



Social Media for Psychological Research in Ethical, Productive and Prosocial Ways

Ian MacRae, BA, MSc, MBPsS

01 MY BACKGROUND & EXPERIENCE

02 DATA COLLECTION

03 PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS

04 SHARING INFORMATION AND RESULTS

05 NEW APPLICATIONS AND INNOVATION

06 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**TOPICS
TO
COVER**



01 MY BACKGROUND & EXPERIENCE

02

03

04

05

06

TOPICS
TO
COVER



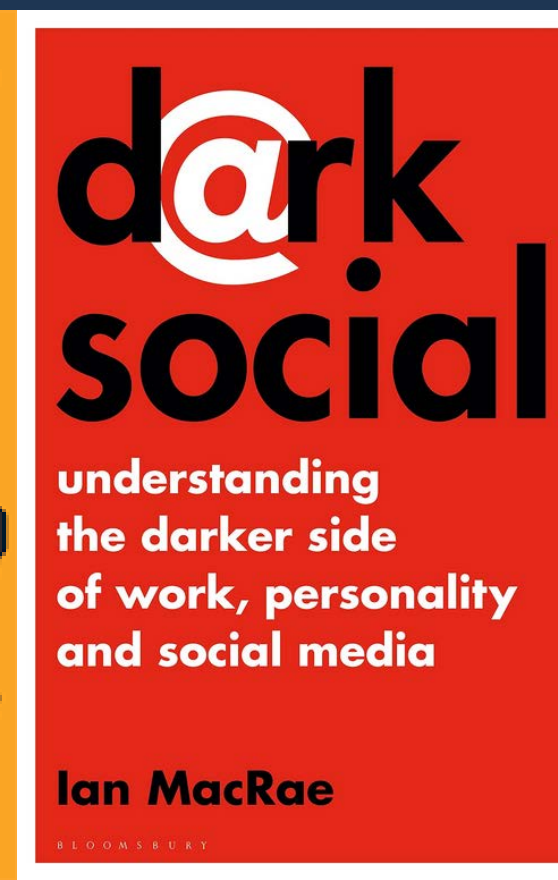
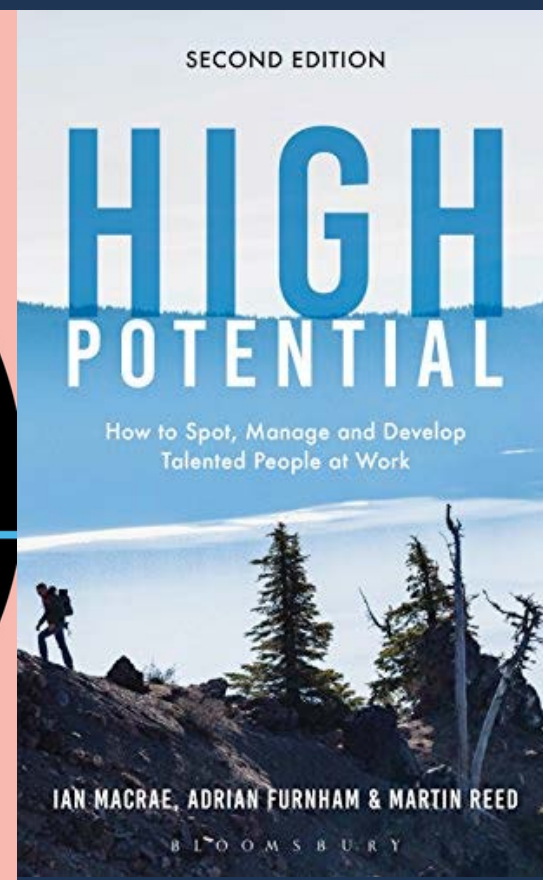
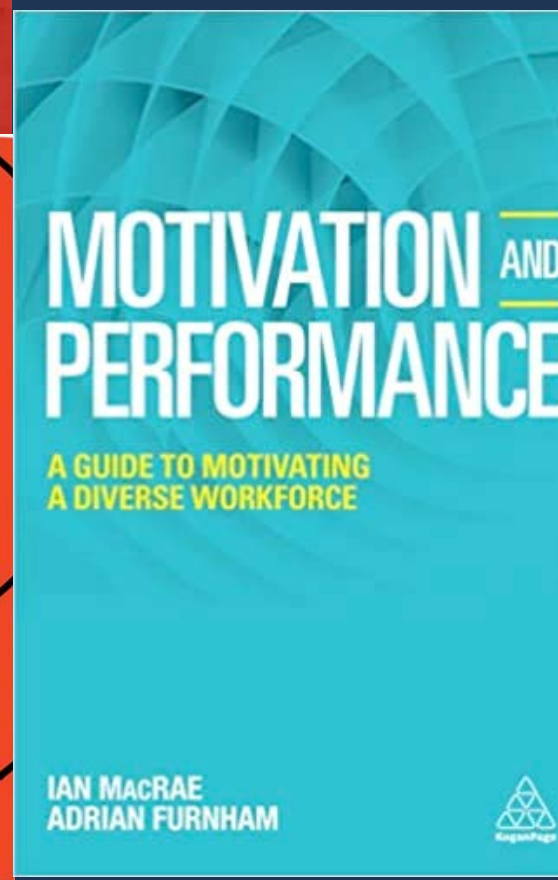
