Call for Participants in the SPRITE+ Virtual Sandpit

SPRITE+ is pleased to invite Members and Expert Fellows to apply to attend an online sandpit on **Trust, Identity, Privacy, and Security in the post-Covid Digital Economy**. Up to £100,000 of SPRITE+ funding will be made available to fund interdisciplinary projects arising from this sandpit.

Background

SPRITE+ is the EPSRC-funded (grant reference EP/S035869/1) NetworkPlus for Trust, Identity, Privacy, and Security (TIPS). We work with academic and non-academic stakeholders to build and strengthen the TIPS community and identify requirements and promising new directions for research in this area. We have a 'pump-priming' budget to fund activities that explore and test new ideas, and that create new collaborations between academic disciplines, and between academic and non-academic partners.

Sandpit theme

In May 2020, SPRITE+ held a workshop with our Project Partners and Challenge Theme leads to identify issues that they judged were important for the future of TIPS, and ripe for further research exploration. A recurring theme was the ways in which technologies are being used in addressing the current challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, how such technologies are or might be exploited (e.g., by governments, criminals or businesses), and the part that technologies may play in achieving a secure and prosperous post-Covid future for everyone.

These workshop discussions inform the focus of this sandpit, specifically ***trust, identity, privacy, and security in the post-Covid Digital Economy***. Questions we might address include (but are not restricted to):

- How do the responses of governments, businesses, and citizens to Covid-19 enable or mitigate new digital harms?
- How might we protect networks, hardware, individuals and organisations (etc.) from such harms and/or make them resilient in the face of harm?
- How can ethics, regulation, policy, education (etc.) keep up with the pace of technological change?
- How can legacy, present, and future technologies come together to form a post-Covid digital ecosystem that works for everyone?

Sandpit outputs

Up to £100,000 of SPRITE+ funding will be made available to fund interdisciplinary projects arising from this sandpit.

Successful projects will explore digital technologies in the anticipated post-Covid world from different disciplinary and stakeholder perspectives, identifying new opportunities, potential threats and

unintended consequences. Successful projects will be partnerships between academic researchers and non-academic stakeholders. It must be possible to run projects under conditions of social distancing / lockdown if necessary.

The timescale for each project will be no longer than four months, and each project funded is expected to be between £5,000 and £25,000 (at 80% fEC). Project Partners and non-academic Members may contribute in-kind resources. The aim is to generate scoping studies and explore promising 'proof of concept' ideas that could be developed into more substantial funding proposals (e.g., to UKRI, Innovate UK, or other funds).

Expected commitment from participants

The sandpit will run virtually, at the following dates and times in July 2020.

- 13 July, 09.30 - 11.00: Sandpit session 0 (pre-meet for participants get to know each other)
- 16 July, 09.30 - 13.00: Sandpit session 1
- 20 July, 09.30 - 13.00: Sandpit session 2
- 23 July, 09.30 - 13.00: Sandpit session 3
- 27 July, 09.30 - 13.00: Sandpit session 4 / Funding panel

Participants must attend every session in full and will be expected to engage with each other and with Project Partners in between the formal sessions, to develop and refine their ideas. Suggested reading and videos will be provided before and during the workshop and participants are encouraged to explore relevant research and grey literature.

In total, we estimate participants will need to commit between 25 and 35 hours before, during and after the sandpit.

An application to attend will be taken to mean you are available for these dates and able to engage fully.

The short application form can be found here.

Further details

How will the sandpit work?
Our approach to the sandpit is similar to the UKRI sandpit approach. A sandpit is highly interactive and involves participants from different disciplines and backgrounds exploring and developing innovative approaches to a challenge. UKRI sandpits traditionally take place in person over between two and five days, to allow participants to immerse themselves fully in collaborative thinking.

However, as in-person events are currently impossible, we will be running the workshop entirely online via Zoom. Full-day online interactions can be tiring for participants and may be difficult to manage for those with caring responsibilities and/or with children at home. We are thus running the

sandpit over five half-day sessions in July. In between the formal sessions we encourage and expect participants to explore ideas together informally.

At the end of the sandpit, project proposals will be presented to a 'Dragons' Den'-style panel which will include members drawn from our Advisory Board, Expert Fellows group, and other stakeholders. The Panel will recommend proposals for funding and those involved will need to prepare a brief written proposal covering their intended activities, with costings (at 80% fEC). The deadline for submission of proposals generated at the sandpit will be 17 August 2020.

After satisfactorily completing normal contract and due diligence procedures with University of Manchester, projects can start. All grant holders will be expected to present their results at the 2021 Expert Fellows meeting on 14 January 2021 (in Belfast or online, depending on Covid-19 restrictions). The deadline for submitting a final report on funded activities is 31 January 2021.

