


LSE Media ranked in the elite

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The LSE [Media and Communications Department](#) where Polis is based has been ranked fourth in the UK under the [Research Assessment Exercise](#) for 2008. This is pretty good going for a five year old department. 

[The RAE](#) is the most important grading system for Universities. It is a complex process based on judgements made by other academics. It can be effected by all sorts of factors such as the size of your department but essentially it is the bench-mark that the boffins and brainiacs use to measure the quality of their thinking. Most importantly, it is used by Government to decide who gets research funding.

Overall, [LSE](#) came joint second with Oxford, with Cambridge top. 75% of my Departmental colleagues were judged to be 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent'.

Here's the full description of the Department's work including Polis' role:

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Rapid change in media, technology and society demands dynamic and imaginative research to keep pace with it and this has been the aim of LSE's Media and Communications Department throughout its five-year history. Now results from the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise show the department's research edge is indeed one of the sharpest in the country – with 75 per cent judged to be 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent'. On grade point average, the department is rated third-best in the UK.

Media and Communications' work to assess the key issues in the emerging digital world encompasses the global and the local, the institutional and the everyday.

A global view is taken by Professor Lillie Chouliaraki in her analysis of how images of suffering and violence in Western media shape the way we interact with and respond to the world beyond. She recently organised a symposium on Humanitarian Communication in a Global Media Age which drew together scholars from media, law, business and philosophy.

This interdisciplinary approach is typical of the department's desire to draw on many branches of the social sciences in its research and to use multiple methods of study. The approach is implicit in the five key themes that underlie all its work: Communication, Identity and Difference; Democracy, Politics and Journalism Ethics; Globalisation and Comparative Studies; Innovation, Governance and Policy; and Media and New Literacies.

More than one of these themes is bound up with Professor Sonia Livingstone's EU-wide study of children and their internet use, charting the levels of danger to which they are exposed and the cultural contexts of childhood. Her work aims to give policy-makers the evidence to take practical action which will make online technology safer for users throughout Europe.

Professor Robin Mansell, the department's head, is working on a European Commission-funded project in which she examines policy and governance issues to show how difficult it can be to establish technical and social norms for operating reliable online services. She has also edited and introduced a four-volume set of books which covers the origins of ideas about the 'information society.'

Professor Mansell welcomed the department's strong showing in its first Research Assessment Exercise. She said: 'Our aim is to be the leading interdisciplinary research based department in the field in the UK and among the top five in the world. To be ranked third in the country after just five years is a tremendous achievement for a very talented team of academics.'

Media and Communications at LSE is also the home to the media think-tank POLIS, a joint initiative with the London College of Communication. Directed by distinguished journalist Charlie Beckett, POLIS is the leading UK forum for debate and research into contemporary media, hosting high-profile events for journalists, activists, politicians and

academics.

One of its recent research reports was Dr Damian Tambini's study *Journalism as a Social Compact: the rights and duties of financial and business journalists*. Based on a series of in-depth interviews with senior journalists, PR practitioners and regulators, his research shows how market and technology changes have put journalists' ethics and responsibilities under new pressure.

The links and tensions between news media and civil society also come under scrutiny in the work of Professor Terhi Rantanen; she is leading a new European Research Council funded project on democracy and news in Central and East European countries.

Polis is a joint partnership between the LSE and the [University of the Arts, London](#).

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