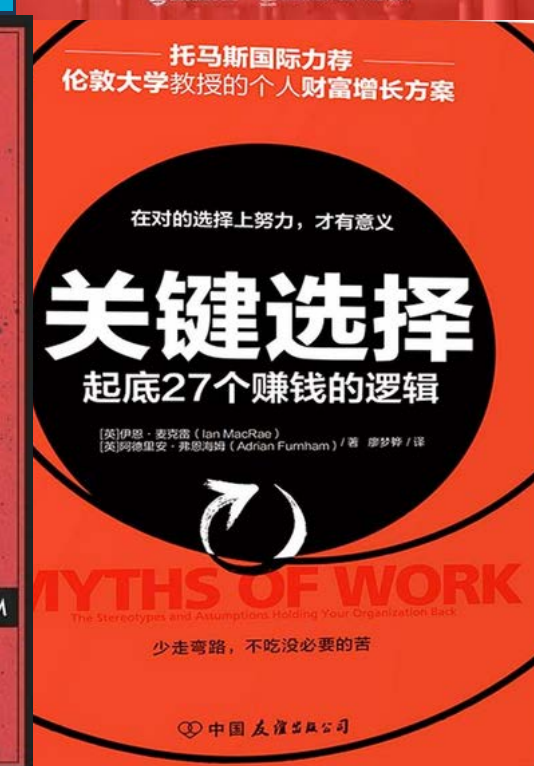
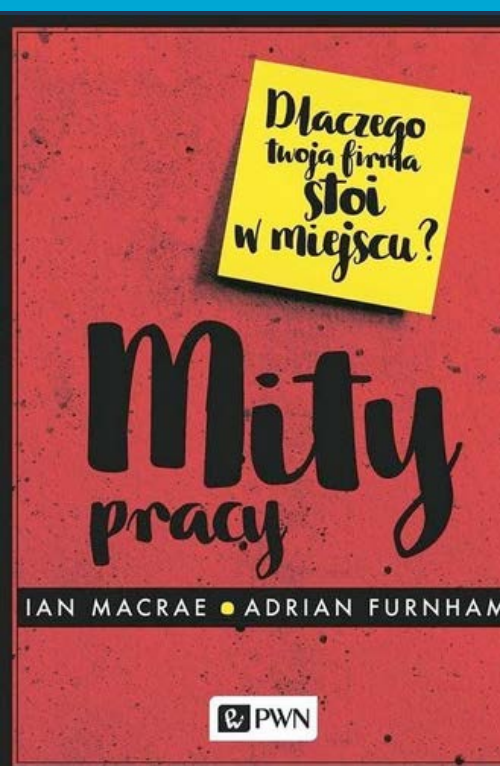
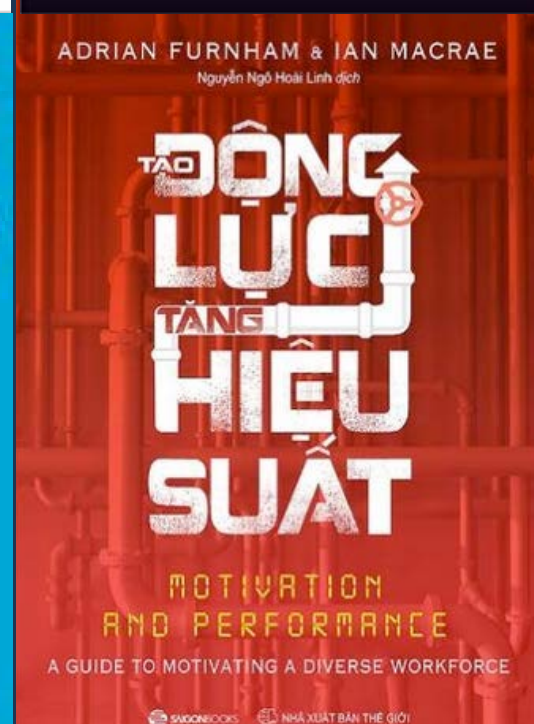
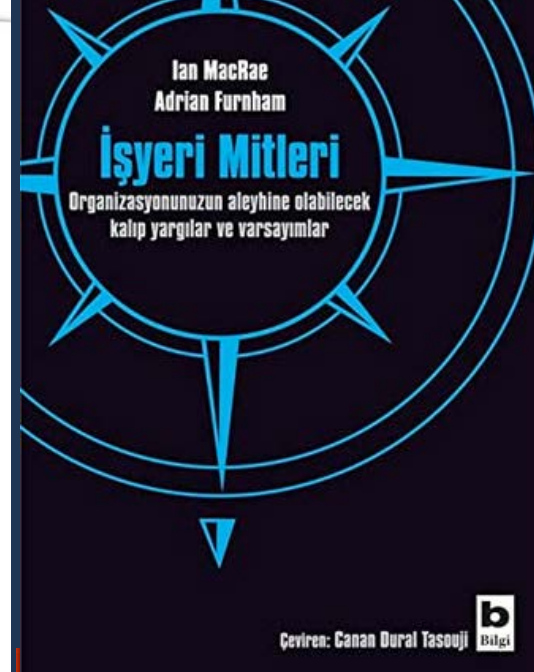
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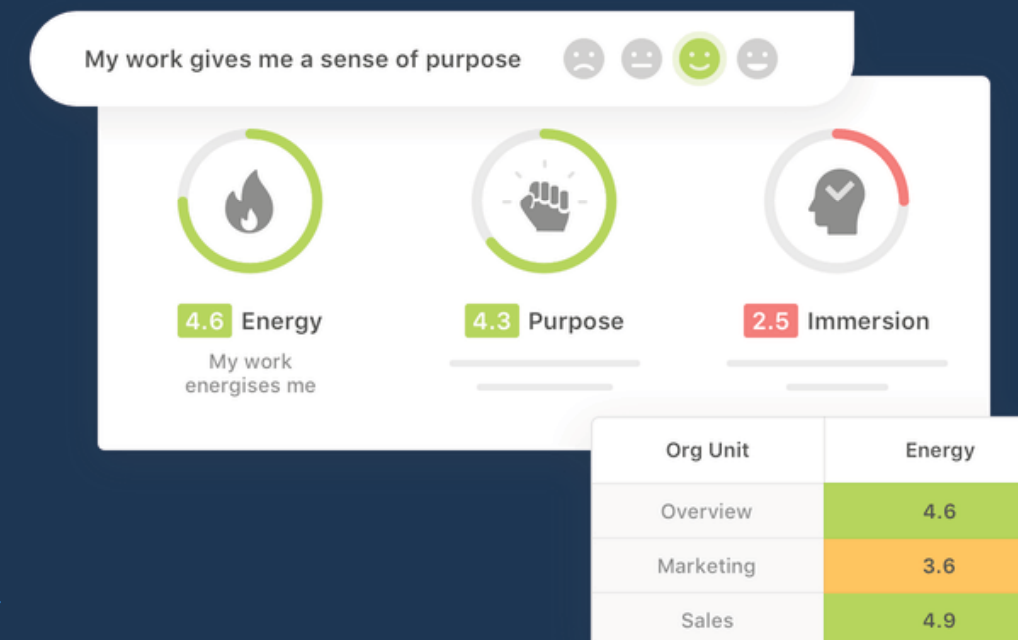
SOCIAL MEDIA

