

# *FUTURES: A Festival of Discovery 2023*

## Work Package 1: Awareness Raising Campaign report

### Authors:

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The Awareness Raising campaign for the 2023 edition of *FUTURES: A Festival of Discovery* successfully met its objectives. The campaign utilised a well-established and strong visual identity and drew on the significant expertise of marketing and communication professionals to reach our target audiences across the region with clear messages. The campaign utilised a mix of social and traditional media as well as well-placed advertisements and promotional material across the region; it reached over 2.2 million people.

### Management of awareness raising campaign

The Awareness Raising campaign for the 2023 edition of *FUTURES* involved a regional awareness raising campaign coordinated by the University of Bath (UoBa) and supported by freelance marketing executive Jo Burnham, and three 'local hubs' of event marketing activity covering the locality of the *FUTURES* events in Bath and Bristol, Exeter and Plymouth. These hubs were led by Freelance Marketing Executive Jo Burnham (Bath and Bristol Hub), University of Plymouth's Marketing Officer Iola Nelson and (Plymouth Hub) and Agile Rabbit (Exeter Hub).

This report outlines the results of the regional awareness raising campaign and the 'local hubs' event marketing activities.

### Target audience

The target audiences for *FUTURES* were:

- Independent adults in Bristol, Bath, Exeter and Plymouth with an interest in science. Sub groups: young adults 16- 24, 25-45, 45+
- Independent adults in Bristol, Bath, Exeter and Plymouth with an interest in art and culture: Sub groups: young adults 16-24, 25-45, 45+
- Families with children aged 6-15

### Objectives

The *FUTURES* Awareness Raising campaign aimed to:

- increase engagement and attendance at individual events and activities
- continue to build on the *FUTURES* brand and its associated messaging

### Key messages

The messages to be conveyed through the awareness raising WP all had an embedded 'call to action' resulting in meaningful and effective communications and encouraged participation with *FUTURES* activities.

- The South West of England is a hub for outstanding research and innovation
- Research happening near you is helping address some of society's big challenges and making lives better
- Research is all about asking questions, getting creative and testing things out, it's as easy as that. You can be a researcher too!

## Visual identity

The 2023 visual identity for *FUTURES* was an iteration on the previous *FUTURES: European Researchers' Night* branding, created back in 2018. Opting for a slight variation rather than a redesign helped ensure a degree of continuity for audiences with the previous identity, ensuring the festival marketing could benefit from the well-established branding. The identity was used across all *FUTURES* activities.



Figure 1: The *FUTURES: European Researchers' Night* logo created for all awareness raising materials

## Communications tools

### Website

In 2023, the *FUTURES: A Festival of Discovery* website was used as a dynamic digital space, showcasing *FUTURES* related content such as events listings, social media content and audio and film material from activities where participants could consume at their leisure. The website address is [futuresnight.co.uk](https://futuresnight.co.uk). The website went live at the beginning of the *FUTURES* Awareness Raising campaign and over the course of the campaign pages were viewed 12,008 times by 4,500 unique visitors.



*FUTURES* is a FREE festival of discovery taking place in the South West across venues in Bath, Bristol, Cornwall, Devon, Exeter and Plymouth and online this Autumn.

The festival is a unique opportunity to find out more about the innovative and world-class research taking place at universities across the South West

With something for every age, *FUTURES* brings science, culture and research to life in new and exciting ways. There are plenty of events to experience, including late-night museum openings, hands-on activities, exhibitions, storytelling, comedy nights, talks, quizzes, radio shows and much more!

## EVENTS

Some events are ticketed, some are drop-in, but all are completely FREE.

The programme includes a range of online activities and in-person events at venues across the South West. With storytelling, talks, quizzes and comedy all exploring the worlds of science, culture and research, there is something for everyone at this year's *FUTURES*.



I'M A RESEARCHER –  
ASK ME ANYTHING!

Date: 13/10/2023  
Time: 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm  
Location: Online



I'M A RESEARCHER –  
ASK ME ANYTHING!

Date: 14/10/2023  
Time: 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm  
Location: Online



I'M A RESEARCHER –  
ASK ME ANYTHING!

Date: 09/10/2023  
Time: 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm  
Location: Online

[SEE ALL EVENTS](#)

## FOLLOW US

Stay up to date on all *FUTURES* events by checking out our social feeds



Figure 2: futuresnight.co.uk landing page.

## Marketing and communications materials

### Digital assets

We worked with a graphic design team to create several digital assets that were used on social media to promote *FUTURES: A Festival of Discovery*.



