Dr Benjamin J Matthews

Senior Lecturer and Discipline Lead, Media and Communication, University of Newcastle, Australia

matthewsbenjamin@gmail.com · benjaminjamesmatthews.com ·
ORCID 0000-0002-5832-8258

Generated from the same data as this website. Updated November 2026.

Current roles

2026–	Discipline Lead, Media and Communication, School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Sciences, University of Newcastle
2018–	Senior Lecturer (2023–), Lecturer (2018–2023), Media and Communication, University of Newcastle
2023–	Associate Investigator, ARC Centre of Excellence in Synthetic Biology
2022–	Co-founder, Director and Commercial Lead, Wild Yeast Zoo Pty Ltd
2015–	Founder and Principal, River Rock Consultants

Education

2010	PhD (Communication and English), University of Newcastle. Thesis: *Wolfgang Iser and literary anthropology*
1999	Honours in English, Class 1, University of Newcastle
1997	Bachelor of Communication (Journalism and Radio Production), University of Newcastle

Earlier career

2017–2018	Sessional Lecturer, Western Sydney University (Adjunct Fellow 2015–2017)
2016	Lecturer, University of Technology Sydney
2011–2018	Strategist, Producer and Copywriter, Headjam
2016–2018	Strategist and Producer, Storyhaus, Guts Creative and Something Blue
2008–2013	Copywriter and Consultant, Rawsuga Marketing

Awards and recognition

2025	Net Zero Grand Challenge, University of Newcastle, First Place and People's Choice (team EcoFusion)

2024	College Excellence Award for Research Engagement and Translation, University of Newcastle
2024	Shortlisted, National Trust (NSW) Heritage Awards, Central Darling Heritage Trail app
2022	Finalist, Lake Art Prize, *Inbetweenness* (with Katherine Williams)
2021	iGEM, team supervisor, Silver Medal (2020 competition)
2020–21	UON Grand Challenge, overall winner

Grants and funding

Nineteen competitive and commissioned grants, about $1.3 million (AUD).

Year	Project	Funder	Amount
2025	Wild Yeast Zoo (AEA Ignite)	Australian Government Department of Education	$204,106
2025	Cellulight: Where optogenetics woo the weave	Australian Research Council (via Macquarie University)	$25,000
2024	A high-throughput platform to inform biocatalyst optimisation	International research award	US$374,330
2024	Public education messages targeting smartphone use among young regional drivers	Transport for NSW	$32,747
2023	Wild Yeast Zoo performance bonus	CSIRO ON Accelerate	~$150,000
2023	CSIRO ON Prime performance bonus	CSIRO ON Prime	$4,050
2023	BPA OMICS (wild yeast genomics)	ARC Centre of Excellence in Synthetic Biology	$25,000
2023	Wild Yeast Program	Inspiring NSW	$10,000
2022	Virtual Augmented Reality Research Network (VARRN)	Sunway Education	$32,000
2022	Wild Yeast Zoo seed funding	ARC Centre of Excellence in Synthetic Biology	$22,500
2022	Entrepreneurial debt and young people's investments in their future	University of Newcastle	$14,000
2021	Central Darling Heritage Trail App	Central Darling Shire Council	$132,406
2021	Virtual Augmented Reality Research Network (VARRN)	Sunway Education	$16,000

2020	Media and Entertainment Research Centre (MERCury) establishment	University of Newcastle	$70,000
2020	ECR Inclusive Transformative Technology Scrum	University of Newcastle	$14,896
2020	MindSpace XR (RAPID grant program)	University of Newcastle	$10,000
2020	FEDUA Finish That Output Scheme	University of Newcastle	$2,500
2020	Strategic Early Advice and Feedback Scheme	University of Newcastle	$1,260
2019	Faculty New Start Grant	University of Newcastle	$5,000
2019	iLead New Media	University of Newcastle Global	$3,000
2019	World Technology Universities Network Exchange	WTUN	$2,200
2019	School of Creative Industries Travel Grant	University of Newcastle	$1,000