PSYCHOMETRICS

[Twitter.com/iansmacrae](https://twitter.com/iansmacrae)

[Linkedin.com/in/iansmacrae](https://linkedin.com/in/iansmacrae)

[Youtube.com/IanMacRaePsychology](https://youtube.com/IanMacRaePsychology)



DARK SIDE TRAITS

DRAMATIC | SENSITIVE | PERFECTIONIST



NAME: imacrae
DATE: 19/01/2021
REPORT ID: 55
PARTICIPANT ID: 3
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WARY | SOLITARY | AGGRESSIVE

YOUR BACKGROUND

POLLS:

A) AREAS OF PSYCHOLOGY

B) SOCIAL MEDIA USE

C) SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

01

02 DATA COLLECTION

03

04

05

06

TOPICS
TO
COVER



RECRUITING RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Common challenge for psychologists: how to recruit research participants outside of psychology student population.

Consider the whole research project, and potential benefits before collecting data

Think about the real value in participating in psychological research

- Benefits to participants and to wider populations
Access to information, results, reports, etc.

- Limitations and benefits of convenience sampling.



Possible Benefits:

a) When your participation is complete, you will be given an opportunity to learn about this research, which may be useful to you in your course or in understanding yourself and others.

Is the 'opportunity to learn about this research' a link to a Research Ethics Board form?

Is that a sufficient benefit for most people?

Is that interesting to a general audience?

Is the presentation of that information accessible to participants?



PEOPLE RESPOND TO REAL BENEFITS

But they must be presented in the right way,
appropriate language with personally relevant
and practical information.



PERSONAL RESULTS

Personality and
psychometric tests

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Accessible and relevant
Practical advice

FURTHER PARTICIPATION

Comment on
preliminary findings

DIRECTLY RELEVANT

Directly ask and answer
the question: "so
what...?"

ACCESSIBLE

In the right form, on the
right channels, using
appropriate language.

PRACTICAL

Understanding the
impact of research and
results.

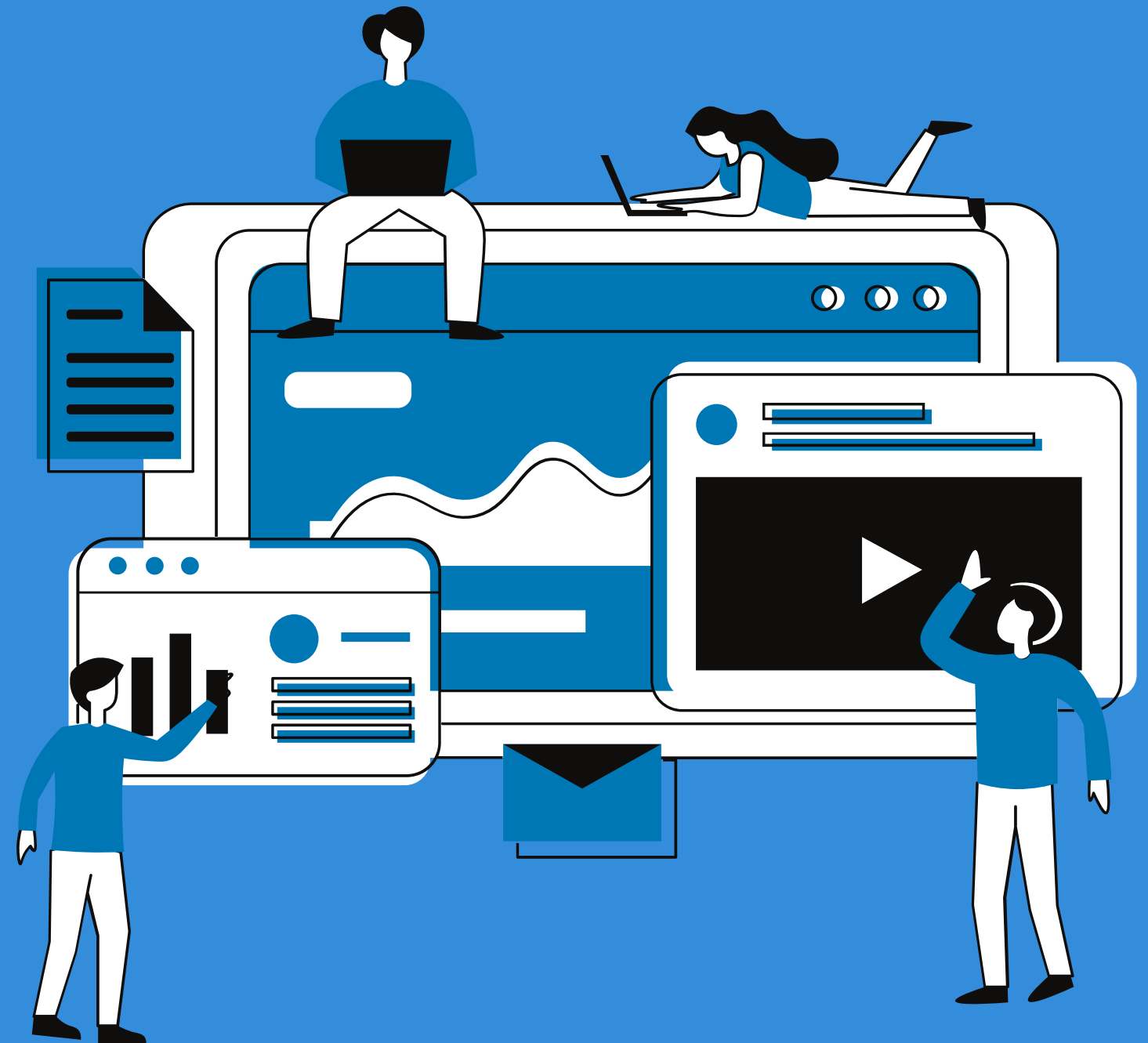
UNDERSTAND HOW PEOPLE ACCESS INFORMATION

