The WWW – the great Abyss:

Exploring & understanding online content that promotes a location as a site for suicide
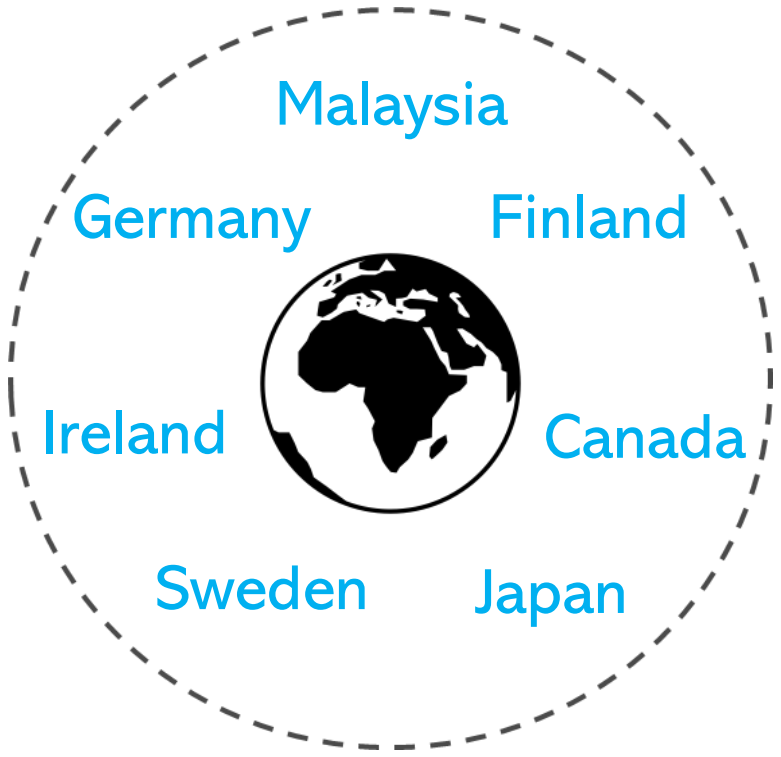
Hayley Martin, Public Health, East Sussex County Council
Dr Ian Marsh, Canterbury Christchurch University

Contact: Hayley.martin@eastsussex.gov.uk

East Sussex
County Council

Coastal location – sadly been used for suicide

Malaysia

Germany   Finland

Ireland   Canada

Sweden   Japan

80% Suicides at the site between 2006 – 2019 were non-residents

– 5% from overseas (2006-2017)

The Culture & Folklore

Suicide prevention minister joked about throwing herself off ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇

Jackie Doyle-Price said in 2014 she would "sooner jump off" the notorious suicide hotspot than defect from her party.

16:34, UK,
Wednesday 10 October 2018
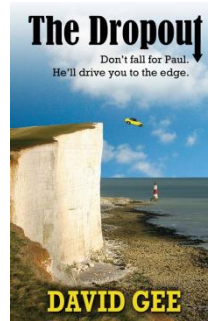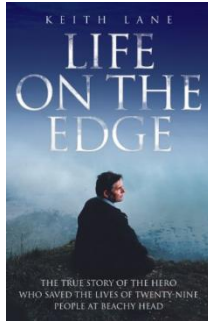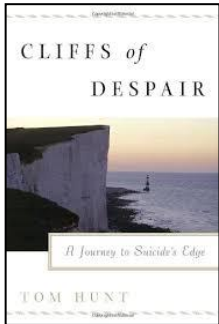
Three Men, A Woman And A Baby (1991)

Del, Trigger and Mike are in The Nag's Head trying to convince Rodney that there are people worse off.

Del Never give up on people, Rodney. I know that most of the time they don't seem to understand. But when you're in trouble and you cry out for help, some will always be there. Trigger's cousin Cyril's a perfect example. He owed 500 quid on his mortgage.
Trigger They were gonna be thrown out on the street the following day. he was very worried about it.
Mike So what happened Trig?
Trigger He drove out to ▇▇▇▇▇ ▇▇▇. Parked about five foot from the edge of the cliff.
Albert What, he was gonna drive off it?
Trigger Yeah! He just sat there for a couple of hours, his head resting on the steering wheel. People tried to talk to him out of it but he was too depressed to listen.
Del But then, and this is the what I mean about people, Rodney, they had a whip-round and got him his 500 quid.
Rodney No! Who held the whip-round?
Del All the passengers on the bus.

