



ECREA Postconference

Digital media and information disorders: Theorizing and investigating influence operations, impact and contextual factors

Where?

Hybrid format

When?

Monday October 24th, 2022

Topic

During the pandemic we have experienced a hitherto unprecedented international focus on digital information disorders such as misinformation, disinformation and conspiracy theories both in policies and scientific contributions across research fields. With among others Lazarsfeld and Merton's (1948) work on propaganda, communication studies have a strong tradition in theorizing and methodologically operationalizing empirical studies on how mediated propaganda affects user behavior and attitudes with central notions such as influentials and opinion leaders. The notion of 'limited effect' has sparked a renewed heated debate on whether this transfers into weak/no effect or under what limited contextual conditions new forms of digital propaganda might actually have quite powerful effects. Digital media affects the distinction between mediated and unmediated life and collapses them into an 'onlife' that provides new theoretical and empirical contexts for effect and influence studies. Recent studies on digital social media influence have pointed to contextual (e.g. platform) factors to be central for the operationalization of communication-style influence (Malhotra & Galletta, 2003; Gruzd & Wellmann, 2014; Goggin & Petakovic, 2014) measured on different levels such as network visibility, in and outgroup social cues, rhetorical and emotional persuasion, and inauthentic behavior such as strategic communication overload, flagging and boosting from e.g. bots, sock puppets, junk news and click farms (Bastos & Mercea, 2019; Howard, 2020). This post-conference invites scholars from around the world and different disciplines to bring forward research focusing on theories and/or empirical studies on digital information disorders e.g., its complex conceptual and contested nature, its contextual factors and associated influence operations, effects and impacts and potential prevention strategies such as digital literacy, fact checking operations and other counter propaganda strategies. We welcome contributions from a variety of topics such as Covid-19, Russian-Ukrainian war, climate change, anti vaxxer social movements etc. The post-conference will furthermore focus on nations and regions as contextual factors.

This postconference is partly funded by EDMO that, together with its national or multinational hubs, aims at countering disinformation and analyzing the impact of disinformation on societies and democracies both at national and European level. The postconference is organized by DATALAB at Aarhus University, which is the academic research partner within EDMO and also leads NORDIS, the Nordic EDMO hub. During the postconference, researchers from the EDMO hubs, as well as other researchers in the field, will present their research.

Structure & Provisional Program

The post-conference will be structured as two-track event taking place in Aarhus, whereas the sessions will be organized hybrid - virtually and in person - to allow for attendance from abroad. There will be one keynote, common sessions and common breaks for participants from both tracks to engage with each other.

Time	Session Track 1	Session Track 2
9:30-9:50	Welcome & Introduction by Anja Bechmann	
9:50-11:20	Session 1A: Media & Platforms 1	Session 1B: Concepts & Context 1
11:20-12:00	Keynote by Axel Bruns	
13:00 -14:00	Session 2: Ukraine & fact-checking	
14:05-15:35	Session 3A: Media & Platforms 2	Session 3B: Concepts & Context 2
15:50-17:20	Session 4: COVID-19	
17:20-17:30	Concluding Remarks by Anja Bechmann	

Participants

The post-conference assembles international junior and senior researchers from various fields. The participants will be:

José Alarcón – U.N.E.D Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Spanien
Daniel Angus - DMRC; Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Daniel Bach – Roskilde University, Denmark
Aukse Balčytienė - Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania
Anja Bechmann – Aarhus University, Denmark
Benedetta Brevini – Sydney University, Australia
Axel Bruns - DMRC; Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Kilian Buehling – Freie Universität Berlin, Germany
Marina Charquero-Ballester – Aarhus University, Denmark
Petra de Place Bak – Aarhus University, Denmark
Hossein Derakhshan – London School of Economics and Political Science, UK
Lorenzo Federico – LUISS, Italy
Hanna Gawel – Jagiellonian University, Poland
Sofya Glazunova – DMRC; Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Tuomas Heikkilä – University of Helsinki, Finland
Mathias Holm Tveen – Aarhus University, Denmark
Minna Horowitz – University of Helsinki, Finland
Ling-Yi Huang – Mid Sweden University, Sweden
Edward Hurcombe - DMRC; Queensland University of Technology, Australia
Sirrku Kotilainen – Tampere University, Finland
Rebecca Kyser – University of Illinois, US
Alexandre Leroux – Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium
Jakob Linea Jensen – Aarhus University, Denmark
Grégoire Lits - UCLouvain Observatory for Research on Media and Journalism, Belgium
René Petersen – Aalborg University, Denmark
Mervi Pantti – University of Helsinki, Finland
Maximilian Schlüter – Aarhus University, Denmark
Guna Spurava – Tampere University, Finland
Phillip Stenmann Baun – Aarhus University, Denmark
Anna Sytnik - St. Petersburg State University, Russia
Alexei Tsinovoi – Aarhus University, Denmark
Jessica Walter – Aarhus University, Denmark
Zhiwei Wang – University of Edinburgh, UK