Different formats:

Links between types of content

- Articles
- Infographics
- Video and audio
- Interactive elements

Don't need to sacrifice quality of content. Think of ways to enhance the quality, depth and richness of information.





USING PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL PROFILES

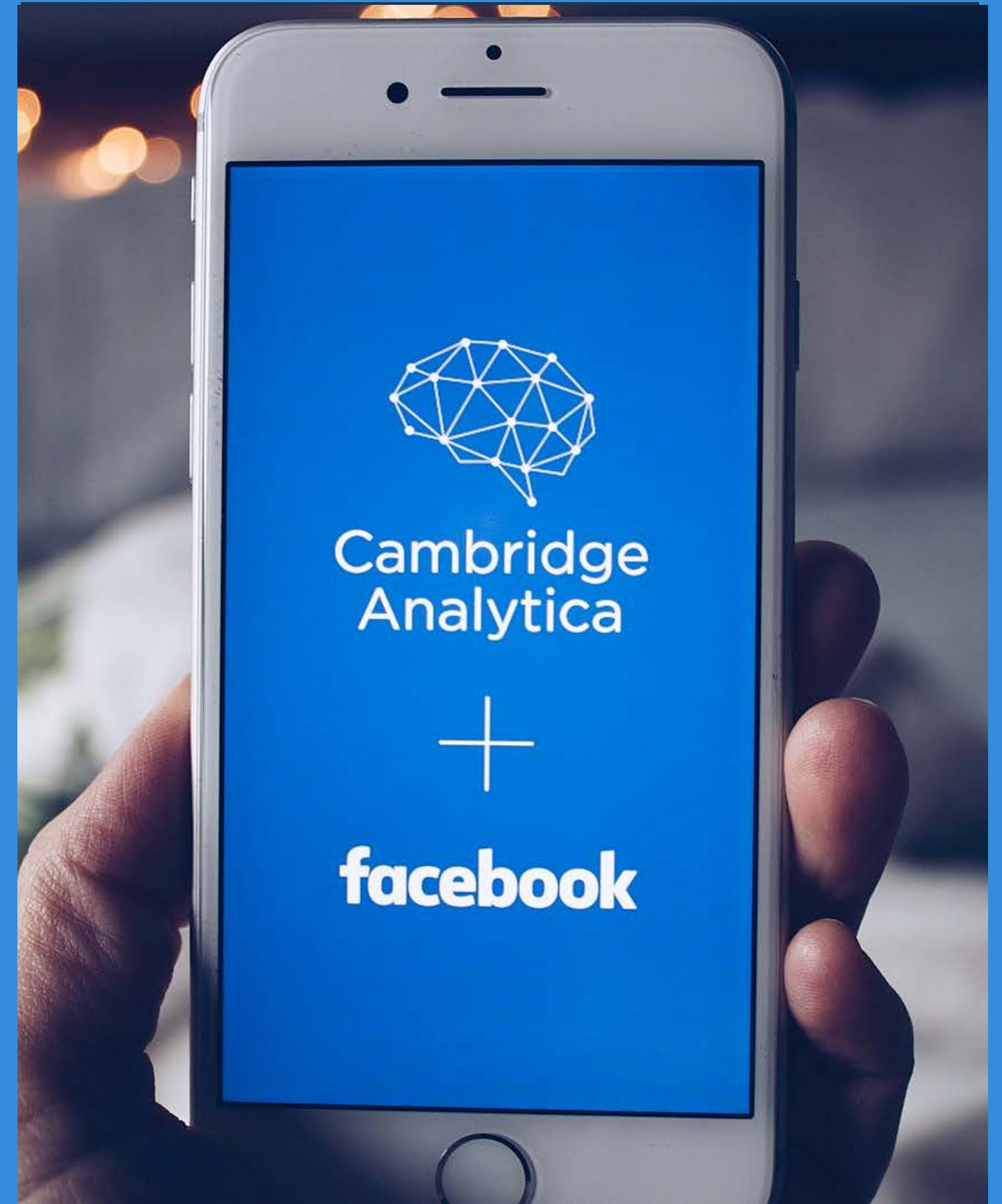
Understanding how to connect with potential participations
Communicate research participation opportunities
Generating interest in results, reports, research



