BRIDGING GAPS, BUILDING FUTURES:
Transformational Approaches in Research

Research & Professional Development Symposium 2025

Programme and Abstract Booklet

ᕦ Research

Day One Agenda: Thursday 16th January 2025

Time	Details
9:00am	**Welcome/Karakia to Symposium** Roman Rogers (Head of Operations, Yoobee Colleges)
9:15am-9:45am	**Opening the Symposium** Ana Maria Rivera (CEO, Yoobee Colleges)
9:45am-10:30am	**Keynote Speaker:** Dr Frances Hughes Role and importance of Research in meeting today's challenges
10:30am-11:00am	Morning Tea (Provided)
11:00am-12:00pm	**Panel:** Blue Skies and Innovation in Research **Panelists:** Dr Tanisha Jowsey, Dr Lehan Stemmet and Dr Donna O'Donnell **Panel Chair:** Jason Hyland (Faculty Lead for Design, Yoobee Colleges)
12:00pm-1:00pm	Lunch (Provided)

Time	Details
1:00pm-3:00pm	**Supporting a Higher Degree Journey:** Supervision of Post-Graduate Students* **Facilitator:** Dr Tanisha Jowsey **Your Research Compass:** From Blueprint and Beyond **Facilitator:** Leigh Quadling-Miernik **Aligning Programme Design with Te Tiriti o Waitangi:** An Equity Framework for Programme Development **Facilitator:** Te Oraiti Reedy *Staff Only Workshop*
3:00pm-3:30pm	Afternoon Tea (Provided)
3:30pm-4:00pm	**Day One Reflection and Q&A** Dr Julia Hennessy (Academic Dean, Yoobee Colleges)

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Day Two Agenda: Friday 17th January 2025

Time	Details
9:00am-9:15am	**Welcome and Reflection of Day One** Dr Narayan Nepal (Faculty Lead for Technology, Yoobee Colleges)
9:15am-10:00am	**Keynote Speaker:** Te Oraiti Reedy Te Ao Māori Perspectives in Research
10:00am-10:30am	**Keynote Speaker:** Dr Tanisha Jowsey Ethical Rollercoasters (and Q&A)
10:30am-10:55am	Morning Tea (Provided)
11:00am-1:00pm	**Staff & Student Research Presentations** Please see page 8 for list of presenters and abstracts **Chair:** Jason Hyland (Faculty Lead for Design, Yoobee Colleges) **First Half** 11:00 AM - 11:10 AM — MSE Student Group #2 - Auckland Transport 11:12 AM - 11:22 AM — MSE Student - Butch Dela Cruz 11:24 AM - 11:28 AM — Priyan Jayamaha 11:30 AM - 11:40 AM — Bhavna Prakash *Break: 11:40 AM - 11:50 AM* **Second Half** 11:50 PM - 12:00 PM — Nik Weston 12:02 PM - 12:12 PM — Dr Mindy Sun 12:14 PM - 12:24 PM — Rouwa Yalda 12:26 PM - 12:36 PM — Shachi Parmar 12:38 PM - 12:48 PM — Paul Barrett 12:50 PM - 1:00 PM — Fozia Zeeshan
1:00pm-2:00pm	Lunch (Provided)
2:00pm-2:25pm	**Breakout Session:** Exploring Research Gabrielle Piggin, Dr Donna O'Donnell and Jason Hyland
2:25pm-2:40pm	**Introduction Session:** Interdisciplinary Research Community of Practice Dr Donna O'Donnell
2:40pm-3:30pm	**Closing Keynote:** Dr Tanisha Jowsey Generative AI for Science and Scholarship: Using your detective skills
3:30pm-4:00pm	**Reflection and Closing Karakia** Dr Julia Hennessy (Academic Dean, Yoobee Colleges)

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Dr Tanisha Jowsey | Bond University Australia
Keynote Speaker and Workshop Facilitator

Dr Tanisha Jowsey is an Associate Professor of Medical Education and Professionalism at Bond University in Australia, and an Honorary Adjunct Senior Lecturer at the Centre for Medical and Health Sciences Education, University of Auckland. She has a background in anthropology, public health, arts and humanities, and medical education.

