 10 books · [2,500+ citations \(h-index 25\)](#) · £450k+ research funding

## AI LITERACY PRODUCTS — BUILT & SHIPPED

### [Slow AI Curriculum](#)

12-month CPD-accredited programme for critical AI literacy. Monthly webinars combining theory, critical prompt exercises, and group dialogue. 8,000+ subscribers. 0% paid churn. Substack Bestseller.

### [Integrity Debt Audit](#)

Web application measuring the gap between what organisations say about AI and what they actually do. 50 questions across five domains: policy, practice, transparency, training, accountability.

### [Bot or Not](#)

Turing test variant. 192 passages from published authors and AI models. Users evaluate whether text is human or machine-generated. Trains pattern recognition in AI output.

### [Dead Reference](#)

Hallucination detection trainer. 40 real and fabricated academic citations presented side by side. Users identify AI-generated references. Addresses citation fabrication in LLM output.

### [Good Employee](#)

Interactive satire exploring AI compliance dynamics in workplace settings. Users navigate corporate AI policy and decide when to comply and when to resist.

## AI RESEARCH & EVALUATION

- **Moltbook: AI agent discourse analysis.** Systematic analysis of 5,000 AI-generated comments from a social network of 150,000 autonomous AI agents (Butterflies). Developed coding framework for evaluating AI-generated social discourse. Examined how AI agents simulate community, empathy, and identity without human input. Submissions to *Nature* and *Nature Machine Intelligence*.
- **Investigating ChatGPT and AI experiences in UK universities.** Leverhulme Trust funded (£142,761, 2024–2026). Empirical research on how students interact with generative AI systems, including output evaluation behaviours and

trust calibration.

- **Generative AI in Higher Education** (Bloomsbury, 2026). Authored book examining AI integration in education, including synthetic empathy, AI anthropomorphism, and the psychology of human-AI interaction.
- **Synthetic empathy and AI attachment.** Ongoing research and public writing on the risks of simulated care in AI systems: how LLMs produce outputs that mimic empathy, why users form inappropriate attachments, and how to build critical distance. Core topic in the Slow AI curriculum.
- **Critical prompt design and output analysis.** Curriculum module teaching structured evaluation of LLM outputs: identifying hallucination patterns, bias markers, and confidence miscalibration. Tested across 12 monthly cohorts.

## AI POLICY & GOVERNANCE

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- **Expert Witness, Council of Europe** on AI Literacy for Human Rights, Democracy and Social Agency (2025–). Advising on how AI literacy frameworks should inform regulation and democratic participation.
- **Expert Witness, European Commission** on the impact of AI on scientific publishing and communications (2023).
- **Expert Witness, Westminster Education Forum** on next steps for AI in Education (2024).
- **Written evidence to House of Lords Select Committee.** Work cited in UK Government policy papers on AI in education.
- **Member, REF 2029 Sub-panel 23: Education.** Evaluating research quality across UK higher education.
- **Member, Royal Society of Edinburgh Education Committee** (2024–).
- **Member, Scottish Universities Working Group on Generative AI in Curriculum and Assessment.**
- **Chair, Science Foundation Ireland Discover Programme grant panel** (overseeing £24M+ in funding allocation).

## CURRENT POSITIONS

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<b>Full Professor of Creative Pedagogies</b>	2021 – present
Edinburgh Napier University, Department of Learning and Teaching Enhancement	
<b>Visiting Professor</b>	2025 – present
University College Dublin	
<b>Founder, Slow AI</b>	2024 – present
Critical AI literacy newsletter and CPD-accredited curriculum	

## EDUCATION

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<b>PhD in Atmospheric Physics</b>	2011
University of Leicester	
<b>MPhys Physics with Space Science and Technology (First Class, 87%)</b>	2006
University of Leicester	
<b>MA in Higher Education</b>	2016
Manchester Metropolitan University	