Sent in by **Peter Hunt**

ANOTHER QUOTE?

CLIFFS of DESPAIR

A Journey to Suicide's Edge

TOM HUNT

KEITH LANE

LIFE ON THE EDGE

THE TRUE STORY OF THE HERO WHO SAVED THE LIVES OF TWENTY-NINE PEOPLE AT BEACHY HEAD

The Dropout

Don't fall for Paul. He'll drive you to the edge.

DAVID GEE

ONLY FOOLS and HORSES

TROTTERS INDEPENDENT TRADING Co.
NEW YORK - PARIS - PECKHAM

And then there was the 'B' word!

WELCOME TO ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
TWINNED WITH
METAPHORS FOR
BREXIT.

BIRCH

12-17 APRIL 2019 | NEW STATESMAN | 61
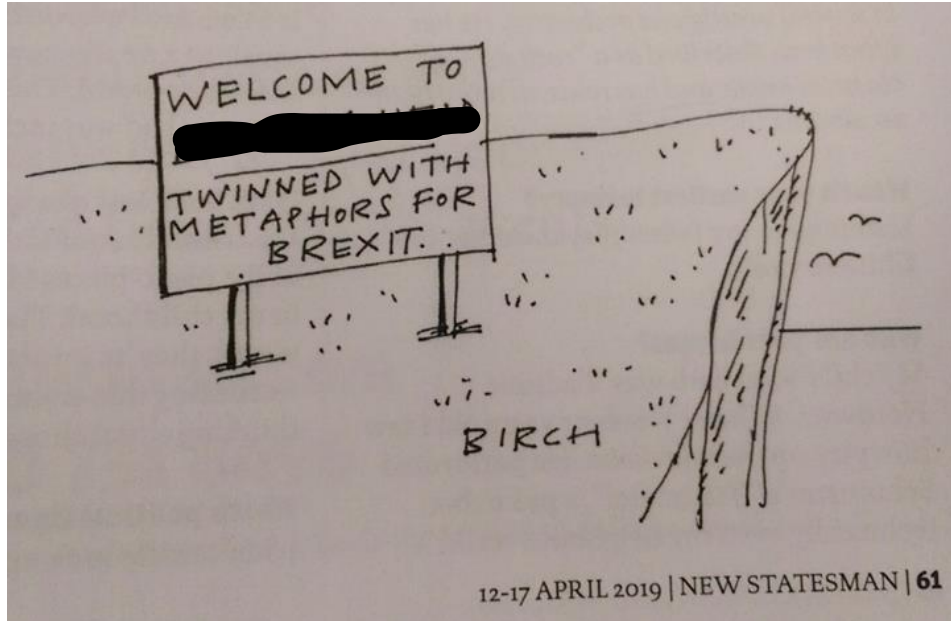
NEWS   POLITICS   VOICES   FINAL SAY   SPORT   CULTURE   VIDEO   INDY/LIFE   HAPPY LIST   INDYBEST   LONG READS   INDY100   VOUCHERS   MINDS

Macron delivered a diplomatic masterclass at the G7, and put Merkel, Johnson and Trump in the shade

After five weeks running around like a clockwork mouse shouting out insults at Brussels and European heads of government, Boris Johnson was firmly told by Macron that if he wants to lead Britain over ▮▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮ to crash on the economic rocks of a no deal in two months, then the responsibility will be his and his alone.

Mirror   NEWS ▾   POLITICS   SPORT ▾   FOOTBALL   CELEBS   TV   FILM   ROYALS   WEIRD NEWS   MORE ▾

Can you hear us yet, Boris Johnson? Brexit is over. The only question is what comes next

The issue isn't when or how Brexit will fail - it's about what to do when it does

He's even started a clock counting down on his own political career, like a lemming dangling its foot over ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ to see how far away the rocks are. Just a little further, you're nearly there...

