The Loop

ECPR's Political Science Blog

ecpr

Report for the ECPR Publications Subcommittee

Johanne Døhlie Saltnes,
Martin J. Bull
and Kate Hawkins
February 2022

Contents

This report analyses data from The Loop's first full calendar year,
1 January – 31 December 2021

*A **note on our photos:** all imagery that appears in this report accompanied a Loop blog piece at some point during 2021*

Our first full year

Overview of progress

Since The Loop's launch on 12 October 2020, our site has developed into a thriving resource for the political science community. We have published a new blog piece nearly every working day throughout the year, though a little quieter in December and January because of the Christmas break. The sheer quantity of our output far exceeds anything we anticipated at the project's inception.

During the calendar year 2021, The Loop published **218** blogs, against last year's stated target of 'at least 120–130'. Of these, 38% were pitched direct, mostly via our online form, but there were also some direct approaches by email to the Editors.

Our prodigious output has meant that academic editors Johanne and Martin have worked particularly hard to sustain a steady influx of copy.

Loop digest fortnightly e-shots

Halfway through 2021, the volume of content being published on The Loop was rendering ECPR's fortnightly e-bulletin too unwieldy for broadcast. Kate therefore decided to publish standalone news digests, every other Monday.

These digest emails typically contain snyopses, images and links to around 10–12 blog pieces published during that time period, along with a general call to action for submissions.

Digests are sent to more than 9,000 subscribers signed up to ECPR's 'Publications' mailing list. They typically attract an open rate of around 30%, and a clickthrough rate of around 3-4%.

These mailshots consistently result in the submission of new pitches to our online form – typically 2–3 per broadcast – so in addition to boosting readership figures, they are a valuable source of fresh content.

Analysis of Loop digest emails sent between 23 July 2021 and 10 January 2022 reveals that the average open rate is 28.58% and the average click-through rate is 3.63%, though the rate improved as the year wore on.

Readability and SEO software

In 2021, ECPR agreed to purchase Yoast readability and Search Engine Optimisation software for The Loop's WordPress website.

This allows us to shape contributors' copy for sentence / paragraph length, use active voice, transition words and general readability. We can also ensure key phrases and synonyms are included, improving our blog pieces' likelihood of being found by online search engines, and therefore more widely read by the scholarly community, and beyond.

Our first full year

Loop presence on ecpr.eu

The Loop slide on ECPR's home page carousel is refreshed each week by Kate with a header image and standfirst of a story we feel has broad appeal, to help drive traffic to our WordPress site.

In June 2021 Kate submitted a request for The Loop 'broken diamond' logo to be included on the ECPR mega-menu. This task remains with the IT team but has not yet been carried out.

Thematic 'strands'

In 2021 we introduced to discrete Loop content strands, distinguished by icons according to their theme. The first of these, *Science of Democracy*, involves blog pieces carrying a ⚘ icon. Contributions are written in response to an original blog piece by the University of Canberra's Jean-Paul Gagnon,

which proposed building a 'data mountain' of terms used to describe democracy, in pursuit of its 'total texture'. By the end of 2021, the series had attracted 32 contributions, largely thanks to series instigator Jean-Paul Gagnon's prolific commissioning.

Our second series launch, charting the surge of an 'Illiberal Wave' in world politics, is marked with a 🌀. We have had only four instalments thus far, but more in the pipeline for 2022. We aim to instigate at least one more of these branded strands of content in 2022, possibly on a theme connected to populism.

> **"**
>
> **In 2021 we introduced discrete content strands on The Loop, distinguished by icons according to their theme**

Presence at the General Conference

At the General Conference in early September, Kate presented *First-Time Blogger*, encouraging early career scholars to submit to The Loop. We are planning to develop this into a YouTube tutorial video for prospective authors.

The presentation, delivered in bitesize visual slides, offers brief, accessible tips for crafting an effective blog piece. It covers writing style and structure, what to expect from The Loop's editorial and production process, guidance on picture research, and tips for improving a blog's readership post-publication.

Also at the General Conference, we hosted Meet-the-Editor sessions for the Academic Eds to discuss Loop submissions with prospective authors. These well-attended sessions were intended in particular for early career scholars, and those who may have been familiar only with dealing with academic journals.

