The following is a brief list of the most frequently asked questions about the Oxford Internet Institute.

- **What is the Oxford Internet Institute (OII)?**
- **At what stage of development is the OII?**
- **How is the OII different from other Internet research centres?**
- **Where will the OII be based?**
- **What is the role of Balliol College?**
- **What are the objectives of the OII?**
- **What will the OII produce?**
- **How is the OII funded?**
- **Is the OII an independent institution?**
- **How will the OII be structured?**
- **Have any academic appointments been made yet?**
- **Who is currently running the OII?**
- **Can I enrol as a student or a post-doc at the OII?**
- **Can I visit the OII as a guest lecturer?**
- **How can my institution/group collaborate with the OII?**
- **Can my company provide goods or services to the OII?**
- **Can my institution or group get funding from OII?**

**Q: What is the Oxford Internet Institute (OII)?**

The Oxford Internet Institute is being established by the University of Oxford as an independent and multidisciplinary Internet research centre which will focus on the social, economic, legal and ethical impact of the Internet. The Institute will build on Oxford's expertise in social science and humanities research in order to offer objective, independent investigation into issues of community, public policy and governance arising from the spread of the Internet. Its initial focus will be on interdisciplinary research, from which it is anticipated that a Policy Studies Unit will then evolve. The Institute will also
Q: At what stage of development is the OII?

The OII is in the early stages of development. Having secured sufficient funding to establish the Institute, procedures are now underway for the appointment of a Director and Management Committee. Concurrently, the OII is making necessary alterations to its future home at 1 St Giles, Oxford. It is planned that activities will commence in the new centre in Autumn 2001.

[ Back to top ]

Q: How is the OII different from other Internet research centres?

The establishment of the OII presents the opportunity to make a unique contribution to Internet research, policy-making and education. There are many free-standing research centres which currently produce high-quality analysis and research on a broad range of economic, social and policy issues related to Internet expansion often with a view to shaping Government and industry policy. However, on the whole, these organisations have specific research and policy agendas and receive their core funding from corporate sponsors or 'members'. A few universities have divisions concerned with Internet research, but none can be said to be both multidisciplinary and independent. As part of Oxford University, the OII will be able to draw on a vast network of research interests and expertise. By belonging to a renowned university, supported by significant core funding from neutral sources, the OII will be the first truly impartial interdisciplinary academic institute for Internet policy and research worldwide.

[ Back to top ]

Q: Where will the OII be based?

The Institute will be a Department of the University of Oxford, within the Social Sciences Division. The Institute's facilities will be housed at 1 St Giles, part of Balliol College.

[ Back to top ]

Q: What is the role of Balliol College?
Oxford Internet Institute

Oxford University has a federal structure with some 39 independent, multidisciplinary colleges. Each college has a governing body comprising the Head of House (called Master in Balliol's case) and the Fellows of the college, most of whom also hold University posts.

Balliol College, where the Institute is located, is one of the oldest and most academically distinguished of these colleges. Balliol, including its Old Members and, in particular, its Master-Elect, Andrew Graham, has played an active role in shaping and guiding the OII since its inception. The Master-Elect of Balliol is to be a member of the Management Committee and will chair the Advisory Board; the first Director of the Institute will also be a Professorial Fellow of Balliol. The college has a substantial graduate community and strong research and teaching interests in all the main disciplines of interest to the Institute, particularly in the social sciences and philosophy. Balliol's close link with the OII will reinforce its multidisciplinary orientation as well as assisting in its integration into the Oxford academic community.

The OII will not, however, be limited to members of Balliol College. The OII is a University Department. Its facilities will be open to all members of the University, and many of its senior posts are likely to be associated with Fellowships at other colleges.

For further information about Balliol College, see www.balliol.ox.ac.uk.

Q: What are the objectives of the OII?

The objectives of the Institute will be:

1. to engage in world-class multidisciplinary academic research in collaboration with other universities (both in the UK and overseas) into the broad-ranging implications of the Internet for society, in order to enhance public understanding and consciousness;
2. to work closely with Government and regulatory bodies to create a respected and authoritative Internet public policy centre which will inform and improve public decision making and respond to current policy needs as and when required;
3. to facilitate and coordinate debate among those interested in the future shape of society, using innovative online and traditional means.
Q: What will the OII produce?

The output of the Institute will include:

1. world-class research published both in an in-house academic journal and in a more contemporary online format;
2. white papers, summaries of policy opinions, evaluation of past decisions and recommendations for the future of Government policy on the Internet published regularly on the website;
3. a collaborative research community brought together by creating online forums and through the hosting of physical conferences.

OII's research and conference proceedings will also be publicised to well-targeted audiences.

Q: How is the OII funded?

The OII has been made possible by a £10 million donation from The Shirley Foundation (partly to the University, of which the Institute will be a department within the Social Sciences Division, and partly to Balliol College, where it will be located), together with public funding totalling £5 million from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), which is supported by the Department for Education and Skills (www.dfes.gov.uk).