Reframing our understanding of the issues

Rethinking our heritage coast

- ▶ Intensive collaboration programme 2019
- ▶ Design Councils *Framework for innovation*
- ▶ **5** day design-led workshop programme
- ▶ **17** organisations
- ▶ **37** people participated in workshops
- ▶ **1 key outcome: Change image of site**
  - ▶ **Reduce potentially harmful online information**

Prolific saturation of online content

Blogs – refer to location for suicide

Media reports – inquests, missing persons, suicides

Pro choice forums – users share info on accessing site for suicide

Web pages on location & suicide e.g. wikipedia

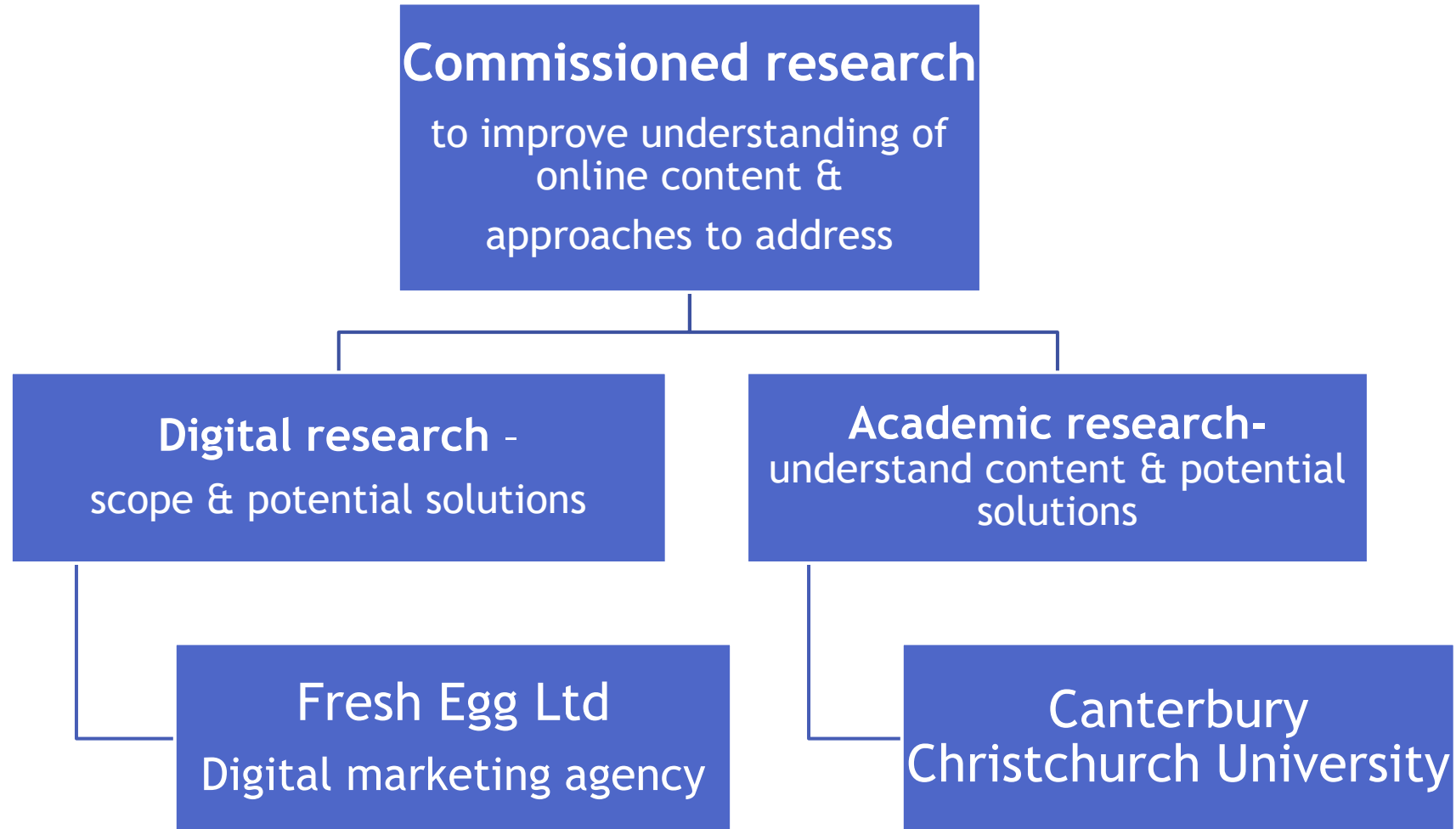**Videos** – YouTube – videos on location or suicide at location