Author profiling
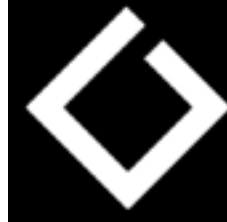
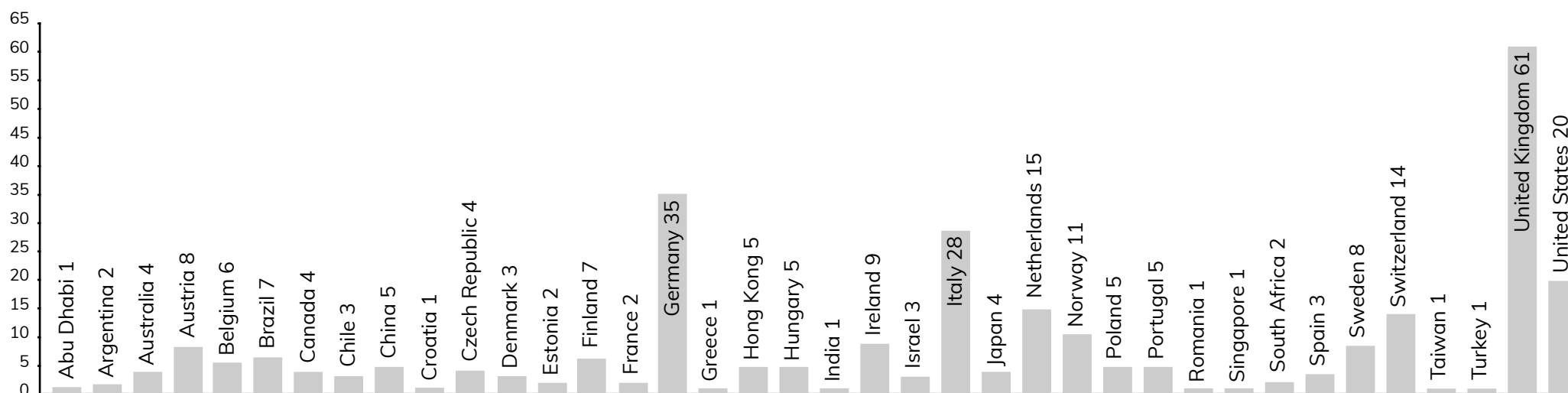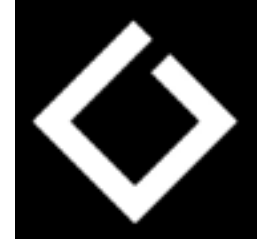| Table 1: Published authors, by region _Many of The Loop's articles are multi-authored; the total number of authors is therefore greater than the number of published articles_														
Regions	**January**	**February**	**March**	**April**	**May**	**June**	**July**	**August**	**September**	**October**	**November**	**December**	**Total**	**%**
United Kingdom & Ireland	4	2	5	6	6	14	3	4	5	5	15	1	**70**	**23.49**
Germany, Austria & Switzerland	3	3	14	3	6	1	4	5	5	1	6	6	**57**	**19.12**
France					1		1						**2**	**0.67**
Italy	2	6	3	5	1	1	4		1		4	1	**28**	**9.40**
Spain, Portugal & Greece		1			1	2		1	1		3		**9**	**3.02**
Belgium & The Netherlands	1		6	1		3	4	1	1		1	3	**21**	**7.05**
Nordic Countries	1	1	5	1	5	2		4	3	6		1	**29**	**9.73**
Central and Eastern Europe		1	3		1	4	1	2	1	2	1	2	**18**	**6.04**
United States & Canada					2	2	1	4	6	4	3	2	**24**	**8.05**
Rest of World		2	2	4	6	6	5	5	3	4	2	1	**40**	**13.42**
Total	**11**	**16**	**38**	**20**	**29**	**35**	**23**	**26**	**26**	**22**	**35**	**17**	**298**	

Abu Dhabi 1, Argentina 2, Australia 4, Austria 8, Belgium 6, Brazil 7, Canada 4, Chile 3, China 5, Croatia 1, Czech Republic 4, Denmark 3, Estonia 2, Finland 7, France 2, Germany 35, Greece 1, Hong Kong 5, Hungary 5, India 1, Ireland 9, Israel 3, Italy 28, Japan 4, Netherlands 15, Norway 11, Poland 5, Portugal 5, Romania 1, Singapore 1, South Africa 2, Spain 3, Sweden 8, Switzerland 14, Taiwan 1, Turkey 1, United Kingdom 61, United States 20

Author profiling

Gender balance of our authors

Despite a strong start in 2020, and an average of 43% female contributors over our first sixteen weeks, we are disappointed to see that the percentage of female contributors for 2021 as a whole dropped to 38%. In line with ECPR's **Gender Equality Plan**, Loop editors pledge to reach out to a greater proportion of female scholars for commissioned blog pieces in 2022 and beyond. Our monthly percentages show huge variation, so greater female representation is well within our reach.

Table 2: Published authors, by gender				
Month	Male	Female	Total authors	% Female
January	3	8	11	**73**
February	11	5	16	**31**
March	22	16	38	**42**
April	13	7	20	**35**
May	18	11	29	**38**
June	23	12	35	**34**
July	10	13	23	**57**
August	17	9	26	**35**
September	17	9	26	**35**
October	15	7	22	**32**
November	26	9	35	**26**
December	11	6	17	**35**
Total	**186**	**112**	**298**	
%	**62**	**38**		

Loop authors, by career stage

The Loop aims to publish pieces by scholars at every stage of their career, and we have continued to maintain a consistent spread of contributions from doctoral candidates to senior professors. Analysis shows no correlation between the seniority of the author and the popularity (readership figures) of a piece; some of our most-viewed blogs have been by the youngest scholars, so we aim to continue this balanced approach rather than trying to attract particularly senior or junior contributors.