Figure 3: Example of digital asset created for use on social media including Facebook and Twitter

### Social media

The social media strategy to raise awareness of the 2023 edition of *FUTURES* builds on the success of social media campaign for *FUTURES Festival 2022* on social media platforms, X (formerly Twitter) and Facebook. Each platform was used to serve a different purpose.

#### Facebook

Through the *FUTURES* [Facebook](#) page, the Awareness Raising campaign aimed to promote the events generally and using a mixed methods approach, posting *FUTURES* related content and running a series of paid-for adverts targeted at regional and local community interest groups and pages. During the campaign the *FUTURES* page gained 92 likes and was visited 2,138 times. The 44 posts reached 192,907 Facebook users and gained 5,460 engagements including Likes, Shares, Comments, media views and link clicks.

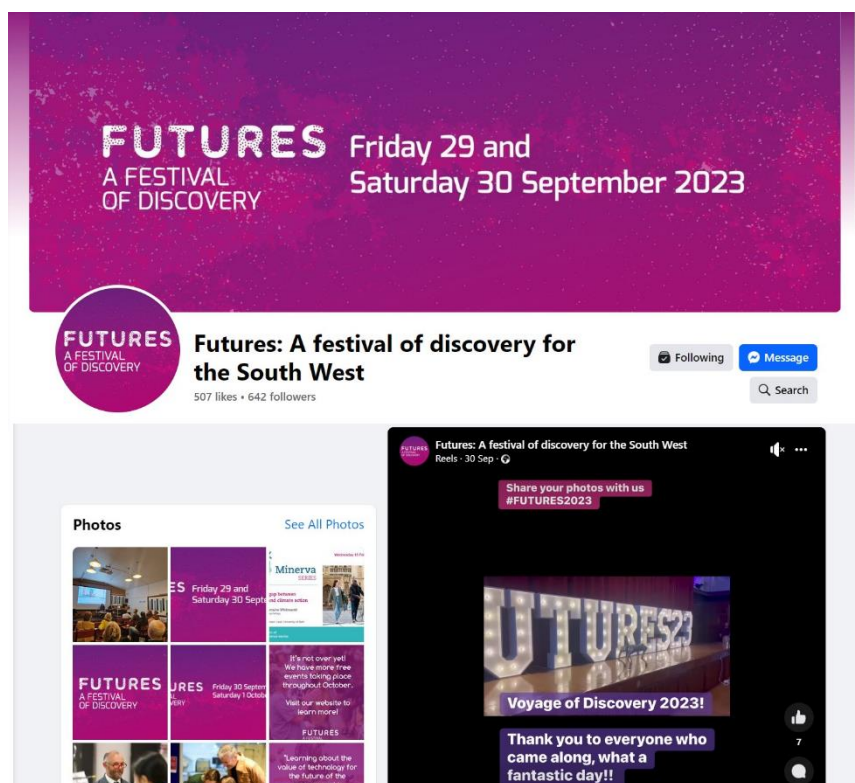


Figure 4: A screenshot of the *FUTURES* Facebook page

The Facebook campaign was complemented by activity delivered by the consortium partners' central social media teams. The four posts by the University of Plymouth account reached 17,689 users and gained 81 engagements. Events were also posted in Facebook various community groups that had a total reach of 20,000 members and were engaged with by 7,000 of those members.

X (formerly Twitter)

Content that was created provided teasers of events that aimed to drive traffic to the *FUTURES* website and event booking site, Eventbrite. During the campaign period the Twitter account ([@FUTURES\\_Night](#)) posted 33 times, reaching 10,997 users. Over the time of the campaign the account gained 52 new followers and the posts received 275 engagements (likes, retweets, link clicks).