Tanisha has more than 20 years of experience teaching and researching in universities, and upwards of 100 publications. She brings insights across a broad range of discipline areas: from communication in operating theatres to arts-based responses to brain donation and escape rooms for interprofessional learning. Tanisha's primary research expertise are qualitative and mixed methods.

Dr Frances Hughes | Global Health Leader
Keynote Speaker

Dr Frances Hughes is a practicing registered nurse with over 35 years' nursing and international health experience. She is a recognised leader in her field and has a BA, MA and Doctorate in Nursing. She is also a Harkness fellow and senior Fullbright scholar, a Senior Research Fellow at the Center for Health Outcomes and Policy Research at the University of Pennsylvania (USA), and Adjunct Professor at Queensland University of Technology (Australia).

Frances' specialty areas include mental health; aged care; healthcare systems; health workforce; psycho-social emergency response post/disaster management; and public policy. She has held executive management and nursing positions on a global level and was made an Officer and Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2006 and 2019 for her services to nursing, mental health and health.

Dr Lehan Stemmet | Auckland Institute of Studies
Panelist

Dr Lehan Stemmet has held various senior commercial and academic leadership roles. He holds qualifications in biochemistry, microbiology, organisational and experimental psychology and started his career in a world-class biotechnology research institute. He has an affinity for interdisciplinary applied research, broadly categorised in the cognitive and behavioural neuroscience space, but with particular focus on stress and resilience as well as its moderators and the impact of it on physical and psychological health.
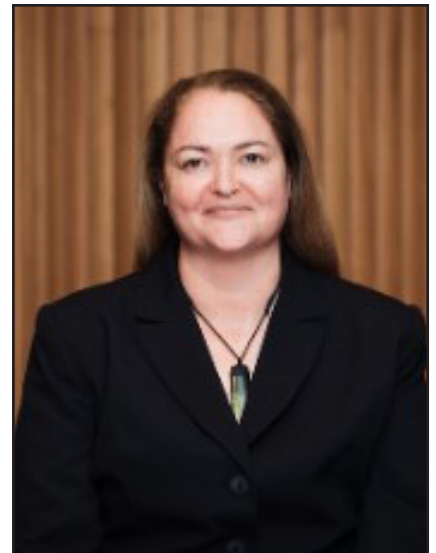
His research engagements span academic and applied research and across several areas of interest such as mental health and virtual reality, cognitive load, decision-making, construction management and artificial intelligence.

Te Oraiti Reedy | Yoobee Colleges
Keynote Speaker and Workshop Facilitator

Leading transformational change in the health and health education sectors, Te Oraiti brings over ten years of experience in senior leadership roles. Her work has been pivotal in driving transformational change, developing and implementing strategic initiatives, and fostering essential relationships with key stakeholders within the medical education landscape.

With a strong commitment to Aotearoa's health and well-being, Te Oraiti combines strategic thinking, operational excellence, and a people-centred approach to leadership. She is passionate about achieving equitable health outcomes for all communities in Aotearoa and is dedicated to creating environments where everyone can engage in meaningful discussions about equity and its implications for their work and the communities they serve.

An expert in fostering safe spaces for exploration and dialogue, Te Oraiti empowers organisations and individuals to understand and embrace equity in their practices. She holds a Bachelor of Commerce from Victoria University and is currently pursuing postgraduate studies, further expanding her expertise in the field.

Leigh Quadling-Miernik | Yoobee Colleges
Workshop Facilitator

Leigh Quadling-Miernik is a Learning Support role for the Online Campus within Yoobee Colleges. She has a background in education, teacher education and learning support with experience within different countries across the world as well as Aotearoa New Zealand.