| Table 3: Published authors, by career stage					
Month	PhD or independent	Postdoc	Lecturer	Senior / Professor	Total
January	4	3	1	3	**11**
February	3	2	9	2	**16**
March	6	10	14	8	**38**
April	8	3	7	2	**20**
May	3	9	13	4	**29**
June	8	6	16	5	**35**
July	5	8	6	4	**23**
August	5	2	10	9	**26**
September	6	8	5	7	**26**
October	5	3	7	7	**22**
November	7	5	13	10	**35**
December	5	4	6	2	**17**
Total	**65**	**63**	**107**	**63**	**298**
%	**22**	**21**	**36**	**21**	

Authors' institutional membership

The Loop is a benefit for scholars at ECPR Member institutions, and an outlet for those outside our membership community. By the end of 2021, figures show that 70% of our contributions had come from scholars at Full or Associate Member institutions. But the 30% of contributions from authors at non-member universities demonstrates that we are also reaching out to scholars from less affluent countries who may not have the resources to take part in (eg) ECPR academic events.

Table 4: Published authors, by institutional membership				
Month	Non Member	Full Member	Associate Member	Total
January	1	10		**11**
February	4	12		**16**
March	5	33		**38**
April	5	15		**20**
May	11	17	1	**29**
June	5	29	1	**35**
July	5	16	2	**23**
August	9	16	1	**26**
September	12	13	1	**26**
October	9	12	1	**22**
November	15	20		**35**
December	7	10		**17**
Total	**88**	**203**	**7**	**298**
%	**30**	**68**	**2**	

Pitches vs commissions
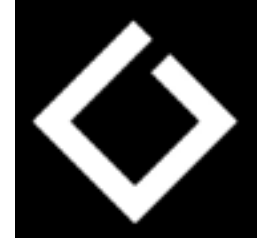
Table 5: Published blogs, pitches vs. commissions				
Month	**Pitches**	**Commissions**	**Total**	**% Pitches**
January	6	4	10	**60**
February	6	7	13	**46**
March	8	14	22	**36**
April	6	9	15	**40**
May	3	16	19	**16**
June	4	16	20	**20**
July	6	13	19	**32**
August	8	14	22	**36**
September	10	11	21	**48**
October	10	10	20	**50**
November	8	15	23	**35**
December	7	7	14	**50**
Total	**82**	**136**	**218**	
%	**38**	**62**		

Routes to publication

The Editorial Team meets for around an hour each week. We we work through the production calendar, picking up overdue copy that needs chasing, and identifying content gaps which may require commissioning. We then generally talk about suggestions for future content, and separate initiatives such as new content strands, presentations, and reporting.

This approach, combined with spontaneous pitches, has produced a steady flow of material, although we do need more spontaneous proposals. Once in-person events resume, we see greater opportunity for promotion among the ECPR community.

Gender and location

At the beginning of each calendar month, Kate shares analysis of the previous month's stats, breaking them down into number of blogs published, pitches vs commissions, male vs female authors, career stage, geographic location of institution, and institutional membership status.

The aim of this is largely to ensure that Academic Editors keep an eye on geographical and gender balance. Most pitches we receive are from men based in Western European universities. We therefore use commissioning to increase the number of female contributors, and ensure we don't simply publish pieces by scholars in affluent Western nations; countries in Central and Eastern Europe, and outside the OECD, should also be represented.

This approach has worked to a certain extent (more male than female authors respond positively to our commissions) and we seek to strengthen this aspect of our commissioning strategy in 2022. When we commission, we stress to contributors that we are flexible on deadlines, ensuring that scholars with extra responsibilities at home (especially during the pandemic) get the necessary flexibility to contribute when it best suits them.

In 2021, 16 authors contributed more than one blog. Thirteen contributed twice, one three times, one four times, and Ruaridh Brown published with us on an impressive five occasions.

The proportion of pitches dropped to a low point of 16% in May, and stood at only 20% in June, but we are hoping that these are aberrations, and that we will be able to maintain a rate above 40% throughout 2022.

Since we instigated the standalone Loop Digest every other week, we generally receive at least a couple of cold pitches via the online form for each mailshot broadcast. We are hoping this will continue to bolster our editors' commissioning efforts as we develop through 2022 and beyond.

Table 6: All pitches (inc. not published), male vs female					
Month	**Male**	**Female**	**Didn't say**	**Total**	**% Female**
January	1	4		5	**80**
February	3	1		4	**25**
March	7	2		9	**22.22**
April	3	1		4	**25**
May	3	4		7	**57.14**
June	2	1		3	**33.33**
July	7	3		10	**30**
August	10	3	1	14	**21.43**
September	5	3		8	**37.5**
October	8	4	1	13	**30.77**
November	6	2		8	**25**
December	8	3		11	**27.27**
Total	**63**	**31**	**2**	**96**	
%	**65.63**	**32.29**	**2.08**		

Published blogs, by category

Category	Number of blogs
Democracy	91
European Union	63
Political Theory	41
Science of Democracy 🦋	32
Elections	27
International Relations	23
Western European Politics	22
Covid-19	21
Political Representation, Eastern European Politics	19
Political Economy, Migration	15
Public Policy	14
Populism, Political Communication, Corruption	13
British Politics, Autocracy	12
European Integration	11
Security, Radical Right-Wing Politics, Political Parties, Political Participation, International Development	10
Social Movements, Latin American Politics, Italy, Gender and Politics	9