Funding
Whilst applications to attend the sandpit are open all SPRITE+ Members, funding can only be allocated to eligible researchers as described in EPSRC's Funding Guide. Funding will be agreed in principle in the final sandpit session on 27 July. We expect proposals to be co-created with non-academic stakeholders for maximum impact.

Funds will be awarded at 80% fEC in accordance with normal UKRI practices. In practical terms, this means that SPRITE+ will fund 80% of the total costs outlined in successful proposals.

Who should attend?
We anticipate that approximately two thirds of places will be filled by academic researchers and one third by non-academic research users.

We want to bring people together who would not normally interact and particularly welcome applications from individuals who have not previously engaged in the 'TIPS' community. We encourage applications from individuals working in SMEs and third sector organisations, and from academic researchers from all disciplines, including engineering, physical sciences, life sciences, the social sciences, and the arts and humanities. Researchers from any stage of their research career are eligible to apply.

Access and inclusion
We recognise that some potential participants may face barriers to online participation, including poor connection speeds, internet data caps, additional childcare costs, or the need for BSL interpreters, captioning, or audio description. We are committed to doing what we can to help participants overcome such barriers. Successful applicants will be eligible to apply for support through our SPRITE+ access fund to help them participate fully and effectively in sandpit activities. Please contact admin@spritehub.org to arrange a discussion (in confidence) if you want to explore what could be available to you.

How to apply

All SPRITE+ Members (including Expert Fellows) are eligible to apply. You can apply for membership (which is free of charge) here.

Applicants should complete the short application form here and submit to admin@spritehub.org by 5pm (BST), 16 June.

Proposals will be reviewed against the following selection criteria:

- The ability to develop novel and adventurous research ideas
- The potential to contribute to research at the interface between disciplines
- The ability to work in a team
- The ability to engage productively with people from a range of backgrounds within and outside your sector

Note that we do not assess your academic publication or research track record as part of the process. We are more interested in your ability to engage creatively and constructively in a multidisciplinary environment to generate novel ideas, and the way in which you demonstrate an appreciation of the challenges of trust, identity, privacy, and security in the post-Covid Digital Economy.

We will select participants based on the information in the application form and will also endeavour to achieve a diverse spread of participants from across disciplines and backgrounds.

Key dates

- 27 May 2020: Applications open
- 8 June, 17.00 BST: Deadline for queries
- 16 June, 17.00 BST: Applications close
- 30 June: Applicants notified of decision
- 13 July, 09.30-11.00: Sandpit session 0 (pre-meet for participants to get to know each other)
- 16 July, 09.30-13.00: Sandpit session 1
- 20 July, 09.30-13.00: Sandpit session 2
- 23, 09.30-13.00: Sandpit session 3
- 27 July, 09.30-13.00: Sandpit session 4/Funding panel
- 17 August, 17.00 BST: Deadline for written proposals
- From 24 August: Start dates for projects (depending on contracts)
- 14 January 2021: Presentation of results at 2021 Expert Fellows Meeting (Belfast or online)
- 1 February 2021: Deadline for project completion

Privacy notice

SPRITE+ is fully compliant with GDPR. We will treat proposals as confidential and share only with the Management Team and peer reviewers. Copies of unsuccessful applications will be destroyed after the evaluation process. Copies of successful applications will be destroyed within 3 months of the

sandpit. Anonymised statistics will be recorded to inform the organisation of future Sandpits and to monitor efforts to attract applicants from diverse backgrounds.

Please note that the information you provide in sections 1, 2, 3 and 6 of your application form may be shared with other participants prior to the sandpit.

For details of how SPRITE+ handles Members' data more generally, see our Privacy Policy.

A note about Zoom

Organising an online sandpit is a complex affair, involving switches between breakout groups and plenary sessions, and the use of virtual flipcharts and post-it notes. The process will be expertly handled by our facilitation partners Know Innovation.

We will be using Zoom as it is currently the only platform that allows smooth running of complex online events such as these, but we recognise that some potential participants will have security and privacy-related concerns about using Zoom. We will take the following actions to ensure the security of our meetings:

- A unique Zoom meeting room number and password will be used for each session
- The Zoom 'waiting room' feature will be used, and participants will be admitted to the meeting following a cross-check of their details with our records, to ensure they are expected
- Once all attendees have arrived, the Zoom meeting will be 'locked'
- Only the meeting host and their designees will be allowed to share screens or content

We are monitoring the actions Zoom takes to address privacy and security concerns. We are also keeping an eye out, as new platforms are launched, for potential alternatives that offer the same levels of functionality and stability and enhanced levels of privacy/security.

Further information

You can read our current FAQs document here (to be updated until 9 June).

If you have any further questions regarding this call, please contact Natalie Theodoulou (SPRITE+ Network Manager) admin@spritehub.org.