Currently in her fourth year of her doctorate looking at professional identity development within tertiary educators, Leigh's passion is "creating learning opportunities"; for students, tutors and herself. She is also an emerging researcher with presentations and journal articles focusing on education and the doctorate journey.

Dr Donna O'Donnell | Yoobee Colleges
Panelist and Speaker

Dr Donna O'Donnell is a Tourism trainer at the New Zealand School of Tourism (NZST). She is the Coordinator of Research at NZST and Representative for Tourism on the Yoobee Colleges Research Committee.

Donna is a grounded-theorist researcher, with a specialisation in Tourism education. Donna's postgraduate theses were in the field of Tourism education. For her PhD, she investigated the long-term benefits of international study tours for secondary school students; whilst her Master of Tourism Studies examined eLearning. Overall, her research prioritises the perspectives of students, tourism educators, and associated stakeholders, to consider meaningful experiences.

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Keynote Speaker: The Role and Importance of Research in Meeting Today's Challenges
Delivered by: Dr Frances Hughes
Date and Time: Thursday 16th of January 2025 (Day One), 9:45am-10:30am

Frances will be the opening keynote speaker for the symposium, and will be exploring the role research plays in addressing issues facing us in today's environment.

Keynote Speaker: Te Ao Māori Perspectives in Research
Delivered by: Te Oraiti Reedy
Date and Time: Friday 17th of January 2025 (Day Two), 9:15am-10:00am

This session invites participants to engage with the fundamental principles of Te Ao Māori and how they intersect with contemporary research methodologies. Te Ao Māori is rich with unique philosophies, values, and cultural practices that significantly influence knowledge creation and dissemination. We will explore the importance of Māori perspectives and research frameworks that ensure that outcomes are relevant, respectful, and beneficial to Māori communities. Participants will learn about the principles of kaupapa Māori research, which prioritises the voices and experiences of Māori, and how these principles can be applied across diverse fields of study. Through case studies and interactive discussions, we will examine the transformative impact of incorporating Māori cultural values, such as whanaungatanga (relationships), manaakitanga (support), and kaitiakitanga (guardianship), into research practices. Attendees will be encouraged to reflect on their own research methodologies and consider how they can foster inclusive and equitable research environments.

Keynote Speaker: Ethical Rollercoasters
Delivered by: Dr Tanisha Jowsey
Date and Time: Friday 17th of January 2025 (Day Two), 10:00am-10:30am

This plenary opens with the kind of rollercoaster none of us want to ride: it traverses two horror stories concerning ethical misadventures. Focal points will include such issues as equitable care, informed consent, integrity, and risk. We will then climb a rickety frame to a dizzying height whilst navigating ethical considerations relevant to projects Tanisha has been involved in. Finally, the rollercoaster will launch at 100 miles per hour straight down towards success stories! Tanisha will offer several tips for how to hang on tight (and breathe) until the motion stops. Members of the audience will vacate the rollercoaster ride with a renewed sense of the kinds of safety, risk, bias, and integrity considerations they need to consider before their next ride.

Closing Keynote Speaker: Generative AI for Science and Scholarship: Using your detective skills
Delivered by: Dr Tanisha Jowsey
Date and Time: Friday 17th of January 2025 (Day Two), 2:40pm-3:30pm

For many of us, hearing the terms generative artificial intelligence, GAI, or GenAI is enough to make us sit down and rock in the corner. Why is that? A plethora of tools, few of us have a strong idea of which tools are effective and in which capacities, and fewer still have enough time to sit and find out. Then when we do, another GenAI tool comes along to throw everything we thought we knew on its head. In this closing keynote, Tanisha will share what she has learned about GenAI for science and scholarship through a series of research projects she has been part of during the past 18 months. Tanisha will offer tips on what works and what to avoid at all costs.