Category	Number of blogs
EU Foreign Policy	8
Parliaments, Germany, American Politics	7
Welfare, Refugees, Presidential Politics, Illiberal Wave 🌊, Foreign Policy, Brexit	6
Terrorism, Political Trust, Democratic Innovations	5
Turkey, Social Media, Referendums, Politics and the Media, Politics and Religion, Middle East, Ireland, Health Policy, EU Economic Policy, Environmental Politics, China, Brazil, Anti-corruption	4
LGBTI, Islam, Green Politics, Democratisation, Coalitions, Africa	3
United Nations, Trade Policy, Scottish Independence, Public accountability, Political Violence, Political Science Profession, Political Science methodology, Political Campaigns, Organised Crime, International Organisations, India, Independence Movements, Globalisation, Feminism, Education Policy, Deliberative Democracy	2
Socialism, Russia, Myanmar, Minority Governments, MENA, Law and Courts, Islamic State, Housing Crisis, Federalism, Energy Policy, Disability, Clientelism, Citizenship, Balkans, Afghanistan	1

Key themes of 2021
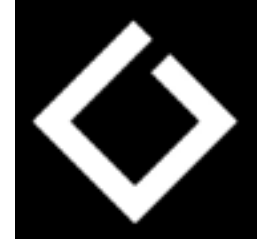
Democracy and elections have been two key topics for us in 2021. Our burgeoning 🦋 Science of Democracy series has created a conversation between scholars on how we ought to study democracy, and the benefits and challenges of using a quantitative vs a qualitative approach.

But beyond the series, contributions to The Loop have discussed the link between democracy and business, party systems, how to safeguard democracy during the pandemic, and the role of civil society in democracies, among other themes. We have published contributions discussing the state of democracy in countries including the United States, India, Argentina, Kazakhstan, China, Italy, Turkey, Afghanistan, and in the EU region.

The Loop encourages and commissions electoral analysis, and in 2021 we have published analyses of elections in Bulgaria, Argentina, Libya, the Netherlands, Latvia, and Italy. Contributors have also written on the run-up to elections in Brazil, and the lack of elections in Palestine. With a number of highly significant elections on the horizon in 2022, in France,

Brazil, Sweden, Serbia, Colombia and the US midterms, The Loop will seek to continue to provide such cutting-edge electoral analyses.

Our 🌀 Illiberal Wave series has not attracted as many contributors as we had hoped for at its inception. We have published a few good blogs but the series has not succeeded in drawing the same amount of traction as 🦋 Science of Democracy. However, we do not see the need for all our

> **"**
>
> **The Loop has published contributions discussing the state of democracy in countries including the United States, India, Argentina, Kazakhstan, China, Italy, Turkey, and Afghanistan**

series to be equally big. We will seek to revive interest in the 🌀 Illiberal Wave in 2022, and to complete the year with at least ten entries in this content strand.

Thematic goals for 2022

We recognise that the 🦋 Science of Democracy series has performed so well because, in the main, of Jean-Paul's substantial contact network, and his proactiveness in motivating authors to contribute.

However, in 2022, we do aim to establish a new series, possibly on the topic of populism. Before going live, we aim to secure 5–6 committed authors. Our plan is to launch the series at the ECPR General Conference in late August and to have 4–5 invited panellists ready to take part in a lunchtime seminar. We will then publish a blog post on this new themed series, by each of our participants, every day during the conference week.
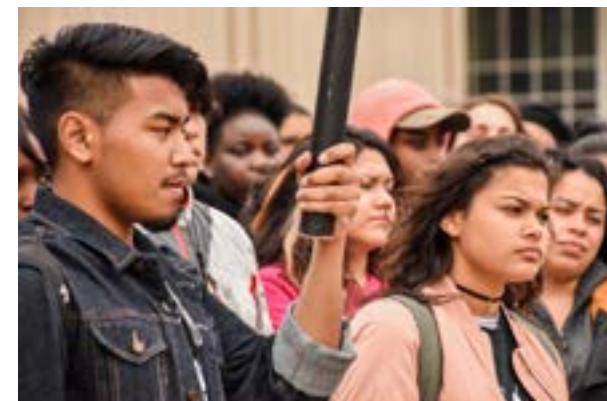
Top 20 most-read of 2021
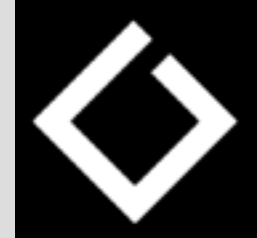
Figures captured 19 January 2022