CAUTIONARY TALE: CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA

Key Points:

- harvesting data without consent
- using participants to collect data from their social contacts
- selling data
- very effective at providing self-assessment results on social media



GENERAL TIPS



Learn how people
interact with your
materials



Offer real, useful
content



Be very clear
about data
protection

01

02

03 PARTICIPATION AND ACCESS

04

05

06

TOPICS
TO
COVER



UNDERSTANDING YOUR AUDIENCE

General population

vs.

Specific groups

Tie this back to strategy: chosen publications and media.



CONNECTING WITH UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS



IN-PERSON ESSENTIAL

Some groups are primarily offline,
shouldn't be ignored.



TRADITIONAL INFLUENCERS

Community and local leaders, and
events.



SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCERS

Online influencers connect directly
to audiences



FORMAL LEADERS

TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND
PEOPLE IN TRADITIONAL
LEADERSHIP ROLES DON'T ALWAYS
HAVE THE SAME REACH

INFORMAL LEADERS

HAVE LARGE, ACTIVE AND
ENGAGED FOLLOWINGS, AND
CAN TRANSLATE IDEAS INTO
BEHAVIOUR

Choosing Channels: Profiles



FACEBOOK - INSTAGRAM

Focused on individual personalities and brands.
Highly saturated with advertisements, difficult to generate "organic" traffic.



LINKEDIN

Generally professional and work-focused, profile based.



TWITTER

Immediate and rapid content.
Media, publishing, advertising; politics and culture
Lots of highly active subgroups..

Choosing Channels: Discussions



SLACK - TEAMS

Internal company networks

Essential for anyone working with clients who use these for internal comms.

DISCORD - WHATSAPP - TELEGRAM - FB MESSENGER

Discussion-focused instead of profile-focused.
Groups centre around topics, communities, or products.

REDDIT

Discussion-based around communities, most are open.

Not great representative samples, but interesting trends.

Choosing Channels: Video



TIKTOK

Video content, primarily younger audiences.
Privacy and data protection concerns.



YOUTUBE

More of a communication tool than a discussion tool, good education resource.



SNAPCHAT

Popular, video and image service, but mostly with younger audience.
Not a lot of professional uses.

Connecting social and traditional media



SOCIAL MEDIA

Highly connected with traditional media.



TRADE ASSOCIATIONS

Specific industry associations and trade bodies have large audiences with very specific interests.



SPECIALIZED MAGAINES

Targeted towards certain interest groups, typically have specific demographic profiles.

GENERAL TIPS



Understand your
(potential)
participants



Understand how
any why people
have "influence"
online



Use the right
platforms.

01

02

03

04 SHARING INFORMATION AND
RESULTS

05

06

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ACADEMIC PUBLICATION

SPECIFIC AUDIENCE

APPLIED PUBLICATION

SPECIFIC AUDIENCE VS.
GENERAL AUDIENCE

PUBLISHING RESULTS

Where to publish your results?

Perils and pitfalls of publishing results on social media and traditional media.

– Very different from academic publishing.