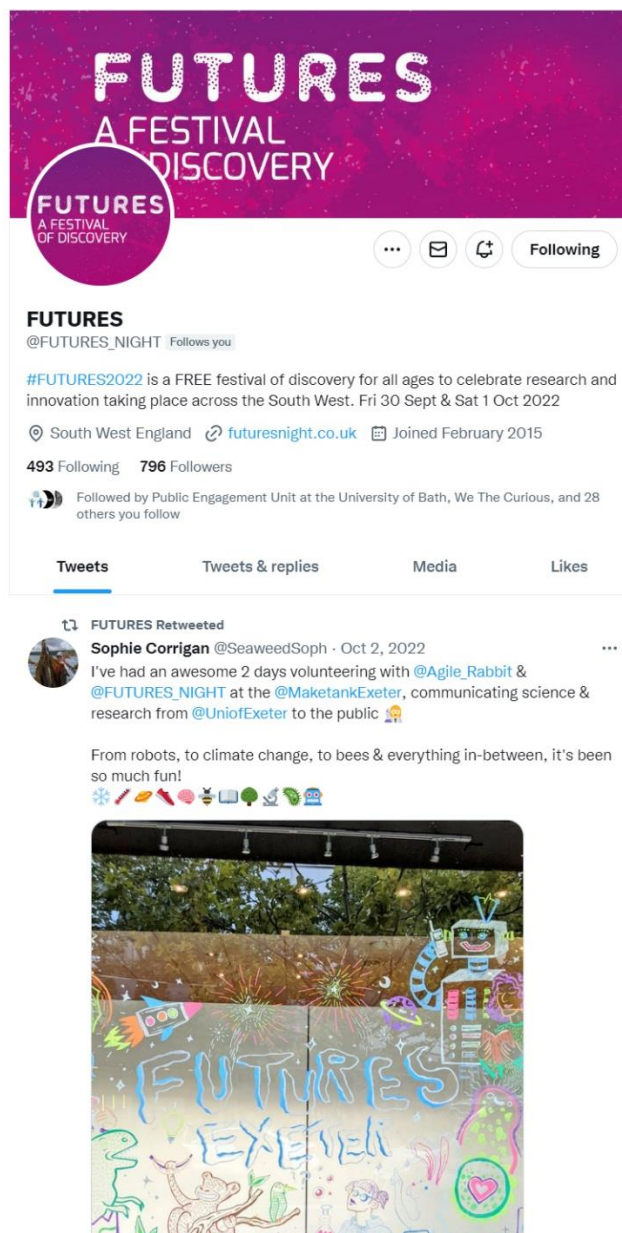


Figure 5: A screenshot of the *FUTURES* Twitter page

The X campaign was complemented by activity delivered by the consortium partners' central social media teams. The five posts by the University of Plymouth account reached 8,615 users and gained 69 engagements.

Working with Visit Plymouth and What's On Plymouth, paid adverts were used across their social media (Facebook and X) to promote *FUTURES* events these reached 35,700 and gained 773 direct engagements.

In total the social media campaign has an estimated reached of 301,796 users across two social media platforms and 15,888 direct engagements (Likes, Comments, Shares and link clicks)

## Online listings

Working with destination management organisations and local tourism boards the Marketing and Communication team created content to be showcased on the websites Best of Exeter, What's on in Plymouth, Visit Bath and Visit Bristol. *FUTURES* content hosted on these websites reached an estimated 278,498 visitors.

## Community-based activities

The University of Plymouth led the way in engaging with community partners across the Plymouth area to market their events. This included events being included in newsletters from Plymouth Octopus (1,000 subscribers), Plymouth City Council (2,000 subscribers) and Nudge Community Builders (1,500) and via social media from cultural venue The Box (7,000).

## Promotional paid adverts

Paid advertisements on local news websites and regional commercial radio stations formed a key element of the regional Awareness Raising campaign for *FUTURES*.

Paid adverts were taken out with the South West's largest regional independent magazine Bristol24/7 and *FUTURES* content was created for promotion for including in their printed magazine (20,000 copies), on their website (598,000 users), newsletter (15,000 subscribers) and social media (176,000 followers).

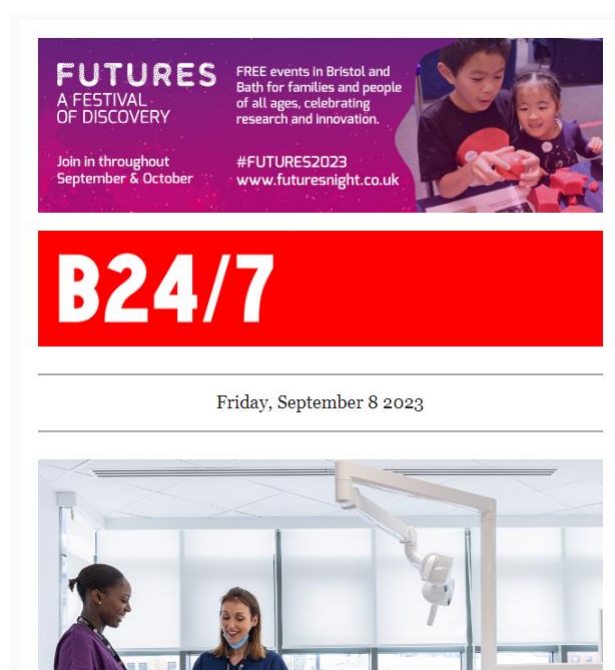


Figure 6: A screenshot of the *FUTURES* Festival advert in the Bristol24/7 newsletter.