Blog title	Author/s	Page views
Why northern Europe is so indebted	Martino Comelli	17,839*
Germany: a country of immigration – or integration? Merkel's uncomfortable legacy	Isabelle Hertner	5,045
The secret of Angela Merkel's extraordinary success: her understanding of the distinctive features of German politics	Femke van Esch	3,370
New Zealand beat Covid-19 without a vaccine: this is how they did it	Lynda Gilby	2,626
The radical right populist Vox and the end of Spain's exceptionalism	Andrés Santana, Lisa Zanotti, José Rama, Stuart Turnbull-Dugarte	1,758
The demise of neoliberalism and the dawn of a new era of 'neo-statism'	Paolo Gerbaudo	1,624
How dictatorships manage their image	Alexander Dukalskis	1,351
After the 2021 Dutch general election, can Volt become a genuine pan-European force?	Benjamin Leruth	1,324
Why is Italy more populist than any other country in western Europe?	Michelangelo Vercesi	1,272
Will Brexit break up the United Kingdom?	Michael Keating	1,229

Blog title	Author/s	Page views
Playing the long game: why democracy is good for business	Carl Henrik Knutsen	1,004
Why right-wing populist parties are more successful in some countries than in others	Léonie De Jonge	993
The new climate change activism is emotional, and it's a good thing	Louise Knops	891
Religious freedom under attack in France	Emmanuelle Bertout	854
Mario Draghi has bigger ambitions than just seeing Italy through to the next general election	Sergio Fabbrini	828
Biden's minimum corporate tax rate could destroy Ireland's economic growth model, leaving the country in uncharted territory	Anna Guildea	827
The 'Global South' and research on world politics	Sebastian Haug	813
✵ Rescuing an abandoned science: the lexicon of democracy	Jean-Paul Gagnon	808
The Kurds defeated Islamic State – now Turkey wants to end their success story	Dastan Jasim	801
Voting for the 'lesser evil': the Peruvian Presidential election	Lucía Dammert	799

Shared on Hacker News (not via Loop republication widget); hence readership figure may be artificially inflated (ie URL not accessed by genuinely interested parties)

Google analytics

	Page impres-sions	Top-growing pages compared to previous month		Top-performing pages, by clicks		How people find The Loop, by clicks		Top-performing search queries, by clicks		Devices, by clicks		Top countries, by clicks	
January	11,000	Guildea	+42	Home page	90	brexit depression	+6	the loop ecpr	55	Desktop	335	UK	124
		Valenza	+38	Valenza	68	china new world order	+4	brexit depression	10	Mobile	233	Germany	72
		Tonge	+28	Guildea	66	far right ireland	+4	ecpr the loop	6	Tablet	11	Ireland	49
February	14,000	Home page	+17	Home page	107	valenza vaccine	+6	the loop ecpr	50	Desktop	396	UK	91
		Anghel	+16	Guildea	62	joe biden cold war	+3	valenza vaccine	6	Mobile	191	Ireland	59
		Bull	+10	Valenza	60	sputnik V meaning	+2	relevance of political science	6	Tablet	10	Germany	54
March	18,700	Home page	+43	Home page	150	the loop ecpr	+19	the loop ecpr	69	Desktop	523	UK	110
		Fabbrini	+26	Guildea	63	ecpr the loop	+7	the loop blog	8	Mobile	212	Germany	59
		Brown	+24	Brown	34	the loop blog	+6	ecpr the loop	7	Tablet	4	USA	59
April	22,000	Leruth	+45	Home page	99	ecpr the loop	+13	the loop ecpr	38	Desktop	604	UK	120
		Gilby	+43	Gilby	63	how new zealand beat covid	+7	ecpr the loop	20	Mobile	205	USA	97
		Dammert	+19	Guildea	60	how did new zealand beat coronavirus	+4	the loop blog	8	Tablet	14	Italy	70
May	64,000	Hertner	+90	Home page	186	the loop ecpr	+40	the loop ecpr	78	Desktop	1,070	UK	241
		Dammert	+88	Dammert	107	the loop blog	+12	ecpr the loop	29	Mobile	451	USA	170
		Home page	87	Gilby	107	ecpr the loop	+9	the loop blog	20	Tablet	13	Germany	80
June	64,400	Guildea 2	+29	Home page	124	ecpr the loop	+9	ecpr the loop	38	Desktop	842	UK	156
		Haugevik	+16	Hertner	108	barnevernet norway 2021	+6	the loop ecpr	38	Mobile	405	USA	151
		Hertner	+14	Gilby	65	will multinationals leave ireland	+5	gender ideology	9	Tablet	22	Germany	91

