

Topos Strategic Plan

2025–2028



Vision

A world where humanity flourishes through interconnected systems and processes that enable cooperation on complex issues with integral consideration of the holistic societal impact

Mission

Shape technology for public benefit by advancing sciences of connection and integration

Strategic Plan

To pursue this mission, Topos works through four interdependent pillars in order to build a robust institution that vertically integrates research, technology development, and public service.

1. **Pioneer a new mathematical systems science** that rigorously addresses fundamental questions about the nature of communication, cooperation, and collective sense-making.
2. **Deploy this science through public-interest software tools** that are accessible, transparent, and open-source, with the purpose of enabling cooperation amongst diverse groups on complex, systemic issues.
3. **Ensure public benefit from this new technology** through direct lines of public service and deep, intentional reflection on the societal impact of our work.
4. **Nurture a healthy and sustainable institution** capable of long term focus on our mission.

Each pillar is given equal emphasis and is tightly intertwined with all others: we can only achieve our mission through success in all four.

Pillar 1: *Pioneer a mathematical systems science*

A. Establish new, practical understandings of systems

We will do excellent mathematical research guided by (1) our personal senses of meaning and fun, (2) questions grounded in practice, and (3) our lineage of category theory-based research into communication, cooperation, and collective sense-making. Negotiation of tradeoffs between these principles will be informed by dialogue with our engineering and social impact staff, coordinated by an internal scientific strategy team, and validated by an external group of world-recognised experts.

B. Be a thriving research neighborhood

We will establish robust connections between Topos researchers. These connections will be supported by events (including: seminars, retreats, and regular meetings) and practices (including: bias towards in-person work, grassroots information flow, and owned sense-making) in service towards common-knowledge of the motivation, technical aspects, and progress of each researcher's projects.

C. Build meaningful connections with the wider world

Topos will be a peer institution with top mathematical research groups around the world. We will continue to share and validate our research in top-tier, peer-reviewed, open-access journals, conferences, and seminar venues. We will seek out practitioners, mathematicians, and students who have an affinity for our research, through avenues such as public events, pedagogical materials, and visiting researcher programs. We will invest in productive collaborations that are based in mutual respect, listening, and shared purpose.

Pillar 2: *Develop new tools for navigating complexity*

A. Build practical, user-oriented computational tools

Based on our mathematical systems research and in dialogue with user communities, we will create publicly available and open source computational tools for co-authoring and activating data, models, and knowledge. These tools will help people express and evolve their ideas, exchange them with each other, and collectively make sense of the world. They will be accessible to and empowering for a general audience, and not require any specific knowledge of advanced mathematics.

B. Foster partner communities that use our tools to address societal issues

We will collaborate with practitioners to demonstrate the efficacy of our tools in solving large-scale systems problems in at least two domains of strategic interest, determined by both positive societal impact and pathways to sustainability of the tool. Examples of potential such domains include public health/epidemiology and scientific research. By mid-2026, a Topos-developed tool will have a hundred users who use the tool at least once a week as an essential component of their workflows.

C. Make technologies that are aligned with and empower people

We will design technical, financial, cultural, and governance structures that ensure our tools are aligned with the people and communities that use them. Concretely, we will ensure that users control their data and can extend our software. We will develop a financial sustainability plan for our technology that aligns our interests with our users', avoiding practices such as vendor lock-in and ad targeting.

Pillar 3: *Forge robust prosocial and ethical practices*

A. Listen carefully to the partner communities we seek to serve

We will continue to develop robust dialogue and collaborations with those working directly on matters of pressing social concern, such as public health, climate change, medical and scientific discovery, inequality and poverty, and risks from emerging technologies. These relationships will inform and reshape our research questions and technology design, speed adoption, and provide our core mechanism for validating whether our research is serving society.

B. Embody active reflection on societal impacts in the research process

We will nurture a culture of open discussion, reflection, and grounding in prosocial values that centres the social impacts of our work. Through this culture we will proactively draw internal and external expertise in societal impacts of science and technology into our research and development processes. The resulting insights will be used to steer our work towards the pursuit of positive social impact, and away from incidental negative impact.

C. Lead new standards for prosocial and ethical practice in technology organisations

We will be a leading voice in the global conversation around technology for public benefit, by exemplifying a new model for integrating ethical practices into the research, development, and deployment of new technologies. In particular, we will publicly and transparently report our work developing our culture, values, policies, revenue model, and incentive structures.

Pillar 4: *Nurture a thriving organization*

A. Cultivate a cohesive, brilliant team with clarity of purpose

We will make Topos a home for capable, caring, and ambitious people to achieve their full potential in serving society through their work. To achieve this, we will clearly articulate our mission, values, and strategy, and build a strongly aligned team led boldly in their pursuit, vastly expanding each of our capabilities through our collaboration. We will transparently respect all contributions to Topos, including those less traditionally visible, and support the flourishing of each team member.

B. Build principled, transparent, and effective organizational structures that continuously improve

We will continuously evaluate and improve the structures we use to work together, keeping pace with the evolving nature of our organisation and the wider world. These structures will facilitate timely communication, transparent decision-making, clarity in each role, and empower leadership embedded throughout the team. Our team's design, skills, and staffing will deeply respect the importance of lived experience and humility about the incompleteness of each individual's perspective as a crucial component of engaging with the impacts of our work.

C. Ensure financial health and stability

We will develop a diverse revenue mix and capable fundraising team to provide the incentives and resources required for focus on our mission, alignment with our values, and significant social impact. This will include a balance of philanthropic gifts, government and industry grants, and program-related earned income.

D. Establish robust organizational oversight

We will continue to strengthen the boards of the Topos US and UK entities to form a cohesive, engaged, and capable governing body that provides strategic, financial, and legal oversight, assists with fundraising, and mentors senior leadership staff. We will also continue to proactively seek external audit and evaluation, across financial and administrative operations, research program quality and social impacts, and diversity and representation in our team.