Workshops | 2025

Date: Thursday 16th January 2025
Time: 1:00pm-3:00pm

ⓘ A part of the pre-event sign up process, we asked attendees to select their workshop preference in advance. Your assigned workshop will be confirmed prior to the symposium, and a reference list will be available on the day if needed.

Supporting a Higher Degree Journey: Supervision of Post-Graduate Students

1

Facilitated by: Dr Tanisha Jowsey
Type: Staff Only

This workshop is for staff supervising higher-degree students. Here we will explore and skill-build staff capability in terms of how to support students with diverse needs and achieve student-engaged researched outcomes. We will touch on such issues as effective feedback, writing craft, navigating life events, and process support systems.

Your Research Compass: From Blueprint and Beyond

2

Facilitated by: Leigh Quadling-Miernik
Type: Staff and Students

What is research, can I do it and how do I start? Are some of the first questions people ask when exploring further professional development. Your Research Compass workshop will provide some direction into taking the first or even further steps into a new world. It's about filling that gap in your knowledge and building awareness. It involves personal reflection and consideration to the possibility of starting the research journey, along with mapping direction to an initial goal.
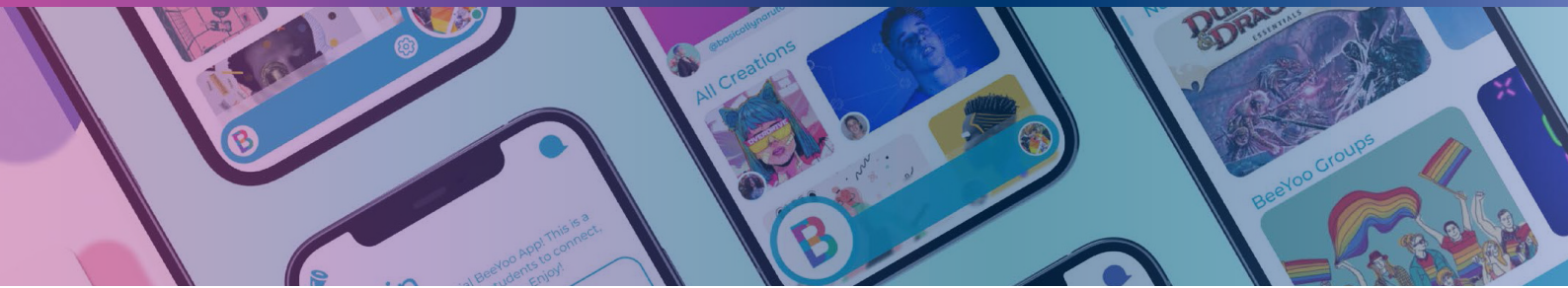
Aligning Programme Design with Te Tiriti o Waitangi: An Equity Framework for Programme Development

3

Facilitated by: Te Oraiti Reedy
Type: Staff and Students

This practical workshop is designed for Yoobee Colleges staff and students. Attendees will leave with insights and tools to implement a framework that will be used by the College to ensure programme development and design align with Te Tiriti o Waitangi and responsiveness to Māori. By critically examining the intersection of Yoobee Colleges educational frameworks and research methodology, the session aims to equip individuals with practical strategies for ensuring programme design considers Māori values and aspirations. This collaborative approach seeks to foster a more inclusive educational framework, ultimately benefiting both students and the wider community.

