



UBC Decision Insights for Business & Society

Annual Report for the 2022-2023 Academic Year

UBC SAUDER
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

DIBS
Decision Insights for Business & Society

Overview of UBC Decision Insights for Business & Society

Decision Insights for Business & Society ([UBC-DIBS](#)) is a behavioural research and policy solutions initiative at UBC Sauder School of Business. Our mission is to improve outcomes across major societal and planetary challenges by improving our understanding of decision-making, encouraging long-term behaviour change, and working together toward an environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable future.

Why Decision Insights

Every day we make hundreds of small decisions—what to eat, how much to save, and how to commute. With 8 billion people making these decisions 365 days a year, the impacts of these small, individual decisions can add up to big, societal problems. As a result, individual human decisions are a critical part of both the cause *and* the solution for our most urgent societal and planetary challenges (e.g., the climate crisis, income inequality, and decolonization).

The behavioural and decision sciences (e.g., psychology, consumer behaviour, economics, and related fields) use the scientific method to explore why and how people make decisions and behave. They combine economic incentives and psychological factors to build and rigorously test theories of decision-making and behaviour. The applied field of behavioural insights draws on the behavioural and decision sciences to “nudge” people to make choices that are better for themselves and the world.

What We Do

UBC-DIBS combines behavioural and decision science research and behavioural insights practice to create decision insights for business and society—insights that harness the power of individual decisions to tackle important societal and planetary problems. This report summarizes our work across the following three pillars for the 2022-2023 academic year (June 2022-May 2023):

- **Behavioural & Decision Science Research:** We conduct cutting-edge behavioural and decision science research to understand how we all make decisions and how to help us all make better decisions. We collaborate with partners in government, industry, and beyond to apply research insights to pressing environmental, economic, and social sustainability challenges.
- **Behavioural Insights Training:** We partner with UBC Sauder Continuing Business Studies to help working professionals develop the behavioural insights knowledge and skills to tackle sticky problems and create positive behavioural change.
- **Behavioural Insights Events & Resources:** We work with partners to host events, create resources, and support an interdisciplinary behavioural insights community that connects academic researchers with policymakers, executives, and behavioural insights enthusiasts and experts across the public, non-profit, and private sectors in British Columbia and beyond.

Land Acknowledgment

UBC-DIBS is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the [xwməθkwəyəm \(Musqueam\)](#), [Skwxwú7mesh \(Squamish\)](#), and [Səlilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh \(Tsleil-Waututh\) Nations](#). We gratefully acknowledge these peoples, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next in this area. As behavioural scientists, we know that words are not enough. We are exploring how behavioural insights and Indigenous ways of knowing and being can be mutually supporting and how applied behavioural and decision science can contribute to Reconciliation.

Funding

UBC-DIBS is funded in part by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Partnership Development Grant and a UBC Grant for Catalyzing Research Clusters.

Behavioural & Decision Science Research

Behavioural and decision science research explores why and how we make decisions as well as what can help us make better decisions. Using the scientific method and an interdisciplinary approach, our research projects build and test theories of decision-making and behaviour in the lab, online, and in the field. We collaborate with partners in the public, private, and non-profit sectors to apply research insights to real-world problems, with a focus on environmental, economic, and social sustainability challenges.

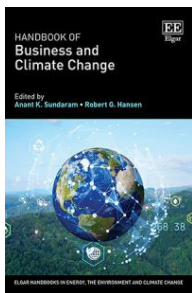


Created for Alice Design
from Noun Project

2022-2023: Our core team published over 15 peer-reviewed journal articles, contributed chapters to two edited books, and gave a TED Talk with over 750,000 views (and growing!), on top of many media interviews. We also collaborated with partners on over 12 field experiments and quasi-experiments. See below for a snapshot of a field project applying behavioural and decision science to energy conservation.



Hardisty, D. J., White, K., Habib, R., & Zhao, J. (2022). Sustainable nudges for the wild: Recommendations from SHIFT. In N. Mažar & D. Soman (Eds.), *Behavioral science in the wild* (pp. 153-169). University of Toronto Press.



