



Kingston University's Big Read goes digital with the Pigeonhole

Global book club and digital reading platform The Pigeonhole has teamed up with Kingston University to digitally serialise this year's Kingston University Big Read choice, Matt Haig's *The Humans*.

The Kingston University Big Read scheme sends a limited-edition copy of a book to all new undergraduate and postgraduate students, so they can start the year as part of a shared reading scheme – and become part of the Kingston community before they even arrive. The partnership with The Pigeonhole will allow up to a further 10,000 members of staff and existing students to join the scheme and receive a free digital version of the book.

From 16 September, The Pigeonhole will be serialising *The Humans* in ten digital instalments. The unique Kingston University Big Read edition will include extras such as links, images, music and videos, as well as an in-text comments function that allows readers to discuss the book with each other within the digital margins of the book itself.

The Kingston University Big Read scheme, which is based on similar projects in the US, was set up by Kingston University in 2015 to create a community through shared reading. Last year saw more than 13,000 copies of Nick Hornby's *About a Boy* given to students and staff. The 2016 choice is *The Humans*, and, this time, in addition to the circulation of a special Big Read edition and a series of associated events for both the University and the local Kingston community, the Pigeonhole edition will create a community online.

Vice-Chancellor Professor Julius Weinberg described *The Humans* as a choice that was bound to stimulate plenty of discussion across all the University's campuses. "I hope students and staff will really engage with it and the issues it raises – that is what the Big Read is all about," he said.

Author Matt Haig spoke of his delight at being associated with the Kingston University Big Read. "I'm incredibly happy that *The Humans* has been chosen, it's such an honour to be part of such an initiative," he said. "I'd have loved the idea of being part of something like the Big Read when I was at university."

Jenny Todd, Publisher at Canongate, said, "The digital serialisation of Matt's wonderful novel is an exciting and innovative development of the Kingston University Big Read scheme and we are delighted to be involved."

Jacob Cockcroft, Founder and CEO of The Pigeonhole, is extremely enthusiastic about the digital start-up's collaboration with Kingston University: "From the beginning, the Pigeonhole has been all about bringing people together through books, to use the power of stories to create shared experiences, online and offline. Discussing books brings so much good, and of course helps build empathy – which in a university environment with so many new faces together for the first time is a wonderful thing. This really is a fantastic and inspiring partnership and we are delighted to be able to help enhance the Big Read initiative."

Associate Professor Alison Baverstock, Co-founder of MA Publishing at Kingston University, and now Director of the Kingston University Big Read, commented: "Working with The Pigeonhole enables us both to create and be part of an online discussion involving our whole community, students and staff. We are really interested to see how this can work alongside the print edition and events – as well as explore the implications this has for our learning environment. Exciting times!"

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