Google analytics

	Page impres-sions	Top-growing pages compared to previous month		Top-performing pages, by clicks		How people find The Loop, by clicks		Top-performing search queries, by clicks		Devices, by clicks		Top countries, by clicks	
July	88,700	Hertner	+65	Hertner	173	the loop ecpr	+35	the loop ecpr	73	Desktop	1,020	USA	189
		Gilby	+56	Home page	151	how did new zealand beat covid 2021	+4	ecpr the loop	15	Mobile	565	UK	177
		Santana	+47	Gilby	121	how did new zealand beat covid without vaccine	+4	how did new zealand beat covid 2021	7	Tablet	34	Germany	146
August	127,000	Gilby	+202	Hertner	330	poland belarus relations	+24	the loop ecpr	43	Desktop	1,340	USA	372
		Hertner	+157	Gilby	323	belarus poland relations	+14	poland belarus relations	25	Mobile	1,030	UK	311
		Leruth	+64	Home page	126	what did new zealand do to be covid-free	+10	ecpr the loop	16	Tablet	54	Germany	147
September	160,000	Hertner	+293	Hertner	623	germany refugee policy	+25	the loop ecpr	53	Desktop	2,140	USA	612
		Keating	+110	Gilby	265	ecpr the loop	+23	ecpr the loop	39	Mobile	1,350	UK	446
		Leruth	+105	Leruth	209	will the uk break up	+17	germany refugee policy	28	Tablet	67	Germany	281
October	211,000	van Esch	+289	Hertner	699	angela merkel leadership style	+59	angela merkel leadership style	59	Desktop	3,350	USA	903
		Gerbaudo	+131	van Esch	289	populism in italy	+23	germany refugee policy	49	Mobile	1,500	UK	626
		Santana	+117	Keating	236	germany refugee policy	+21	populism in Italy	36	Tablet	75	Germany	239
November	239,000	van Esch	+771	Hertner	1,100	angela merkel leadership style	+222	angela merkel leadership style	281	Desktop	4,900	USA	1,370
		Hertner	+403	van Esch	1,060	angela merkel leadership qualities	+42	ecpr the loop	63	Mobile	2,050	UK	1,030
		Knutsen	+93	Santana	318	the loop ecpr	+35	the loop ecpr	60	Tablet	95	Germany	322
December	258,000	Whithorn	+173	van Esch	1,140	italian presidential election	+28	angela merkel leadership style	261	Desktop	4,550	USA	1,440
		van Esch	+76	Hertner	706	finns party	+15	vox spain	52	Mobile	2,150	UK	931
		Tardivo	+72	Santana	320	why is angela merkel a good leader	+15	angela merkel leadership qualities	46	Tablet	100	Germany	344

Google analytics

Clicks and page impressions

After a quiet start to the year, clicks per month skyrocketed in summer 2021, almost trebling between August and year end. There was a slight dip in December, but this is to be expected given that we published fewer blog pieces, and readers would be otherwise occupied over Christmas period.

Page impressions showed huge increases month on month, from only 11,000 to 127,000 by August. By the end of the year, the August figure had almost doubled, to 258,000.

Search term analysis

In keeping with stats on our most-read blogs, pieces by **Isabelle Hertner** and **Femke van Esch** on Angela Merkel and her legacy were top performers in clicks and search terms. See 'germany refugee' policy', 'angela merkel leadership style / qualities' and 'why is angela merkel a good leader'. August is the final time the home page appears as a top performer, indicating readers are heading straight to specific blogs from social media prompts rather than navigating from **theloop.ecpr.eu** to find a topic that interests them.

Where do people read The Loop?

Desktop continues to be readers' favoured device by far, suggesting that people read The Loop as part of their working day, rather than on the move or during leisure hours. By July, the US had overtaken the UK in generating the most clicks. This now looks unlikely to change as The Loop grows.
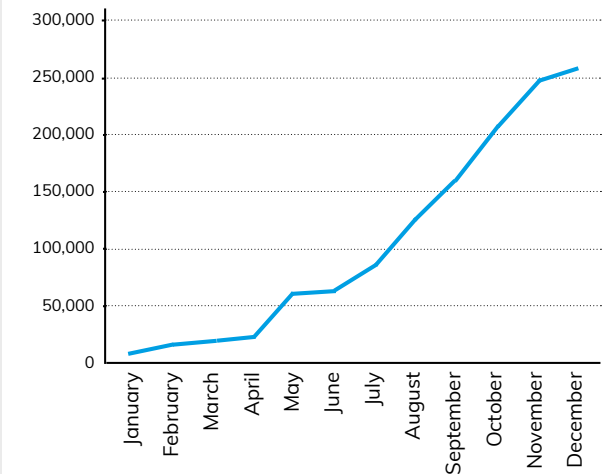

Clicks per month

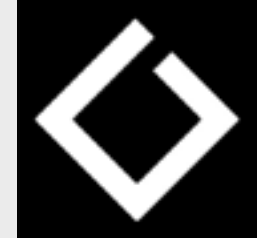*How often someone clicked a link from Google to **theloop.ecpr.eu***

Month	Clicks
January	579
February	597
March	739
April	823
May	1,540
June	1,270
July	1,620
August	2,420
September	3,560
October	4,930
November	7,050
December	6,800
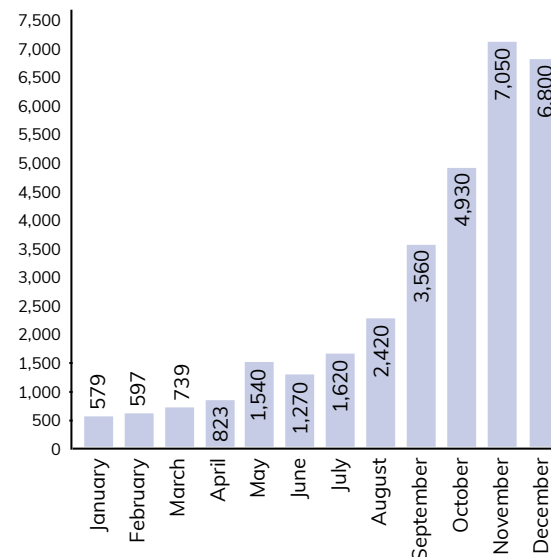
Page impressions

*How often someone saw a link to **theloop.ecpr.eu** on Google*

Author survey feedback

A Survey Monkey questionnaire captures contributors' experiences. The anonymous 1–2 minute survey comprises five questions, followed by a free-text box for additional comments, a selection of which are reproduced overleaf.