Habib, R., & White, K., (2022). Shifting consumers' decisions towards climate-friendly behavior. In A. K. Sundaram & R. G. Hansen (Eds.), *Handbook of business and climate change* (pp. 405-429). Elgar.



Zhao, J., (2023, April). *How to feng shui your fridge – and other happy climate hacks* [Video]. TED@DestinationCanada.

https://www.ted.com/talks/jiaying_zhao_how_to_feng_shui_your_fridge_and_other_happy_climate_hacks/c

Featured Research Project

Twice as Nice? A Longitudinal Field Study of Separate vs. Combined Nudges for Household Laundry Behaviours

Are energy conservation nudges more effective if they focus on benefits for the self, benefits for the planet, or both? And is it better to target one behaviour at a time, or many different behaviours simultaneously?

UBC-DIBS partnered with BC Hydro on a longitudinal field study comparing the impact of different laundry machine decals on encouraging consumers to increase four energy-efficient laundry behaviours: re-wearing clothes until dirty, combining many small loads into fewer large loads, washing with cold water, and hang-drying inside or outside.

In a mixed design, residential consumers ($N=1,210$) were randomly assigned to one of six conditions (shown below): (1) control with no decal, (2) control decal with no message, (3) “environmental appeal” decal focused on the impacts of micro-plastics on marine life and encouraging all four behaviours, (4) “self appeal” decal focused on the impacts of micro-plastics on clothing and encouraging all four behaviours, (5) “environmental + self appeal” decal focused on the impacts of micro-plastics on marine life *and* clothing and encouraging all four behaviours, or (6) “environmental + self appeal” decal focused on the impacts of micro-plastics on marine life *and* clothing and encouraging only hang-drying.



Study participants were asked to place the decal on their laundry machine and record (using the depicted QR code or URL) each time they did a load of machine washing or drying. Over a period of one year, we measured behaviour change intentions, retrospective self-reports of behaviour, logged laundry behaviour, and objective energy meter data. Results show that:

- All four decals with messages increased *intentions* to engage in energy-efficient laundry behaviour.
- The “environmental appeal” decals featuring marine life increased *objective measures* of behaviour change, whereas the “self appeal” decals featuring clothing did not change objective measures.
- Making multiple complementary behaviour change requests was more effective than making a single behaviour change request.

This project is currently being written up for publication. In the meantime, you can watch a [project overview](#).

Behavioural Insights Training

Behavioural insights (BI) applies an understanding of decision-making and behaviour to help us make decisions that have a positive impact on individuals, communities, and the planet. By developing and practicing BI knowledge and skills, working professionals can create solutions that draw on the behavioural and decision sciences and test those solutions using the scientific method. Further, they can learn how to use BI ethically and guard against misuse. UBC-DIBS partners with UBC Sauder Continuing Business Studies and a nationwide steering committee to offer two behavioural insights programs. Read our [brochure](#) for more details.



Fundamentals of Behavioural Insights

This part-time, online [course](#) introduces behavioural insights, experimentation, and ethics over the course of 3 weeks. The course is offered multiple times per year and can be taken open enrolment or as a prerequisite for the full certificate.



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from Noun Project

2022-2023: We welcomed 79 students into *Fundamentals* this year. Students represented the private sector (35%), government (29%), academia (17%), and other parts of the public (15%) and non-profit (4%) sectors. Students participated from BC (66%), Nova Scotia (12%), Ontario (12%), and other parts of Canada (5%) and the world (5%).

Advanced Professional Certificate in Behavioural Insights

This part-time, online [program](#) combines coursework and a capstone project over the course of 9 months to provide rigorous behavioural insights practitioner training. Cohorts are capped at 30 students and run from September through May each year.



2022-2023: We celebrated the graduation of 25 BI practitioners from the certificate program this year. Students represented a mix of sectors and locations. Working with partner organizations, teams of students completed 7 capstone projects tackling issues including waste sorting, program uptake, financial security, shift to online, and sustainable food choices. For working papers from previous projects, visit the [BI Wiki](#).