2 potential harms
1. Reinforces location used for suicide
2. Provides info on how to access & complete suicide

Social media – share images & news stories / views

Images – associated with suicide or reinforce lethality & remoteness of cliffs

Understand more

Commissioned research

to improve understanding of online content & approaches to address

Digital research – scope & potential solutions

Academic research- understand content & potential solutions

Fresh Egg Ltd
Digital marketing agency

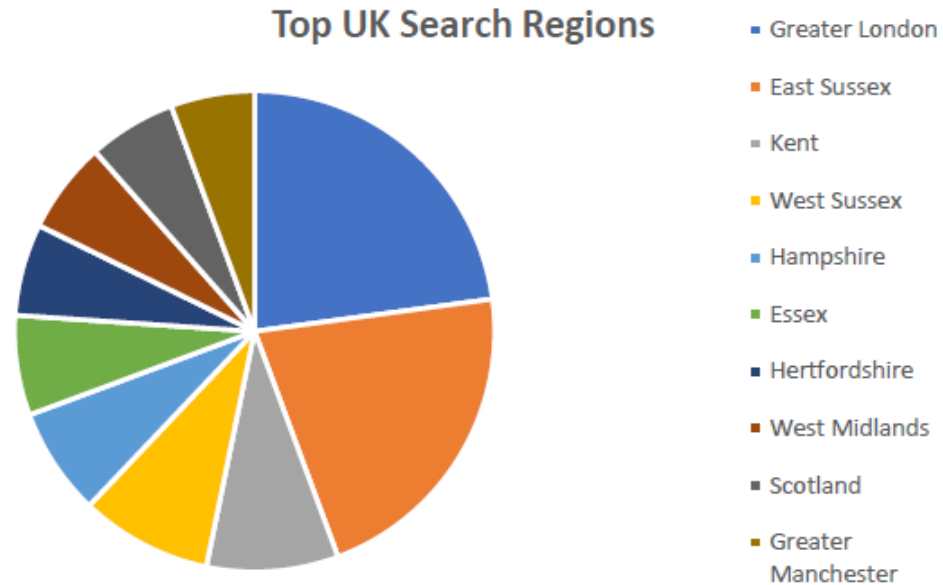Canterbury Christchurch University

Digital research overview

- Stakeholder engagement & extensive review of digital landscape
  - Samaritans online harm leads, local suicide incident response workers, public health, academic research lead.
- Challenging
  - Lots people looking for location info, not all at risk of suicide
  - People looking to end their lives at BH do not leave same digital footprint, e.g. they may:
    - Use other non traceable sources e.g. private groups, dark social sharing spaces
    - Disguise searches (avoid detection)
  - Reverse of digital marketing
    - Need to increase friction in journey – make harder to find info