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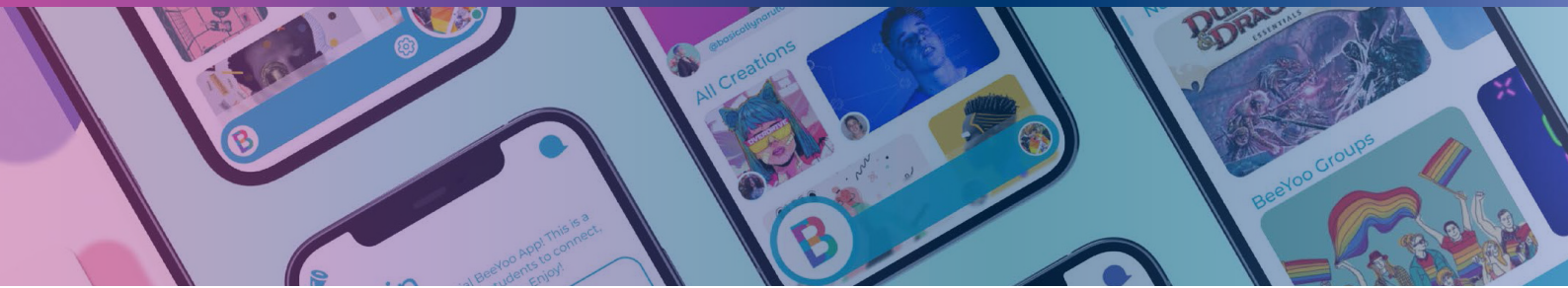## Staff and Student Research Presentations

Koekemoer, M., Gamlath, H., & Prasad, S. (2025). BLE-based automated passenger onboarding system for Auckland Transport

This research project introduces a Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE)-based Automated Passenger Onboarding System for Auckland Transport (AT). The project aims to replace manual "Tag On" and "Tag Off" processes of AT Hop cards with an automated system using BLE technology. Passengers' mobile devices, equipped with the AT app, will act as BLE beacons, communicating with detectors installed in buses to register boarding and alighting events. This approach improves efficiency, reduces waiting times, and enhances user convenience by eliminating physical card tapping. The system leverages real-time data transmission to ensure accurate journey tracking and fare calculation. Key advantages include low power consumption, wide compatibility, and reduced infrastructure costs. However, challenges such as signal interference, security risks, and device incompatibility are acknowledged. Addressing these concerns through encryption, robust authentication, and range management will ensure reliable performance. Ultimately, this BLE-driven solution aims to optimize the public transport experience in Auckland.

Mauritz Koekemoer: [Developer], Hasitha Gamlath: [Developer], and Suranga Prasad: [Developer]

Dela Cruz, B. (2025). e-Prescripchain

The development of e-Prescripchain introduces a blockchain-based system aimed at resolving critical issues in electronic prescription (e-prescription) systems, including data security, patient privacy, and fraud prevention. While traditional e-prescription systems have improved healthcare by minimising errors and streamlining processes, they remain susceptible to vulnerabilities such as data breaches and unauthorised transactions. e-Prescripchain leverages blockchain's decentralized and tamper-resistant features to enhance transparency and ensure real-time verification of prescriptions. This solution also provides immutable audit trails, improving accountability among stakeholders like patients, physicians, pharmacies, and regulators. By integrating blockchain-technology, the system not only safeguards sensitive medical data but also improves operational efficiency and patient trust. This research highlights the transformative potential of blockchain in healthcare, emphasising its capacity to ensure integrity, detect fraud, and integrate seamlessly across organisational boundaries. The findings suggest that e-Prescripchain is a robust solution for the future of digital healthcare infrastructure, fostering a secure, transparent, and reliable prescription system for global adoption.
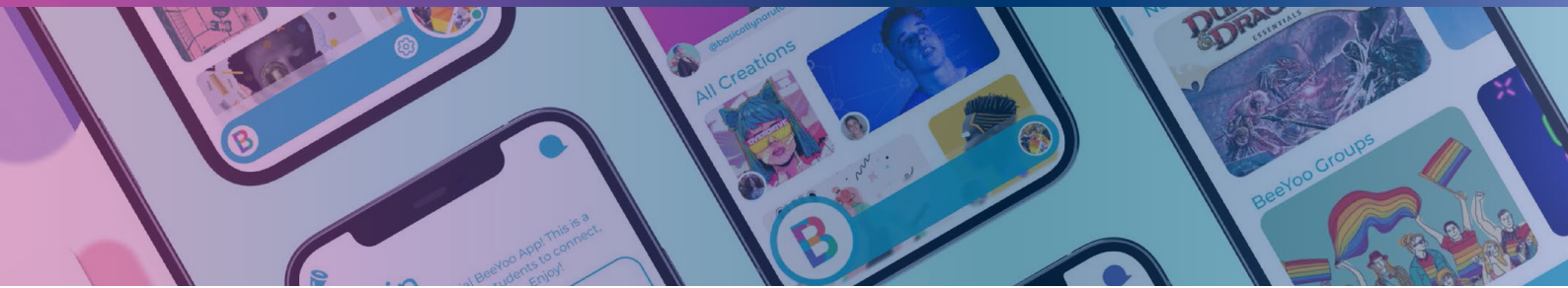
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Jayamaha, P. L. (2025). Interactive Card/Board Game for Bird Conservation Awareness in New Zealand