BIG Difference BC Scholarship

UBC-DIBS co-administers this annual \$5,000 [scholarship](#) for a student in the *Advanced Professional Certificate in Behavioural Insights*. The scholarship is open to public- and non-profit sector working professionals in BC; to help create equitable pathways to BI careers, priority is given to people who identify as IBPOC, 2SLGBTQ+, persons with disability, and/or women.

2022-2023:



BIG Difference BC Scholar for 2022-2023

Jennifer Parisi

Manager, Marketing and Communications

Michael Smith Health Research BC



Behavioural Insights Events & Resources

There is increasing interest in using behavioural insights (BI) to tackle problems across domains and sectors in British Columbia and beyond. With our partners, we support a growing interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral BI community that connects researchers, government, industry, and BI enthusiasts and experts. We host events and share resources to further spread awareness of BI as a tool and to support practitioners using BI.

BIG Difference BC Conference

Our annual flagship event is the free, online [BIG Difference BC conference](https://BIGdifferenceBC.ca), which we cohost with the BC Behavioural Insights Group and WorkSafeBC. The conference celebrates using the behavioural and decision sciences for positive social impact across topics and sectors in BC and beyond.



BIG Difference BC 2022: Our 2022 theme was “Using Behavioural Insights to Create Lasting Change” and it brought together over 1,225 registrants from 52 countries. Registrants represented federal, provincial, and local governments, universities around the world, and a variety of other public, non-profit, and private sector organizations. The [program](#) featured:

- Keynote address on behavioural science and anti-racism by Dr. Crystal Hall (University of Washington)
- Special session on behavioural insights in organizations with Dilip Soman (University of Toronto), Kerri Buschel (WorkSafeBC), Tori Peace (Ontario Behavioural Insights Unit), and Sasha Tregebov (BIT)
- Lightning talks and micro-presentations about projects applying BI to health and safety, sustainability, criminal justice, and other challenges across sectors



BIG Difference BC 2023: Save the date for our sixth annual conference on Friday, November 3, when our theme will be “Using Behavioural Insights to Improve How We Work”.

Behavioural Insights Seminar Series

Our regular Behavioural Insights Seminar Series invites academic researchers and public-, non-profit-, and private-sector practitioners to share their field and lab projects using the behavioural and decision sciences to "nudge for good". Details of upcoming seminars and recordings of past seminars are available on the [BI Wiki](#).

2022-2023: We hosted 8 seminars that drew an average of 175 registrants, including faculty, staff, students, alumni, and members of the public.


DIBS
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UBC-DIBS Behavioural Insights Seminar Series 2022-2023

UBC-DIBS is thrilled to announce this year's outstanding line-up of researchers and practitioners sharing their field and lab projects using the behavioural and decision sciences to "nudge for good".

 <p>Fri., Sept. 9, 2022 Claire Tsai (University of Toronto)</p>	 <p>Fri., Oct. 14, 2022 Ellen Peters (University of Oregon)</p>	 <p>Fri., Dec. 9, 2022 Neil Lewis, Jr. (Cornell University)</p>
 <p>Fri., Jan. 13, 2023 Jeremy Gretton (BIT Canada)</p>	 <p>Fri., Feb. 10, 2023 Erik Thulin (RARE)</p>	 <p>Fri., Mar. 10, 2023 Vince Hopkins (University of Saskatchewan)</p>
 <p>Fri., May 12, 2023 Brittany Bingham & Andrea MacNeill (Vancouver Coastal Health)</p>	 <p>Fri., June 9, 2023 Ammaarah Martinus (UNESCO)</p>	

Register at <https://bit.ly/DIBS-seminar>. Seminars are 10-11am PT on select Fridays. Learn about UBC-DIBS at <http://sauder.ubc.ca/DIBS>.

Research Lab

Our regular Research Lab meetings provide an informal venue to share, discuss, and provide feedback on emerging behavioural and decision science research ideas and research projects in progress. In contrast to seminar, lab is only open to UBC-DIBS members and partners to provide a supportive, collegial environment for junior researchers and practitioners to share their work.

2022-2023: We convened lab six times to discuss work in progress from a mix of UBC graduate students and faculty and practitioners from partner organizations.