A weblink with a prompt to complete the survey appears in the auto-generated message authors receive as soon as their blog is published. Between 1 January and 31 December we received **114 responses**. This represents around half of the 218 blogs published over the course of the calendar year, but given that repeat contributors would be unlikely to complete it, the figure could be said to represent the views of more than 50% of our authors.

Response analysis

95% of contributors were satisfied / very satisfied with the editing of their blog. Only 5% were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, though with the heavy editing required in blog production, a small minority will always push back, not having experienced non-academic editing in the past.

Q1: How satisfied were you with the editing of your blog?		
	Responses	**%**
Very satisfied	92	**80.70**
Satisfied	16	**14.04**
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied		
Dissatisfied	5	**4.39**
Very dissatisfied	1	**0.88**
Total	**114**	

A comparable figure (97%) were satisfied / very satisfied with the speed of the editorial process, and 95% with their overall experience.

Contributors find their ways to us via various routes. It is heartening that ECPR communications are the most common, particularly since we introduced standalone Loop Digest mailshots in July. Encouragingly, 97% of respondents said they would publish with us again.

| Q2: How satisfied were you with the speed of the editorial and production process?		
	Responses	**%**
Very satisfied	91	**79.82**
Satisfied	20	**17.54**
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	2	**1.75**
Dissatisfied	1	**0.88**
Very dissatisfied		
Total	**114**	

| Q3: How would you rate your overall experience?		
	Responses	**%**
Very satisfied	96	**84.21**
Satisfied	12	**10.53**
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4	**3.51**
Dissatisfied	1	**0.88**
Very dissatisfied	1	**0.88**
Total	**114**	

Q4: Where did you hear about The Loop?

36% ECPR email

29% word of mouth

19% approached by a Loop editor

15% Twitter

1% Google search
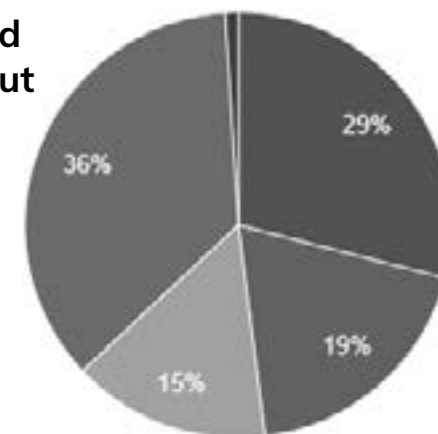
Q5: Would you publish with The Loop again?

97% Yes

3% No
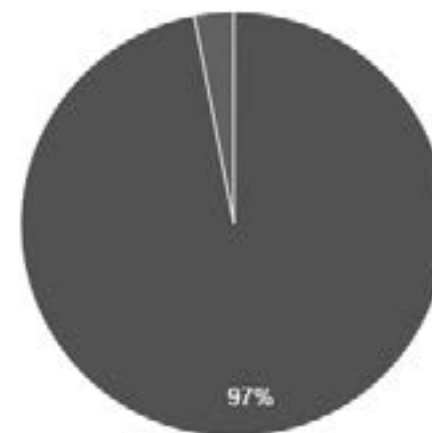
> **"**
> **The process was really accessible for a new academic... I would highly recommend others submit** *1 October*

> **"**
> **Pleased that there is a strong editorial system to keep the quality of the blog high** *10 September*

speedy, professional and friendly

16 November

> **"**
> **The whole process has been excellent, and the outcome perfect!**
> *6 August*

Email feedback from authors

Martino Comelli 4 February

■ Thank you for your care and work! Your revisions made the text so much better.

Carl Henrik Knutsen 28 June

■ Thanks for great editing! I have no suggestions/edits, and I like the new title 😊

Franziska Maier 27 July

■ Thanks Johanne for such a smooth and constructive process, I really enjoyed it!

Maoz Rosenthal 23 August

■ Thank you guys for a speedy and professional process. We will definitely be pitching you again with further ideas and research.

Femke van Esch 28 September

■ Thank you for the cooperation; I found the submitting and processing of my contribution very pleasant.

Felix Stein 20 May

■ This is very exciting! Thank you very much for your extremely dedicated, detailed & useful work! Amazing!

Malu Gatto 2 July

■ Thank you for your careful edits. They considerably improved the text and made it much more accessible.

Luca Manucci 6 August

■ Thanks a lot to the whole team, I really like the final result and I look forward to seeing other scholars responding to the article.