This elevator pitch presentation focuses on proposing a concept that Priyan will be developing as part of their research plan. The project is an interactive card/board game aimed at raising awareness about critically endangered bird conservation in New Zealand. This game targets primary and secondary school students and youth to highlight the various risks that birds face, while also instilling empathy and developing awareness strategies for their protection. This project is an extension of Priyan's previous research, "Waka Hourua" (Jayamaha, 2022), in which they developed an augmented reality-integrated board game to teach primary school students about early Polynesian navigation concepts. Priyan will outline the key concepts, research, interactive elements, and methodologies involved in developing this new project.

Prakash, B. (2025). Challenges in the Hospitality Sector

Over the years, tourism has heavily contributed towards the country by becoming one of the largest revenue and employment-generating sectors, which has led to an increase in the growth of the economy (Harrison & Pratt, 2010). Fiji started to promote the Grand Pacific Hotel to attract tourists, allowing tourism to steadily grow in 1970 (Rao, 2002). As the hotel industry was rapidly growing, labour challenges in the hotel sector started to emerge. According to Sudhakar (2008), most of the labourers working in the hotel sector are unskilled therefore the hotels face difficulties in meeting the needs of the industry. This study will be taking a qualitative approach to investigating major labour challenges facing the Fijian hotel sector and discussing how the challenges can impact the future hotel industry by using secondary data.
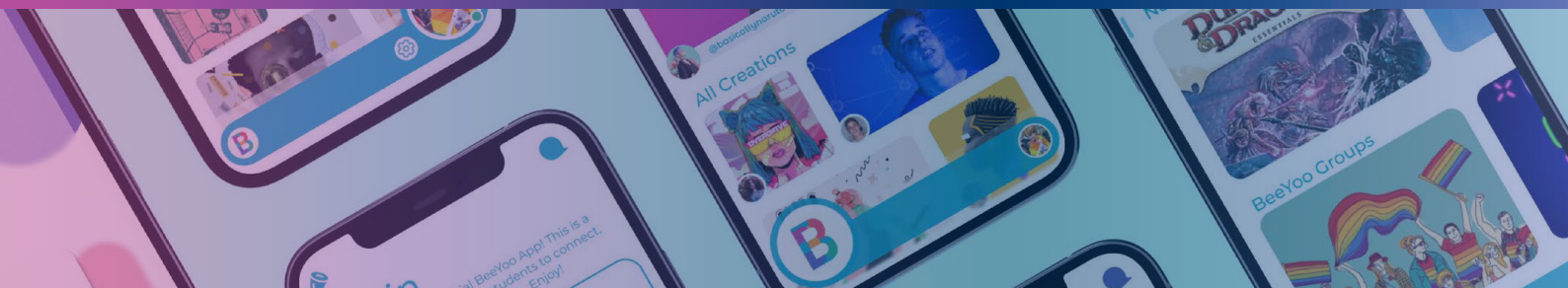
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Weston, N (2025). The Tertiary Educator's Guide: Working with autistic students (2024 revision)

