

Evolving Technological, Legal and Social Solutions to Counter Disinformation in Social Media - A Workshop

Committee

Joan Donovan

Co-Chair

Joan Donovan, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the College of Communication at Boston University.

She is a leading public scholar and disinformation researcher, specializing in media manipulation, political movements, critical internet studies, and online extremism.

Formerly, Donovan was Research Director of the Harvard Kennedy School's Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy and the Director of the Technology and Social Change project (TaSC). Through TaSC, Donovan explored how media manipulation is a means to control public conversation, derail democracy, and disrupt society. TaSC conducts research, develops methods, and facilitates workshops for journalists, policy makers, technologists, and civil society organizations on how to detect, document, and debunk media manipulation campaigns. Dr. Donovan submitted a disclosure letter in November 2023 to Harvard University alleging that Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government ended the TaSC project at the university due in part to her criticism of the institution's relationship with Facebook.

Donovan is co-author of the book *Meme Wars, The Untold Story of the Online Battles Upending Democracy in America*. Her research can be found in academic peer-reviewed journals such as *Social Media + Society*, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *Information, Communication & Society*, and *Social Studies of Science*. She is a columnist at MIT Technology Review, a regular contributor to the New York Times, The Guardian, NPR, and PBS, and is quoted often on radio and in print.

Donovan has laid out the philosophical frameworks for how to research, report on, and understand this moment in internet history and American politics. Her conceptualizations of strategic silence, meme wars, and media manipulation campaigns provide crucial frameworks for understanding how the US got to this point. She coined many of the terms that the disinformation research field and mainstream media use to understand technology's impact on society.

Saul Perlmutter

Co-Chair

Saul Perlmutter, Ph.D., is a 2011 Nobel Laureate, sharing the prize in physics for the discovery of the accelerating expansion of the Universe. He is a professor of physics at the University of California, Berkeley, where he holds the Franklin W. and Karen Weber Dabby Chair, and a senior scientist at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. He is the leader of the international Supernova Cosmology Project, and director of the Berkeley Institute for Data Science and executive director of the Berkeley Center for Cosmological Physics. His undergraduate degree was from Harvard and his PhD from UC Berkeley. In addition to other awards and honors, he is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and the American Academy of Arts, and Sciences and a fellow of the American Physical Society and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Since 2021, he has served as a member on the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology for the Biden-Harris Administration. Perlmutter has also written popular articles and has appeared in numerous PBS, Discovery Channel, and BBC documentaries. His interest in teaching scientific-style critical thinking for scientists and non-scientists alike led to Berkeley Sense and Sensibility and Science and Physics & Music.

Amelia Acker

Member

Amelia Acker is Associate Professor of Information at the University of Texas at Austin, where she directs the Critical Data Studies Lab. Acker researches how data is represented and managed over time in information infrastructures. She has researched how bad actors manipulate metadata and web archives to create disinformation campaigns that go undetected by content moderation algorithms. Acker's research has been funded by the Institute for Museum and Library Services, the National Science Foundation, Sloan Foundation and Ford Foundation. She received both her Ph.D. and M.L.I.S. training in information from the University of California, Los Angeles. Before joining the University of Texas she worked as an archivist and librarian.

Hany Farid

Member

Hany Farid is a Professor at the University of California, Berkeley with a joint appointment in Electrical Engineering and Computer Sciences and the School of Information. His research focuses on digital forensics, forensic science, misinformation, image analysis, and human perception. He received his undergraduate degree in Computer Science and Applied Mathematics from the University of Rochester in 1989, his M.S. in Computer Science from SUNY Albany in 1992, and his Ph.D. in Computer Science from the University of Pennsylvania in 1997. Following a two-year post-doctoral fellowship in Brain and Cognitive Sciences at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he joined the faculty at Dartmouth College in 1999 where he remained until 2019. He is the recipient of an Alfred P. Sloan Fellowship, a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship, and is a Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors.

Beth Mara Goldberg

Member

Beth Mara Goldberg is the Head of Research and Development at Jigsaw, a Google unit that explores threats to open societies. Goldberg is also a Senior Fellow and Lecturer at Yale's Jackson School of Global Affairs where she teaches graduate courses on misinformation studies. At Jigsaw, she leads an interdisciplinary team of researchers who investigate online harms from disinformation to violent extremism, then test novel mitigation strategies. Goldberg works closely with academics, civil society, and practitioners to advance applied research on how cognitive and behavioral interventions can reduce harms online. Alongside anthropologists, she has led ethnographic studies of conspiracy theorists, harassers, Islamists, and former white supremacists globally to inform tech products and policies.

Prior to joining Jigsaw, Goldberg managed programs for the U.S. Department of State with Freedom House advancing digital security, investigative journalism and information access in authoritarian regimes. She is a Fellow of the Zeit-Stiftung Program on Global Governance and Senior Fellow with Humanity in Action.

Goldberg graduated from Yale with an M.B.A. and M.A. in global affairs, where she conducted ethnographic research on the advent of content moderation as a fellow at Yale Law School. She holds a BS in International Political Science from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.