The Shirley Foundation was established in 1996 by Dame Stephanie Shirley, who endowed it with a substantial trust fund. The fund is used to support a wide range of projects, primarily in the fields of autism and information technology. The Foundation has achieved national recognition for the importance and impact of its funding. Its mission is to support pioneering projects with potential to have strategic impact, especially to push out the boundaries of knowledge, understanding and good practice.

Q: Is the OII an independent institution?

In order to maintain the independent perspective of the OII, the University sought and obtained philanthropic and national government funding, rather than seeking funding from one single large commercial donor or sponsor. The OII's position in the University of Oxford will ensure that it remains impartial in its research.
Both the public and philanthropic contributions have been offered under standard terms for such funding. This means that all academic decisions will be made independently within the University and the University will account to those contributing funds for the way in which their money has been spent.

[ Back to top ]

Q: How will the OII be structured?

The OII will be headed by a Director, who will hold the new Chair of Internet Studies. It will be a Department of the University of Oxford (under the Social Sciences Divisional Board), with a Management Committee (on which Balliol College will be represented). There will also be an Advisory Board, composed mainly of people from outside the University who have appropriate expertise to give guidance on strategy. Appointments to this Board will largely be made following the appointment of Director. One of the objectives of the OII will be to collaborate with other universities, so it is envisaged, for example, that there will be a programme of secondments for academics to and from Oxford.

[ Back to top ]

Q: Have any academic appointments been made yet?

The University has begun the selection process for Director, which will be conducted in line with our normal procedures for any professorial appointment. We hope to be able to make an appointment in the autumn.

The Institute intends to attract the best people in the world through both permanent appointments and by offering senior visiting appointments for research staff seconded to Oxford. Once the Director has been appointed, the process of appointment for other positions will commence. All permanent appointments will be made via open competition. Further details will be available on-line in due course.

For job vacancies at the University of Oxford, visit www.admin.ox.ac.uk/ps/gp. If you are an academic or researcher with research interests in the impact of the Internet, especially its social, economic, legal or ethical influence and implications, please feel free to register your interest here.

[ Back to top ]

Q: Who is currently running the OII?
The OII is currently being administered by a Project Steering Committee, consisting of a number of university members who have had a significant role in the creation of the Institute. The Committee will shortly be superseded by a Management Committee, to be chaired by the Head of the Social Sciences Division.

Q: Can I enrol as a student or a post-doc at the OII?

As the OII grows in experience and size, a more formal educational programme will evolve. While it is intended that OII will ultimately provide opportunities for doctoral and post-doctoral research and supervision, these will not be available until after academic and teaching staff have been appointed to the Institute. These appointments will be made in due course following the selection of the OII Director later this year.

The OII also intends to introduce courses at a graduate level. Initially these will be specialist papers within existing taught programmes, but we would expect these to develop into full, taught graduate programmes at either the MPhil or MSc Level. Again, these developments will follow the appointment of academic and teaching staff.

Given that the OII is in its earliest stages, it is not currently envisaged that graduate or post-doctoral opportunities will be available in the forthcoming academic year (which begins in October 2001).

For general information about undergraduate and graduate admissions at the University of Oxford, visit: www.ox.ac.uk/adminfo.htm.

If you are a student/individual whose current or future research interests relate to the impact of the Internet, especially its social, economic, legal or ethical influence and implications, please feel free to register your interest here.

Q: Can I visit the OII as a guest lecturer?

An important aspect of the OII will be the facilitation of discussion and debate through conferences and presentations attended by individuals and groups. A calendar of visitors will be developed once key appointments to the Institute have been made.

In the meantime, should you wish to register your interest in visiting the OII as a guest lecturer, please visit the
Q: How can my institution/group collaborate with the OII?

The OII will be a national and international centre for collaboration between individual universities as well as between universities and other public and private sector partners. These collaborative projects will be undertaken once relevant appointments have been made, and the OII has moved into its permanent location at 1 St Giles, Oxford.

A small sample of interdisciplinary topics the Institute may investigate include:

- Global law enforcement
- governance and regulation
- privacy and security
- confidentiality and trust
- the boundaries of the nation state (including the implications for taxation)
- participation in the information society
- e-Government and the delivery of public services
- e-democracy
- Internet-enabled healthcare
- innovation and knowledge creation
- effects on education
- the digital divide
- problems and prospects for e-money
- impact on music and creative arts
- community building and development
- defence and counter-terrorism.

If your institution or group has research interests which relate to the impact of the Internet, especially its social, economic, legal or ethical influence and implications, or may be interested in future collaboration with the OII, please feel free to register your interest here.

Q: Can my company provide goods or services to the OII?

The OII, although growing rapidly, is still in its very early stages of development, so concrete decisions about the purchase of goods and services have not yet been made. In addition, as a University Department, the OII will be bound by the University's existing agreements for the provision of much of the goods and services it needs. Tendering for many of these is conducted by the University's Purchasing Office.
Q: Can my institution or group get funding from OII?

OII is not currently intended to be a source of funding for outside institutions or groups. However, one of the objectives of the OII is to undertake collaborative, multidisciplinary studies. The OII will accordingly provide support for joint research programmes, conducted in collaboration between the OII and other universities, which receive the approval of its Management Committee.