fresh egg

████████ digital research project

Research & recommendations
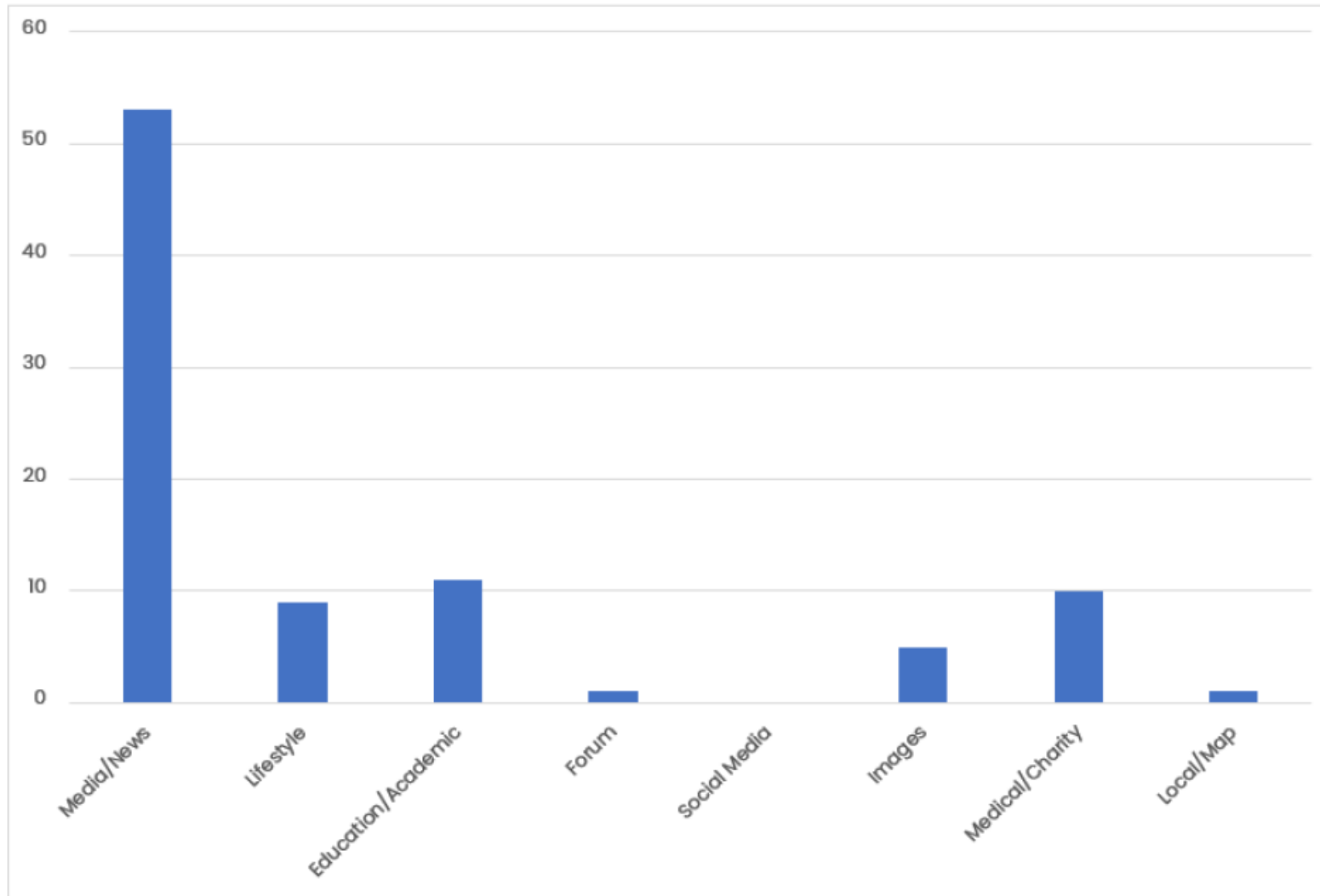
July 2020
Nate Wood & David Somerville,
Fresh Egg