Paid 'advertorials' were taken out with Reach Plc. that manages the Live suite of local news websites (Devon Live, Cornwall Live and Plymouth Live) across the South West of England. These paid adverts reached 3,000 readers and the associated Facebook campaign reached 84,459 users generating 9,956 direct engagement.

The screenshot shows the Devon Live website interface. At the top, there's a red navigation bar with the Devon Live logo and various menu items like 'NEWS', 'DISCOVER DEVON', 'EXETERLIVE', 'TORBAYLIVE', 'NORTHDEVONLIVE', and 'MORE'. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for 'BUY A PAPER', 'FUNERAL NOTICES', 'JOBS', 'BOOK AN AD', 'BUY A PHOTO', 'ADVERTISE WITH US', 'MARKETPLACE', 'DIRECTORY', 'VOUCHER CODES', 'DATING', and 'NEWSLETTER SIGNUP'. The main content area features a 'Partner Stories' section with a 'D' icon and the word 'Education'. The article title is 'Futures Festival 2023 will bring scientific research alive in the South West'. Below the title is a sub-headline: 'A voyage of discovery and wonder for all ages, with events in Plymouth and Falmouth'. The article is labeled as an 'ADVERTISING FEATURE FROM University of Bath' by Christopher Jones, dated 09:15, 2 SEP 2022, and updated 15:12, 16 AUG 2023. There are social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, and a 'Bookmark' button. A video player is embedded in the article, showing a child holding a globe with the text 'Futures: A Festival of Discovery' and a play button. Below the video, the article text begins with 'Do you have the next Greta Thunberg at home? Or perhaps a budding Nobel Laureate in science? **Futures 2023** is an action-packed and accessible series of activities and events for all the family, as researchers from local universities bring their subjects to life for kids and adults across the South West - all absolutely free to attend. This year's edition of Futures is an opportunity to find out about the innovative and world-class research taking place at your local university, with events taking place in locations throughout the region between September 16 and October 1. Plymouth and Falmouth will each host a number of fun, exciting and interactive activities and events that are bound to inspire the next generation of scientific minds - and grown-ups too. Devon Live has a look at [what's going on](#) and how you can get involved:'. The article ends with a section header 'What's on in Falmouth?'. To the right of the article is a 'RECOMMENDED' section which is currently empty.

Figure 9: A screenshot of the *FUTURES: A Festival of Discovery* 'advertorial' on Devon Live.

Working with commercial radio organisation Bauer Radio, the Marketing and Communications team also produced a 30 second lively and dynamic advert. This ad was tailored to regions of Bristol and Bath, Somerset, Plymouth and Cornwall, highlighting the specific events taking place in those areas and online and was used during a two-week broadcast campaign on Greatest Hits FM reaching 376,834 listeners. In addition, a second promotional advert was created for broadcast 'instream' on Kiss Radio in the South West reaching 200,000 listeners.

In total 1,483,243 people engaged with paid advert content as part of the Awareness Raising Campaign.

## Booking

Several activities had limited capacity so an [Eventbrite](#) booking system was used to guarantee visitors a place at the event. It also served an additional promotional purpose as all events were listed publicly. The event pages had a total of 5,065 page views.

## General marketing materials

### Posters and leaflets

Using the visual identity, the graphic design team created lively and creative designs for posters and flyers to market and promote several events. Working with Out of Hand Marketing, these posters were distributed to various venues, spaces and on billboards and handed out in busy city centre locations across Bristol and Bath. In Plymouth graphics were used on a roadside banner and leaflets posted to homes within target locations in Plymouth.



Figure 10: A photo of the *FUTURES: A Festival of Discovery* billboard at a central Bristol location.



Figure 11: Two examples of the posters created and distributed in venues and spaces across the target regions.

In total these posters and leaflets reached an estimated 125,500 people.

Other marketing material was produced that incorporated the FUTURES visual identity, these included:

- Pop-up banners



- Stickers
- T-Shirts
- Postcards



Figure 12: University of Bristol team in *FUTURES* t-shirts at Up Late at S.S. Great Britain event and a flag banner used during a University of Bristol event.

## Summary of reach of awareness raising campaign

All elements of WP1: Awareness Raising, when compiled, achieved a total maximum reach of 2,222,110. This is broken down as follows:

Social media engagement (Followers, Likes, Shares, Comments, media viewed and link clicks): **15,888**

Social media reach of *FUTURES: A Festival of Discovery* content: **301,796**

Website traffic: **16,508**

Eventbrite booking reach: **5,065**

Online listings: **278,498**

Posters and leaflets: **125,500**

Paid advertisements: **1,483,243**