Publications

Books and chapters

1. Matthews, B., & Roxburgh, M. (in press). We become the second: Prompting, care, and the lessening of the human. In M. Zournazi, C. Hight, & J. Drummond (Eds.), *Cultural analytics, AI and the digital futures*. Routledge.
2. Matthews, B. (in press). Render ghosts: Generative AI and blur. In H. Cohen et al. (Eds.), *The artist and the algorithm*. Open Book Publishers.
3. Matthews, B., & Roxburgh, M. (forthcoming). The dematerialisation of the designer: Human creativity in the age of automated culture. In *Digital futures* (edited collection).
4. Matthews, B. (accepted). Fear of synthesis: Microbes, citizen science, and the nature–culture dialectic. In D. Fulvi & H. Dixson (Eds.), *Philosophical, ethical, and social challenges of synthetic biology*. Palgrave Macmillan.
5. Arnold, E., Matthews, B. J., Chand, A., & Roche, L. (accepted). Universal design for learning across the educational lifespan: From early childhood education to higher education. In *Universal design for learning across adult learning: Theory and practice*. Springer.
6. Matthews, B. J., & Roxburgh, M. (forthcoming, 2027). Prompting as practice: Rethinking design literacy in the AI era. In I. Bo-Linn & J. Marble (Eds.), *AI for designers: Supporting creativity in graphic design education*. Bloomsbury Academic.
7. Matthews, B., Gibbs, E., Cain, A., Hassan, K., & Lean, C. (2025). Transdisciplinarity and the role of creative industries in science and technology research teams. In *The elephant's leg II* (pp. 11–26). Common Ground. https://doi.org/10.18848/978-1-966214-81-6/CGP
8. Cloke, S., Roxburgh, M., & Matthews, B. (2023). Who gets to wear the black turtleneck? Questioning the profession of design thinking. In K. Straker & C. Wrigley (Eds.), *Research handbook on design thinking* (pp. 46–70). Edward Elgar.

9. Matthews, B. (2021). Future creative industries: Media work in the orgnet. In C. Hight & M. Minichiello (Eds.), *The elephant's leg: Adventures in the creative industries* (pp. 67–88). Common Ground.
10. Matthews, B. (2019). New hypothetical continents: Experimenting with u/dystopia. In S. Douglas & S. Lowry (Eds.), *Anywhere: Art at the outermost limits of location-specificity* (pp. 40–45). Centre of Visual Art (University of Melbourne) & Parsons Fine Art (Parsons School of Design, The New School).
11. Matthews, B. (2019). Enkel Collective: Making change makers. In L. Bogers & L. Chiappini (Eds.), *The critical makers reader: (Un)learning technology* (pp. 173–180). Institute of Network Cultures.
12. Burns, L. S., & Matthews, B. J. (2018). *Understanding journalism* (3rd ed.). SAGE.

Journal articles

1. Matthews, B. J., Gibbs, E., et al. (in preparation). Speculative design as a method for transdisciplinary research translation: The case of The Living Spacecraft. Manuscript in preparation for the *Journal of Responsible Innovation*.
2. Threadgold, S., Shannon, B., Haro, A., Cook, J., Davies, K., Coffey, J., Farrugia, D., Matthews, B., Healy, J., & Burrows, R. (2025). Buy now, pay later technologies and the gamification of debt in the financial lives of young people. *Journal of Cultural Economy*, *18*, 52–67. https://doi.org/10.1080/17530350.2024.2346210
3. Threadgold, S., Haro, A., Matthews, B., Coffey, J., Healy, J., & Cook, J. (2025). Hustling in the projectariat? Financialisation and precarious creative industries. *Cultural Trends*, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/09548963.2025.2596864
4. Healy, J., Cook, J., Threadgold, S., Coffey, J., Farrugia, D., Davies, K., & Matthews, B. (2025). Young people's buy now, pay later use: Financial stress, usage patterns and intersections with other forms of credit. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/13676261.2025.2605539
5. Davies, K., Cook, J., Threadgold, S., Farrugia, D., Coffey, J., Matthews, B., & Healy, J. (2024). "Winging it": How youth workers navigate debt with young people. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *163*, 107771. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2024.107771
6. Matthews, B., Shannon, B., & Roxburgh, M. (2023). Destroy all humans: The dematerialisation of the designer in an age of automation and its impact on graphic design—A literature review. *International Journal of Art & Design Education*. https://doi.org/10.1111/jade.12460
7. See, Z. S., Matthews, B., Day, J., Carroll, N., McGrath, J., & Amin, M. (2023). Inclusive virtual simulation space: Digital technologies and the design thinking process. *Virtual Creativity*, *13*, 49–67.
8. See, Z. S., Ledger, S., Goodman, L., Matthews, B., Jones, D., Fealy, S., … Amin, M. (2023). Playable experiences through technologies: Opportunities and challenges for teaching simulation learning and extended reality solution creation. *Journal of Information Technology Education: Innovations in Practice*, *22*, 67–90. https://doi.org/10.28945/5121
9. Day, J., Finkelstein, J. C., Field, B. A., Matthews, B., Kirby, J. N., & Doty, J. R. (2021). Compassion-focused technologies: Reflections and future directions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *12*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.603618