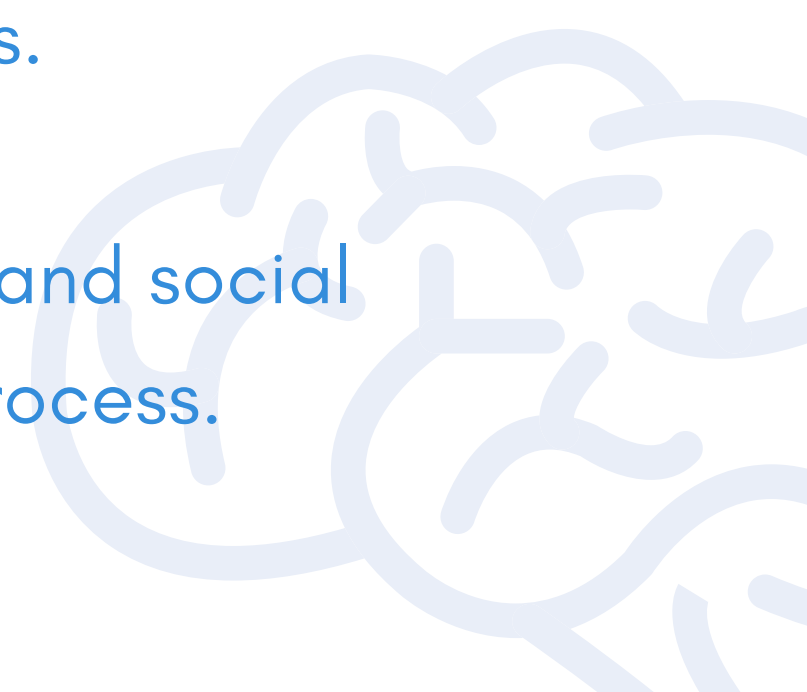


USE ALL THE SAME CHANNELS

Find different ways of sharing, disseminating and discussing the results of your research.

If you used social channels to connect with participants, use the same channels to disseminate your results.

Collaborate with traditional media channels and social media influencers throughout the research process.



NOT ALL SOCIAL MEDIA HAPPENS PUBLICLY



Identify key
people



Find preferred
communication
platform



Value of direct
messages

DIRECT CONVERSATION

One-to-one discussion can be more clear and focused.

NO BENEFIT TO HAVING AN AUDIENCE

Removes the element of social media performance for an audience.

MORE PERSONAL CONNECTION

Direct messages can make it easier to discuss nuance and clarify points.

MOVE TO DIRECT CONTACT

Privacy and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed on someone else's messaging platform.

When to send direct messages





PRESENT RESULTS

Present and discuss results in different formats and for different audiences.



FUTURE PARTICIPATION

When possible, include a "what's next" or opportunities for future participation.

FUTURE PARTICIPATION

FEEDBACK ON THE RESULTS

Give people opportunities to comment, ask questions, provide feedback.

FOLLOW-UP RESEARCH

Qualitative research, follow-up studies, further understanding.

REGISTER INTEREST

Contact information, with clear info about how it will be used.



GENERAL TIPS



Think about
publication
channels



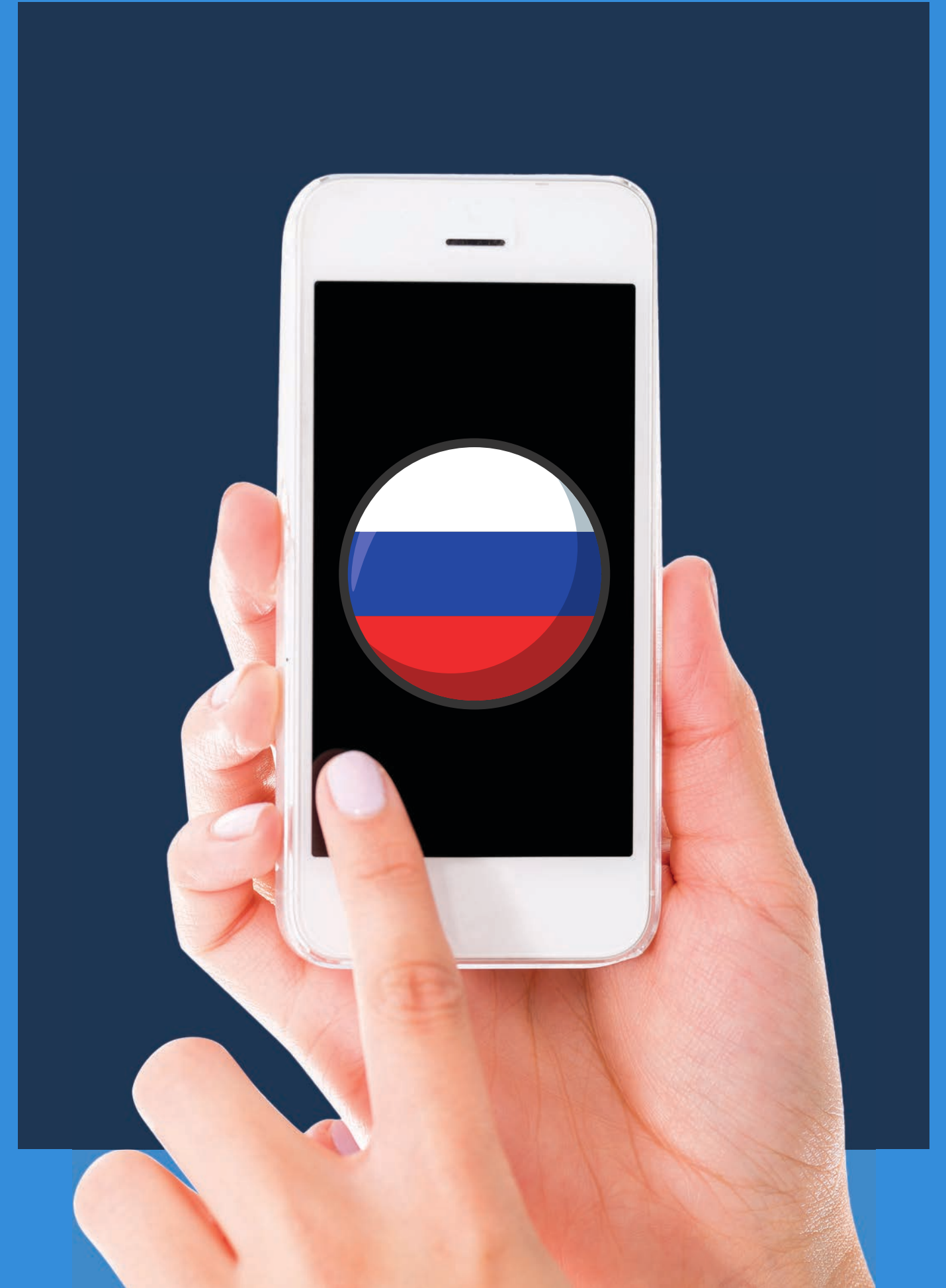
Connections
between social
and traditional
media.