Detailed Program

Time (CEST)	Session Track 1	Session Track 2
9:50-11:20	Session 1A: Media & Platforms 1 Presenters: Hurcombe/ Glazunova/ Balčytienė	Session 1B: Concepts & Context 1 Presenters: Wang/ Bruns/ Derakhshan/ Alarcón
11:20-12:00	Keynote by Axel Bruns	
13:00 -14:00	Session 2: Ukraine & fact-checking: Presenters: Gawel/ Walter/ Federico	
14:05-15:35	Session 3A: Media & Platforms 2 Presenters: Tsinovoi/ Bach/ Buehling/ Heikkilä	Session 3B: Concepts & Context 2 Presenters: Jensen/ Spurava/ Leroux
15:50-17:20	Session 4: COVID-19 Presenters: Charquero Ballester/ Lits/ Kyser/ Huang	
17:20-17:30	Concluding Remarks by Anja Bechmann	

Note: presenters only; order within sessions can still change, all hybrid sessions

Keynote: Axel Bruns: The role of mainstream media as amplifiers of misinformation

Session 1A: Media & Platforms 1

Edward Hurcombe, Daniel Angus, Axel Bruns, Ehsan Dehghan, & Laura Vodden:

“Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior”: How Meta shapes the discussion of mis/disinformation on Facebook

Sofya Glazunova, Anna Sytnik, Dennis Leeftink: Conspiracy, Propaganda, or ‘Fake News’? Understanding the Digital Public Response to RT Coverage of COVID-19

Auksė Balčytienė, Minna Horowitz, & Mervi Pantti: Similar and different: Resilience to online disinformation in Finland and Lithuania

Session 1B: Concepts & Context 1

Zhiwei Wang: Being Chinese Online – Discursive (Re)production of Internet-Mediated Chinese National Identity

Aljoshia Karim Schapals & Axel Bruns: Responding to ‘Fake News’: Journalistic perceptions of and reactions to a delegitimising force

Hossein Derakhshan: Disinfo Wars: a taxonomy of information warfare

José Alarcón: Digital disorders versus The Generalized Other

Session 2: Ukraine & fact-checking

Hanna Gawel: Birds of a feather boycott together – strength of temporary homophily cyber voice in social media in the time of unrest

Jessica Walter: Emotional responses to fact-checking in the Ukraine war: A cross-country comparison of social media content

Lorenzo Federico: Network and semantic analysis of the dissemination of Italian fact-checking on Twitter

Session 3A: Media & Platforms 2

Alexei Tsinoi & Anders Kristian Munk: In the eye of the Twitter storm: the topologies of online (in)visibility in the remediation of the 2019 Eurovision Song Contest

Daniel Bach, Phillip Stenmann Baun, & Maximilian Schlüter: What 4chan’s reading of the Ukrainian war can teach us about far-right information disorders

Kilian Buehling: Affording Deletion: Message ephemerality on Telegram and its implications for the research of conspiracist communities

Tuomas Heikkilä, Salla-Maaria Laaksonen and Matti Pohjonen: Covid-19 content moderation and platform accountability

Session 3B: Concepts & Context 2

Jakob Linaa Jensen & Benedetta Brevini: How digital feudalism creates information disorders

Guna Spurava & Sirkku Kotilainen: Young people as empirical experts of research in the age of information crisis

Alexandre Leroux, Matteo Galiolo: Distrust and contention - Bridging actors within a polarized mobilization space

Session 4: COVID-19

Grégoire Lits : Anxiety, panic and (social) media effect during the pandemic. Insight from a multi-wave survey (2020-2022) in French-speaking Belgium

Marina Charquero-Ballester: Public emotions in the Nordic Twitter during the second wave of the COVID-19 crisis

Rebecca Kyser: Images as Tools of Information Disorders

Lingyi Huang: Do you hear my voice? Different framings of COVID-19 children’s vaccines between the mainstream media and social media in Taiwan