



Rhodes Forum on Technology & Society: Innovation Challenge

AI for Abundance: Designing Futures of Flourishing

Overview

The annual Rhodes Forum on Technology and Society will take place on 8 November 2025 in Oxford, bringing together global thinkers and doers at the intersection of science, technology, and society.

As part of the Forum, the Kevin Xu Innovation Challenge invites bold, early-stage ideas that use AI to build systems of abundance—reimagining access, opportunity, and well-being in a world too often shaped by scarcity.

This year, we are launching two tracks for participation:

- ◆ Public Interest Track – for solutions aimed at equitable social benefit, governance, education, sustainability, or community empowerment
- ◆ Commercial Track – for market-driven solutions that demonstrate both business potential and social responsibility

Shortlisted teams will present at the Forum and compete for up to £25,000 in non-dilutive funding, with dedicated mentorship and feedback from a panel of experts across disciplines.

The Kevin Xu Innovation Challenge

How might we build AI systems that increase human agency and dignity—not by automating away choice, but by amplifying it?

Abundance isn't just about more stuff—it's about more meaningful time, more trusted knowledge, more generative relationships. We welcome ideas that help people make decisions with greater context, pursue goals with greater clarity, and interact with systems that respect their autonomy and values.

Some possibilities might include:

- A public-interest AI that helps displaced communities access legal and housing resources
- A for-profit platform using AI to reduce food waste by connecting local supply to need
- A tool that supports smallholder farmers with regenerative agriculture advice
- A childcare matchmaking and co-op coordination platform that uses AI to connect families with shared values, availability, and geography to form rotating care pods or micro-centers.

We welcome applicants from across sectors, geographies, and disciplines. Ideas should be early-stage (pre-product is fine!) and demonstrate a clear theory of impact—whether social, commercial, or both.

Who Can Apply and Timeline

This challenge is open to: Rhodes Scholars, Equitech Fellows, Schmidt Science Fellows, Atlantic Fellows, Next Horizon Scholars,

We welcome interdisciplinary teams and encourage applicants from any sector or background—technical or not. Ideas can be in their earliest stages.

Key Dates

- ➔ Applications Due: July 30, 2025
- ➔ Virtual Workshops (Required): Sept 3 · Sept 10 · Sept 17 · Sept 24
- ➔ In-Person Pitch & Forum: November 8, 2025 (Oxford)
Travel support available if needed

We encourage boldness, collaboration, and a clear commitment to using AI as a tool to serve people, communities, and the planet.

If you have an idea that's early, unconventional, or imperfect—but rooted in care and ambition—we want to hear from you.

 Apply by July 30.

We can't wait to see what you imagine.