

Smashing the Silos Series

On Saturdays this term, the Oxford Union will be hosting a new series, attempting to answer the question: What aren't universities teaching you that they should be? Even science students learn in narrow academic silos but the world is changing faster than ever and these silos increasingly render students unprepared for steps beyond university

This series of talks and panel discussions will focus on those intellectual silos within academia and industry, and on the attempts of different thinkers to breach them. Each Saturday will see the Oxford Union host a set of individual lectures and presentations from field-leading figures, grouped together loosely by overarching theme

Speakers include senior academics like David Krakauer and Doyne Farmer who have forged successful interdisciplinary careers; AI experts from the interdisciplinary Future of Humanity, Leverhulme, Oxford Internet and Ethics in AI Institutes (bringing the four centres together in public conversation for the first time); and entrepreneur Patrick Collinson with his collaborator, academic Tyler Cowen, on the proposal of a new Progress Studies focusing on the productivity paradox

Ranging from high-level discussion of how silos emerge to applied examples from groups driving interdisciplinary co-operation around particular topics, this promises to be a series to remember

“Do you know that one of the great problems of our age is that we are governed by people who care more about feelings than they do about thoughts and ideas” Salman Rushdi

The Events

- 30 Jan : University Funding - *How university funding structures shape narrow disciplines, and how to challenge them*
- 13 Feb : Private Sector Silos - *Silos in industry and the power of decentralisation*
- 27 Feb : Interdisciplinarity in AI - *The state of interdisciplinarity in AI*
- 06 Mar : Growth & Innovation - *Interdisciplinary approaches to growth and innovation*
- 13 Mar : Human Progress - *Progress Studies: the systematic study of human progress*
- 20 Mar : The Development of Taboos - *What can and cannot be asked; the development of taboos*