Understand how
people describe
themselves in their
own words.

CAUTIONARY TALE: INTERNET RESEARCH AGENCY

- Bait and switch tactics, deception in building audiences.
- Highly effective at generating user engagement
- Emotionally charged and personally relevant content



01

02

03

04

05 NEW APPLICATIONS AND
INNOVATION

06

TOPICS
TO
COVER



Tech & Psychology



ONLINE DATA

Data collection

Data harvesting



MENTAL HEALTH APPS

Practical uses

Some have poor/no evidence basis



BLOCKCHAIN

Storing, portability and ownership of data

Still the digital "wild west".

Role for psychologist in navigating how technology and business influences human behaviour online.

- Positive, constructive and ethical input**
- Need conversations about ethics early in the development of new tech**
- Based on guiding principles, not ad hoc responses**



GENERAL TIPS



Advocates for the
role of
psychologists in
tech



Interest in
emerging tech
fields



Try out new
platforms

01

02

03

04

05

06 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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COVER



BREVITY

Please see the attached
five documents

CLARITY

Be clear about what
you're asking and
offering

DIRECTNESS

Polite, but get to the
point

Working with (Social) Media

OFFER REAL BENEFITS

Clear, practical,
accessible

FIND NICHE

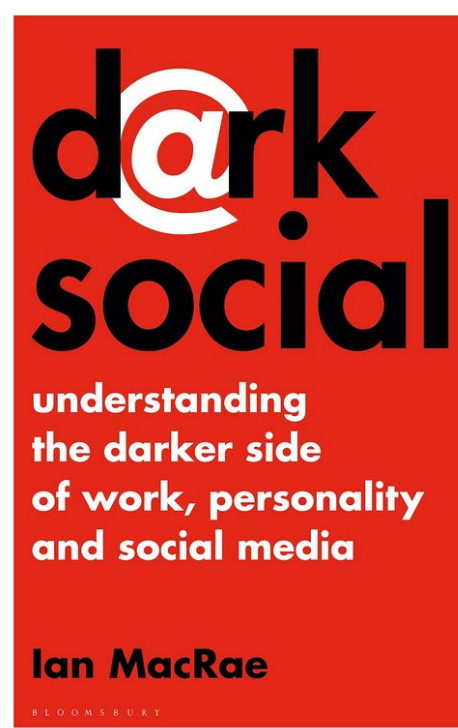
Far easier to get heard

MAKE IT EASY TO SAY YES

Administrative and
cognitive barriers



REFERENCES



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SOCIAL MEDIA

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