10. Matthews, B., See, Z. S., & Day, J. (2021). Crisis and extended realities: Remote presence in the time of COVID-19. *Media International Australia*, *178*(1), 198–209. https://doi.org/10.1177/1329878x20967165
11. Matthews, B., See, Z. S., & Doyle, D. (2021). XR and creativity: Transformative technologies for good. *Virtual Creativity*, *11*(1), 3–7. https://doi.org/10.1386/vcr_00039_2
12. Orr, N., Matthews, B., See, Z. S., Burrell, A., Day, J., & Seengal, D. (2021). Transdisciplinarity in extended reality (XR) research design: Technological transformation and social good. *Virtual Creativity*, *11*(1), 163–179. https://doi.org/10.1386/vcr_00048_1
13. See, Z. S., Matthews, B., Goodman, L., Jones, D., Hight, C., Egglestone, P., … Ooi, W. H. (2020). Extended reality interactive wall: User experience design research-creation. *Virtual Creativity*, *10*(2), 163–174. https://doi.org/10.1386/vcr_00030_1
14. Burns, L. S., & Matthews, B. J. (2018). First things first: Teaching data journalism as a core skill. *Asia Pacific Media Educator*, *28*, 91–105.
15. Matthews, B. (2017). Precarity, globalism and resistance in emergent collectivism: The case of Enspiral. *Global Media Journal: Australian Edition*, *11*(1).
16. Matthews, B. (2017). Anti-hierarchical culture in media-based creative collectives: Sketching originary analyses. *Anthropoetics*, *XXII*(2).
17. Burns, L. S., & Matthews, B. J. (2017). "Post-industrial" journalism as a creative industry. *International Journal of Social, Behavioral, Educational, Economic, Business and Industrial Engineering*, *11*(6), 1543–1551.
18. Matthews, B. (2015). Virality and the new ostensive: Ai Weiwei's leg-gun meme. *Anthropoetics*, *21*.
19. Matthews, B. (2015). Victimary thinking, celebrity and the CCTV building. *Anthropoetics: The Journal of Generative Anthropology*, *20*.

Conference papers, reports and reviews

1. Matthews, B. (Think tank leader). (2025). *Integrating transdisciplinary collaboration for sustainable industrial innovation through synthetic biology* [Think tank report]. ARC Centre of Excellence in Synthetic Biology Annual Conference, Wollongong, December 2024.
2. Matthews, B., & Roxburgh, M. (2021). *Robots ate my homework: Impacts of automation on the future of work in the design profession* [Report]. University of Newcastle.
3. Matthews, B., & Roxburgh, M. (2020). Will visual communication designers be replaced by machines? *Design Research Society Conference 2020*.
4. Matthews, B., See, Z. S., & Orr, N. (Eds.). (2020). *XR and Creativity Symposium report: Transformative technologies for good*. University of Newcastle.
5. Orr, N., & Matthews, B. (2020). Introduction to the XR and Creativity Symposium: Transformative technologies for good. In *XR and Creativity Symposium report* (pp. 1–18). University of Newcastle.
6. Matthews, B. (2018). Review of *Defiant earth: The fate of humans in the Anthropocene*. *Global Media Journal (Australian Edition)*, *11*(2).

Creative works and essays

1. Matthews, B. (2026). Unquiet: Proximity, charcoal and Tim Tams [Catalogue essay]. In H. Bezzina, *HEAD2ART*. University of Newcastle Art Gallery.
2. Matthews, B. (2022). Journey, memory, anastrophe [Commissioned essay]. In *Exhibition catalogue of Broken Chord (multiple-media installations) by Jen Valender*. Multi-Arts Pavilion, MIMA.
3. Matthews, B., & Williams, K. (2022). *Inbetweenness* [Archival print on cotton rag]. 2022 Lake Art Prize Finalist Exhibition, Lake Macquarie Art Gallery.
4. Matthews, B., See, Z. S., Orr, N., & Coates, A. (2020). *XR and Creativity Symposium web media* [Exhibition]. xrandcreativity.com
5. Matthews, B. J. (2018, March 6). What are the New Hypothetical Continents? [Essay]. *Project Anywhere*.
6. Matthews, B. (2015). Neokairos and the new hypothetical continents [Catalogue essay]. In L. Maddock (Ed.), *New hypothetical continents*. Blackartprojects.
7. Matthews, B. (2015). *Until I am there I will be there* [Text to accompany installation, with Lottie Consalvo]. The Lock Up Gallery, Newcastle.
8. Ryan, H., & Matthews, B. (2014). *Interregnum–Honi Ryan: A conversational quadrant 2* [Performance, Blue Mountains]. Kia Sulc Open House, MAP Launch.