Mark Hansen

Member

Mark Hansen is currently the East Coast Director of the Brown Institute for Media Innovation, a joint venture of Columbia Journalism School and Stanford's School of Engineering and is a Professor at Columbia Journalism School. He joined Columbia over a decade ago and teaches courses in computational and data journalism. An investigation that started in one of his classes examined the bot economy behind the sale of fake followers on Twitter – it became a front-page story in the New York Times and was part of a package of stories that won the 2019 Polk Award for National Reporting and was a finalist for a 2019 Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting. Hansen received a Ph.D. in Statistics from the University of California, Berkeley, and a B.S. in Applied Mathematics from the University of California, Davis.

Eric Horvitz

Member

Eric Horvitz is the Chief Scientific Officer of Microsoft. His research has centered on challenges with machine learning, reasoning, and action amidst the complexities of the open world. His efforts and collaborations have included the fielding of AI technologies in healthcare, transportation, aerospace, and computing applications and services. His contributions to AI have been recognized by the Feigenbaum Prize, Allen Newell Award, and induction into the CHI Academy. He serves on the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST). He has served as president of the AAAI and on advisory boards at the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, and the Office of Naval Research. He has been elected fellow of the Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Association for Computing Machinery, National Academy of Engineering, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Philosophical Society. He earned an M.D. and Ph.D. at Stanford University and a bachelors in biophysics at Binghamton University.

Aziz Z. Huq

Member

Aziz Z. Huq is a scholar of U.S. and comparative constitutional law at the University of Chicago. He has worked on topics ranging from democratic backsliding to regulating AI. His award-winning scholarly work is published in several books and leading law reviews, social science, and political science journals. He has also written for the Washington Post, the New York Times, Dissent, The Nation, and many other non-specialist publications. In 2015, he received the Graduating Students Award for Teaching Excellence. He has an active pro bono practice. He is now on the board of the American Constitution Society, the New Press, and the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois. Before joining the Law School, he worked as counsel and then director of the Brennan Center's Liberty and National Security Project, Senior Consultant Analyst for the International Crisis Group, and as a law clerk for Judge Robert D. Sack of the US Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, and also for Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg of the Supreme Court of the United States.

Susan S. Silbey

Member

Susan S. Silbey, Ph.D., holds the Leon and Anne Goldberg Chair in Humanities, Anthropology and Sociology, and is Professor of Behavioral and Policy Sciences in the Sloan School of Management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where she teaches in the programs in Work and Organizational Studies and Economic Sociology. From 2017-2019, she served as Chair of the MIT Faculty.

Silbey is interested in the governance, regulatory and audit processes in complex organizations. Her current research focuses on the creation of management systems for containing risks, including ethical lapses, as well as environment, health and safety hazards. In addition, for fifteen years, she has been part of a team following a national panel of engineers from college to the workplace.

Her award-winning articles and books include “Why do biologists and chemists do safety differently? The Reproduction of Cultural Variation through Pragmatic Regulation,” (2021); “Accountability Infrastructures: Pragmatic Regulation Inside Organizations,” (2021); “I’m Not A Feminist, But... The Hegemony of a Meritocratic Ideology and The Limits of Critique Among Women in Engineering,” (2018); “Subversive Stories and Hegemonic Tales: Toward A Sociology of Narrative” (1995); “Narrating Social Structure: Stories of Resistance to Legal Authority” (2003); “Governing the Gap: Forging Safe Science Through Relational Regulation,” (2011); *The Common Place of Law: Stories From Everyday Life* (1998). Other books include *In Litigation: Do the Haves Still Come Out Ahead* (2003); *Law and Science (I): Epistemological, Evidentiary and Relational Engagements* (2008), and *Law and Science (II): Regulation of Property, Practices and Products* (2008).

Silbey is the recipient of numerous prizes and awards including the James R. Killian Jr. Faculty Achievement Award, (2019-2020); Institut des Etudes Avancees, Paris; Russell Sage Foundation (2014-2015); Stanton Wheeler Prize for Mentoring (2015); John Simon Guggenheim Foundation (2009); Doctor Honoris Causa from Ecole Normale Supérieure Cachan in Paris (2006); and the Harry Kalven Jr. Prize for advancing the sociology of law (2009). She is Past President of the Law & Society Association, and a fellow of the American Academy of Political and Social Science.

Kate Starbird

Member

Kate Starbird is an Associate Professor at the Department of Human Centered Design & Engineering (HCDE) at the University of Washington (UW) and is currently the Director of the UW Center for an Informed Public. Dr. Starbird’s research sits at the intersection of human-computer interaction and the emerging field of crisis informatics, i.e., the study of the how social media and other information-communication technologies are used during crisis events. Currently, her work focuses on the production and spread of online rumors, misinformation, and disinformation during crises — including natural disasters, political disruptions, and a global pandemic. In particular, she investigates the participatory nature of online disinformation campaigns, exploring both top-down and bottom-up dynamics. Starbird received her B.S. in Computer Science from Stanford (1997) and her Ph.D. in Technology, Media and Society from the University of Colorado (2012).

Steven R. Kendall

Staff Officer