Autism in tertiary education is a continuously evolving field with direct relevance to Yoobee Colleges Ltd. 2024 marks a major revision to The Tertiary Educator's Guide: Working with Autistic Students, first developed in 2018, to include significant developments. These include a rewritten and expanded introduction including more on masking and the experience of late-diagnosed autistics, as well as a new section on AuDHD (combined autism and ADHD). These additions reflect the growing number of students disclosing their neurodivergent status during enrolment, including autistic and AuDHD individuals. This presentation will provide an overview of the Guide's 2024 revision, emphasising its role in preparing tertiary educators in the Yoobee Colleges Group to create welcoming, inclusive learning environments. Attendees will gain insight into The Guide's latest update, its evolution in tandem with the subject matter, and the rationale behind its inception and ongoing development. The session will be a 10-minute presentation; and attendees will have access to the latest edition of The Guide as a pdf. By bridging gaps in educators' understanding of autism, with practical classroom strategies, The Guide empowers them to support autistic learners so that they can thrive.

Sun, M. (2025). Improving Student Attendance: A practical approach

Student attendance in vocational education is crucial for ensuring students acquire the practical skills needed for their careers. However, absenteeism remains a persistent challenge in vary vocational education institutions which largely affected student outcomes and engagement. This study seeks to identify effective strategies for improving student attendance in vocational education by surveying students to gain insights into the factors influencing attendance. The objectives of this study are to identify key factors influencing absenteeism in vocational education and evaluate student perceptions of different attendance improvement strategies. This study will employ a quantitative research approach using student surveys to collect data. The data will be collected from current enrolled students in NZST. Descriptive statistics will summarize demographic data and reasons for absenteeism.
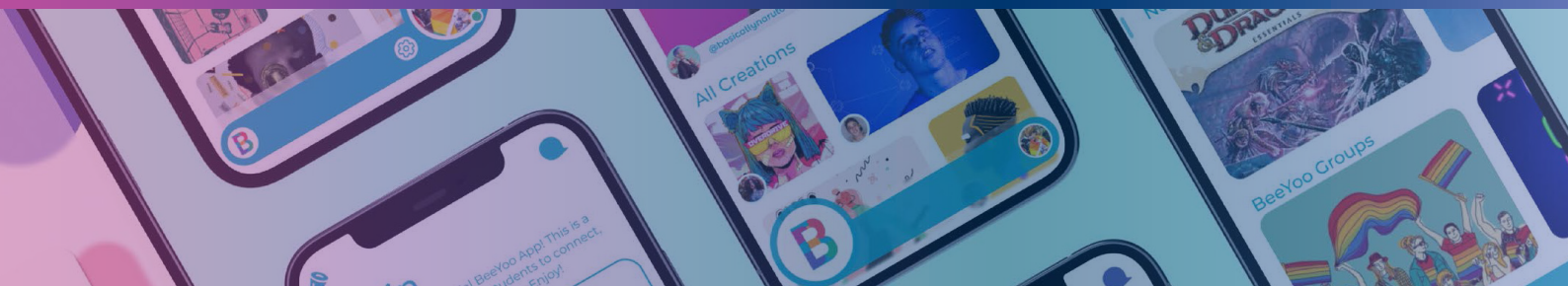
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Yalda, R. (2025). Securing QR code interactions: A blockchain-based solution to combat QR phishing

QR phishing, or "squishing," is a new cyber threat that uses malicious QR codes to deceive users and steal sensitive information. The number of phishing attacks involving QR codes has been increased significantly, with a 270% increase reported in 2024 according to the security vendor Keepnet. In addition, QR code scans increased by 433% from 2021, peaking at 26.95 million in 2023, according to QR Tiger. This rapid growth underlines the urgent need for new solutions that use emerging technologies to mitigate this threat. This paper proposes a blockchain-based system for QR code security. The blockchain technology has been designed on the concept of a decentralized ledger, recording QR code data in cryptographic hashes. The technology keeps the QR codes tamper-proof and allows independent verification of their authenticity. It presents a scalable and tamper-resistant approach for tackling the increasing QR code misuse for phishing attacks. The project will contribute to cybersecurity by providing an effective framework that industries can adopt in order to ensure user trust and safety and QR code interactions. By taking advantage of the immutability nature of the blockchain technology, this solution addresses the security challenges occurring due to the wide adoption of QR codes while promoting a secure and trustworthy digital environment.