## SELECTED BOOKS

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<i>Generative AI in Higher Education</i>	
Bloomsbury, 2026	
<i>Bridging Scholarship and Practice in Higher Education</i>	
Routledge, 2025	
<i>Poetry and Pedagogy in Higher Education</i>	
Policy Press, 2024	
<i>Effective Science Communication</i>	
IOP Publishing, 3rd edition, 2024 · Adopted by 523 institutions across 66 countries · 250,000+ downloads	
<i>A Sonnet to Science: Scientists and Their Poetry</i>	
Manchester University Press, 2019	

## SELECTED KEYNOTES & INVITED TALKS

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<b>Keynote:</b> Institute of Physics	Nov 2025
<b>Keynote:</b> U!REKA EduForum, VSB-TUO, Czechia	Apr 2025
<b>Keynote:</b> Brain to Machine Generative AI Conference, Learning Planet Institute	Feb 2025
<b>Keynote:</b> ARC Speaker Series, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, USA	Oct 2024
<b>Keynote:</b> European Geosciences Union, Vienna	Apr 2023
<b>Keynote:</b> European Science Engagement Association, Vienna	May 2019
<b>Invited:</b> Equity Unbound	Nov 2025
<b>Invited:</b> Barcelona Biomedical Research Park	May 2025
<b>Invited:</b> University of Edinburgh (x4)	2022–2025
<b>Invited:</b> BERA: AI and Curriculum Making in Schools	Nov 2024
<b>Invited:</b> Wellesley College (x2)	2022–2023
<b>Invited:</b> Stockholm Resilience Centre	Sep 2023
<b>Invited:</b> Falling Walls, Berlin	Apr 2020
<b>Invited:</b> Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (UK Gov)	May 2022

Full list of 40+ invited engagements available on request.

## MEDIA

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BBC Radio 3   BBC Radio 4   BBC Radio Scotland   NPR   Wired   Buzzfeed

Nature   Scientific American   Channel News Asia   Times Higher Education   The Conversation

### BBC Science Focus

400 million media reach over the past two years. Written and presented for BBC. Featured by NPR (*All Things Considered*), Wired, Buzzfeed, Scientific American, and BBC Science Focus (*Instant Genius*).

## AWARDS & FELLOWSHIPS

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- **Katia and Maurice Krafft Award** (2023), European Geosciences Union, for innovative engagement methods in the geosciences
- **Principal Fellow of Advance HE** (PFHEA, 2022)
- **LSE Higher Education Blog Fellow** (2024), one of six globally
- **Daiwa Anglo-Japanese Foundation Scholar**, two years studying science and theatre in Japan
- **Fellow of the Young Academy of Scotland** (2022)

## SELECTED FUNDED RESEARCH

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Investigating ChatGPT and AI Experiences in UK Universities	· Leverhulme Trust, 2024–2026	£142,761
Climate Consortium	· NERC, 2017–2018	£119,000
The Imitation Game: AI in Analogue and Digital Games	· AHRC, 2018–2020	£56,000
Carbon City Zero	· Kickstarter / Laurence King Publishing, 2019–2020	£32,420

Additional grants from The Royal Society, EPSRC, Arts Council England, Advance HE, QAA, and others. Total: £450,000+.

## EDITORIAL & SUPERVISION

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**Editorial:** Chief Executive Editor, *Geoscience Communication* (Copernicus, 2018–). Editorial Board, *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* (Nature Portfolio, 2025–). Founder, *Consilience*, interdisciplinary journal with 86 volunteers across 6 continents. External Examiner, MSc Science Communication, University of Edinburgh.

**PhD supervision:** 4 completed: Dr Eleanor Dunn (UCD, 2026), Dr Tony Hall (MMU, 2020), Dr Maria Loroño (MMU, 2019), Dr Joanne Phillips (MMU, 2018). Current doctoral candidates at Edinburgh Napier. 5 external examiner appointments.

**Grant reviewing:** UKRI, AHRC, Swiss National Science Foundation, L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science, Science Foundation Ireland, Royal Society of Edinburgh.

**Creative:** Poetry and theatrical works performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company, at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and at Green Man festival. Published board game: [Carbon City Zero](#) (Laurence King Publishing). Written and presented for BBC.