Thesis

1. Matthews, B. J. (2010). *Wolfgang Iser and literary anthropology* [Doctoral thesis, University of Newcastle].

Talks and presentations

1. 2026. *The dematerialisation of the designer: Human creativity in the age of automated culture*. Digital Futures Symposium, University of Newcastle, with M. Roxburgh. Symposium.
2. 2025. *Transdisciplinary innovation and sustainable futures*. International Education Week, Georgia Institute of Technology, USA. Invited.
3. 2025. *Wild Yeast Zoo: Building Australia's bioeconomy through citizen science and synthetic biology*. Australian Business Network Australia (ABNA). Invited.
4. 2024. *Integrating transdisciplinary collaboration for sustainable industrial innovation through synthetic biology (think tank leader)*. ARC Centre of Excellence in Synthetic Biology Annual Conference, Wollongong. Think tank.
5. 2024. *Australian microbial biodiversity and synthetic biology: public lecture, workshops and citizen-science sampling tours*. Woodford Folk Festival, Queensland. Public.
6. 2023. *The Wild Yeast Zoo: Transdisciplinary synthetic biology and citizen science (launch presentation)*. ARC Centre of Excellence in Synthetic Biology Annual Conference. Conference.
7. 2023. *Investigating patients' intention to use antibiotics*. Cross-College Research Symposium, College of Health, Medicine and Wellbeing, University of Newcastle, with C. Reeves, C. Gauld, P. Lewis, K. Hassan, H. Reid. Symposium.

8. 2022. *We'd like to give you some presence: Cinematic VR narration and the sense of 'being there'*. Design Principles & Practices 17th Annual Conference, Chicago, with S. Weaving, Z. S. See. Conference.
9. 2022. *Entrepreneurial debt in the creative industries*. Youth and the New Economy: Newcastle Youth Studies Centre launch, University of Newcastle, with A. Haro. Symposium.
10. 2022. *Mind Space XR and Inclusive Space VR: Digital technologies and the design thinking process*. VARRN Webinar Series 2022–2023, with Z. S. See, J. Day, A. McDonald, N. Carroll, J. McGrath, M. Amin. Webinar.
11. 2020. *Will visual communication designers be replaced by machines?*. Design Research Society Conference 2020, with M. Roxburgh. Conference.
12. 2020. *XR and Creativity Symposium: Transformative technologies for good (convenor and opening address)*. University of Newcastle, with Z. S. See, N. Orr. Symposium.
13. 2019. *New hypothetical continents: Experimenting with u/dystopia (peer-reviewed selection)*. Project Anywhere Biennial Symposium, Parsons School of Design, The New School, New York. Conference.
14. 2019. *The new hypothetical continents*. ART ANYWHERE? Symposium, Buxton Contemporary, University of Melbourne. Invited.
15. 2018. *Teaching digital humanities for the creative industries: Immersion and making*. Digital Humanities Australasia 2018, Adelaide, with C. Payne. Conference.
16. 2017. *The figure of utopia, originary thinking and the New Hypothetical Continents art project*. Generative Anthropology Summer Conference, Stockholm. Conference.
17. 2016. *Precarity, collectivism and activism: Enkel and Enspiral*. Australian Anthropological Society Conference, University of Sydney. Conference.
18. 2016. *Post-hierarchical culture in media-based creative collectives: Sketching originary analyses*. Generative Anthropology Summer Conference, Nagoya, Japan. Conference.
19. 2016. *Workflow, engagement and ethics: Google Docs as a collaborative environment*. UTS Teaching and Learning Forum. Conference.
20. 2015. *Emergent collectivism in professional communication in Australia and New Zealand: Enkel as a case study*. ECREA ICSI Convention, Aarhus University, Denmark. Conference.
21. 2015. *Ai Weiwei's leg-gun meme, virality and the new ostensive*. Generative Anthropology Summer Conference, High Point University, North Carolina. Conference.
22. 2009. *The 'decline' of literary studies: Diagnoses, treatments and anthropological outcomes*. ANZCA Conference, Brisbane. Conference.
23. 2008. *Interpreting Lycidas: Fictionalising/arriving at a literary anthropology/originary scene?*. Generative Anthropology Summer Conference, Chapman University, California. Conference.

Research supervision

Four PhD candidates supervised at the University of Newcastle, three completed (2022, 2026, 2026) and one submitting in December 2026. Honours supervision on

multidisciplinary projects. External examiner for PhD and Masters theses at other universities.

Service and professional activity

- Editorial Board, *Virtual Creativity*, Intellect (2022–). Guest editor, 2021 special issue on XR and creativity
- Committee member, SIGGRAPH Asia 2026 Educator's Forum
- ARC Centre of Excellence in Synthetic Biology, conference organising committee (2025) and EMCR committee (2026). Think tank leader (2024)
- School Executive Committee, Academic Senate and Faculty Board, University of Newcastle
- Program Convenor, Bachelor of Creative Industries and combined degree, during teach-out (2021–2023)
- Organising committee, UON RAPID seed-grant program
- Member of ANZCA, AGDA and IxDA