Adam Stokes 24 September

■ I will absolutely consider the Loop in the future. This was my first blog and the process has been seamless.

Agustín Goenaga 25 October

■ Thanks so much for taking care of this and for your kind words about the text. It reads so much better now thanks to your edits!

Stuart Wilks-Heeg 15 June

■ Thanks for the kind words and for running such a great editorial operation – very impressed by your set-up and really enjoyed doing this.

Gemma Dipoppa 15 July

■ Thank you for your work on this blog post, it is much easier and pleasant to read now that you edited it. Thanks so much again for this great opportunity.

Emilia Palonen 21 August

■ Thanks for your hard work and collaboration, great to publish with you!

Manès Weisskircher 24 September

■ I just wanted to thank you again for the great and swift feedback to the blog article. I very much appreciate it!

Rafal Fabianowicz 15 December

■ You guys are everyday heroes. Thank you so much for the constructive feedback. I hope I can write another piece in 2022.

> **Thanks to @ECPR_TheLoop for a great experience. Keep it in mind for getting the word out about your work!**
>
> *@jon_polk, 1 March*

> **Thank you very much @ProfMartinJBull for sparing no efforts to improve the argument... also grateful to your wonderful team... Grazie!**
>
> *@MahmoudJavadi2, 5 November*
> ——

> **Many interesting posts by European researchers here. Thanks for encouraging me to do this, @ECPR_TheLoop team!**
>
> *@junkogasudduth, 11 June*
> ——

> # One of the most research-driven & fast-growing blogs in our trade
>
> *@anghel_veronica, 19 August*

> **...many thanks to @ECPR_TheLoop and @ProfMartinJBull for their help and for giving us the chance to write this blog**
>
> *@Svenja_Krauss, 22 March*

> # Fab initiative. Can I write for you some time?
>
> *@AnandMenon, 18 March*
> ——

> # Many thanks to @ECPR_TheLoop for their fantastic edits!
>
> *@DrJamesFDownes, 21 June*

> **Delighted to write on #conspiracytheories for @ECPR's excellent new blog @ECPR_TheLoop**
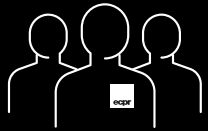>
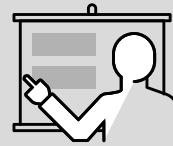> *@HDrochon, 10 April*

Headline statistics, 2021

97%

authors would publish with The Loop again

218

published articles

43%

authors are early career scholars

21.5%

authors based at institutions outside Europe
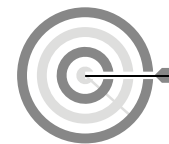
238

published authors

Democracy

most written-about topic

2,212

followers on Twitter at 31 December

38%

female authors

17,839

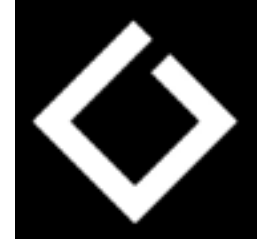page views of our most-read blog piece at 19 January 2022

70%

authors from ECPR member institutions

Looking ahead

Finding new ways to solicit content

As 2022 progresses, we are hoping that a number of factors will help increase the proportion of unsolicited blog pieces. These include: being a better-known, more established player in the industry; having built a substantial following on Twitter, which gives us greater reach in the online political science community; and, possibly most importantly, fortnightly Loop Digest mailshots to ECPR's Publications distribution mailing list.

We hope, too, that a Loop presence at ECPR events for presentations and meet-the-editor sessions will also help turn readers into contributors. When ECPR returns to hosting face-to-face events, this should also provide us with a boost.

In January 2022, Johanne delivered a presentation to students at Bamberg Graduate School of Social Sciences, on the benefits of academic blogging. She discussed the Loop's publishing process, gave participants insider tips, along with

some pointers on transforming their research into standalone blogs. In February 2022, In his capacity as a founding editor of The Loop, Martin spoke at a roundtable discussing the implications of the Italian presidential election.

ECPR House Lecture series

In conjunction with ECPR's Events team, we are planning the first in a series of recorded roundtable events linked to our themed content strands.

The first such event, on 4 March 2022, will discuss our thriving Science of Democracy series. Our discussion will feature a mixture of existing and future contributors, including Matthew Flinders and Jean-Paul Gagnon. An edited version of the recording will be uploaded to ECPR's podcast channel, Political Science Matters. A second such event is planned for autumn, linked to our Illiberal Wave content strand.

Welcome, Kaez!

At the start of 2022, Publishing and Communications Co-ordinator Kaez Condon joined Kate on Loop production.

Kaez quickly proved themselves a skilled and valued member of the editorial team. Their knowledge of SEO software should ensure improved readership figures for 2022, and an extra person will help us meet our ambitious 2021 publication target.

Our targets, in numbers

Building on our 2021 figure of 218 blogs published, we are hoping this year to hit **240–250**. We want to improve the proportion of female contributors, from 38% to nearer **45%**, aiming for parity by the end of 2023. On Twitter, we are aiming to build our following to around **3,500**. ◇