Calling DIBS Podcast



Our *Calling DIBS* podcast is a glimpse into the world of behavioural insights through interviews with BI enthusiasts and experts from BC and beyond. Originally developed as a resource for students in the *Advanced Professional Certificate in Behavioural Insights*, the podcast is now available for a wider audience on the [BI Wiki](#) as well as [Apple Podcasts](#), [Google Podcasts](#), [Spotify](#), and [Amazon Music](#).

2022-2023: We released 19 episodes covering topics including how to conduct BI projects, uses of BI across sectors, how BI tackles challenges like the climate crisis and Reconciliation, how BI intersects with fields like user experience and marketing, BI careers, and BI critiques. The podcast received over 2,500 listens this year.

Behavioural Insights Wiki



Created by Gregor Cremer
from the Neuen Project

Our [BI Wiki](#) is an online resource for BI enthusiasts and experts. Like our podcast, the wiki started as a resource for students and graduates of the *Advanced Professional Certificate in Behavioural Insights*. It is now publicly available and offers several different streams of resources, including:

- [Newsfeed](#): Regularly-updated feed of events, case studies, training opportunities, and job postings
- [Calling DIBS Podcast](#): All publicly-available episodes of our podcast
- [BI at UBC](#): Recordings of our seminar series and working papers describing capstone projects from our *Advanced Professional Certificate in Behavioural Insights* as well as other projects
- [BI Library](#): Recommended behavioural science books, podcasts, webinars, newsletters, blogs, and sources for academic and practitioner case studies
- [RIDE Resources](#): General resources and tips for using the behavioural insights approach as well as specific resources for each phase of the BI project lifecycle
- [Learning & Careers](#): Resources to explore BI learning opportunities and career pathways

2022-2023: We added new content and features to the wiki this year. We averaged 3 newsfeed items each week, for over 140 items this year. The wiki auto-sends the latest items to 70+ subscribers on a weekly basis.

BIG Difference BC Community & Resources

Together with the BC Behavioural Insights Group (BC BIG), UBC-DIBS manages [BIG Difference BC](#), a network of BI enthusiasts and experts from government, academia, and across the public, non-profit, and private sectors in BC and beyond. A [cross-sectoral advisory board](#) provides strategic oversight as well as creative and logistical input. In addition to our annual conference, UBC-DIBS and BC BIG also collaborate to deliver:



Created by Gregor Cremer
from the Neuen Project

BIG Difference BC Newsletter: Our monthly newsletter shares news, “choice events”, “choice reads”, BI tips and case studies, and other opportunities and highlights from across our network. Subscribe by emailing BIG@gov.bc.ca.



Created by Gregor Cremer
from the Neuen Project

BIG Difference BC Blog: Our regular [blog](#) features a wide variety of content, including glimpses of how practitioners use BI, examples of BI in the wild, case studies, topical issues, and guest posts from community members.

2022-2023: The BIG Difference BC website saw over 9,700 visits. We released 10 issues of our newsletter to over 3,100 newsletter subscribers. We published 12 blog posts which together saw over 950 page views.

Our People

Core Team



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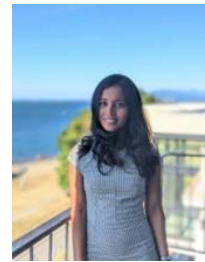
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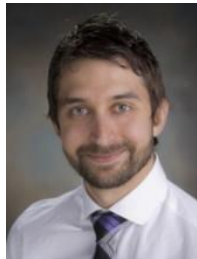
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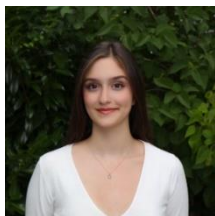
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Our Partners



BC Behavioural Insights Group



BC Hydro



Business & Higher Education Roundtable



Centre for Business Law



City of Vancouver



Foundations for Social Change



Fraser Health



Peter P. Dhillon
Centre for Business Ethics

Peter P. Dhillon Centre for Business Ethics



Planetary Healthcare Lab



SEEDS Sustainability Program



Share Reuse Repair Initiative



UBC Food Service



UBC Sustainability Hub



WorkSafe BC