Parmar, S. (2025). From Ireland to New Zealand: Piloting innovation hubs for creative education

This presentation shares first-hand experiences in developing strategies for GROWTHhub, an institutional-level project at the largest higher education institution in Ireland, in its mission to build growth thinking and entrepreneurial behaviour, and how its principles can inform the development of a transform-ative innovation hub at Yoobee. Drawing on insights from a Mid-Stage Innovation Hub, the presentation highlights practical strategies for building an ecosystem that fosters interdisciplinary collaboration, creative entrepreneurship, and real-world problem-solving. It weighs upon the evidence-based role of hands-on initiatives, such as hackathons, workshops, and mentorship programs, in equipping students with industry-ready skills. Key learnings, including aligning academic and industry goals, forming global partnerships like Climate-KIC, securing sustain-able funding, and appointing innovation champions, will be discussed alongside KPIs for success. The presentation emphasises adapting these practices to New Zealand's cultural and industrial landscape, incorporating Māori and Pacific perspectives. A proposed pilot program will showcase how leveraging methodologies like design thinking can address global chal-lenges, such as sustainability while nurturing creativity. This session provides a roadmap for transforming creative education through innovation hubs, these hubs serve as a nexus where students, educators, and industry professionals converge to co-create solutions, nurture creativity, and propel forward-thinking initiatives.

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Barrett, P. R. (2025). Expanded States of Consciousness: Using digital media to facilitate creativity, innovation, and peak performance

This research explores the potential of digital media technologies including VR, AR, and AI to ethically facilitate expanded states of consciousness (ESCs) for enhancing creativity, innovation, and peak performance. It examines the ethical considerations surrounding informed consent, user control, privacy, accessibility, and harm avoidance when using such technologies. Additionally, it highlights the potential benefits of ESCs for individuals and society, including increased creativity and problem-solving skills for designers and students, breakthrough thinking and innovation for entrepreneurs, and deeper understanding of consumer behaviour for marketers. It also discusses how ESCs can foster empathy and social cohesion on a societal level. Finally, the research explores how digital media could potentially be used to analyse the consumer decision making process beyond traditional methods, providing insights into subconscious motivations and emotional responses. This knowledge could lead to more ethical and effective marketing strategies that resonate with consumers on a deeper level. By understanding the human experience in the context of ESCs, content creators and marketers alike can create more personalised experiences that foster authentic connections and promote individual and collective well-being.

Zeeshan, F. (2025). AI-Powered Health Analytics: Promoting equity in healthcare delivery and addressing cultural disparities

Artificial intelligence (AI) applications in healthcare analytics have the potential to transform current medicine by increasing accuracy, efficiency, and inclusion. Despite these advances, cultural health inequities remain, often resulting in uneven access and outcomes. This study looks at AI-powered methods for addressing inequities and promoting fairness in healthcare. AI can improve the accuracy of diagnoses, customize therapies, and guarantee the provision of culturally appropriate care by using techniques like machine learning, natural language processing, and predictive analytics. The study highlights the importance of developing algorithms that prioritize impartiality, integrate diverse datasets, and mitigate biases that impact communities in need. Anticipated contributions include a better knowledge of how AI may close systemic disparities in healthcare, fair resource allocation, and better patient outcomes across cultural populations. This study intends to give practical insights into designing ethical, inclusive, and successful AI systems, ensuring that no demographic is left behind in the digital health revolution.

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