Regionality of location suicide search terms
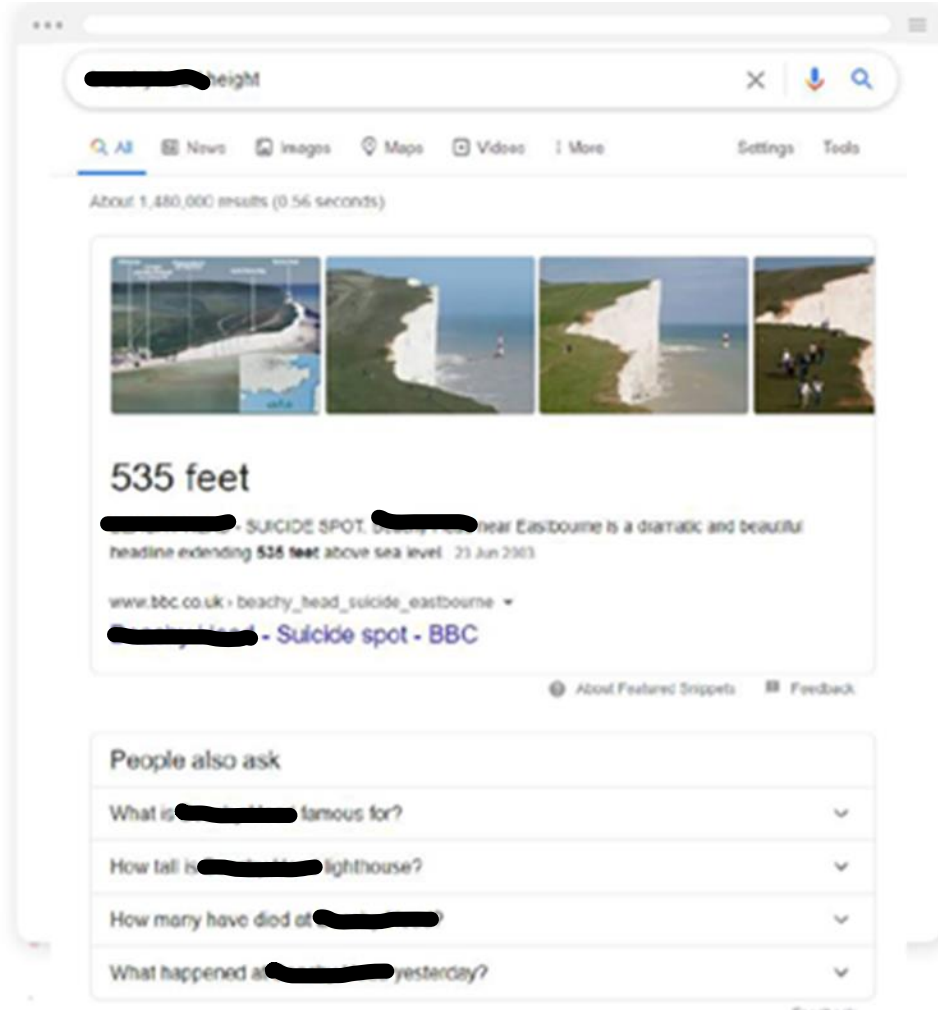
- 28,400 searches per month on location name alone

- 3,540 searches per month on location 'suicide' search terms

- 25% UK searches - Sussex, Kent & London

- Top 10 locations account for 42% average monthly search volume

- 40/51 UK regions had average monthly searches over 100

Top UK Search Regions

- Greater London
- East Sussex
- Kent
- West Sussex
- Hampshire
- Essex
- Hertfordshire
- West Midlands
- Scotland
- Greater Manchester

Type website appearing in search results

Example of issues identified

- Search engines prioritise suicide related terms
- Example - Search for location height
- Produces 9 links
  - 8 about suicide at location
- First promoted article BBC news story naming it a suicide spot

"The connection between the location & suicide is so strong & ingrained, that it appears to be reinforced even in content that has no bearing on the topic of suicide."

Research recommendations

▶ 4 areas of recommendations

1. **Content Correction & Removal**

   ▶ E.g. Edit Wikipedia location entry to demote the 'suicide spot' angle

2. **Education & Information**

   ▶ E.g. Create resources & offer training for bloggers/social media influencers/YouTubers

3. **Targeted Messaging**

   ▶ E.g. Run contextual display advertising on websites where key terms are present

4. **Platform Partnerships**

   ▶ E.g. build relationships with platforms to widen scope of existing interventions to minimise potentially harmful content

Implementing recommendations

- Challenges
  - Scale of content to review request removal/edit
  - Influencing platforms – working with existing platform policies
    - Work with Samaritans Online Harm team – established relationships with platforms
  - Some recommendations not without risk
    - E.g. To tackle misinformation – use content to exaggerate the capabilities for detection, number of wardens etc
    - Consider in academic research
- Plan to implement most feasible