False Webs Network Seminar

Fact Checking and Fake News on Social Media

Edinburgh Napier UNIVERSITY
Centre for Mind, Creativity & Environment Research (CEDAR)
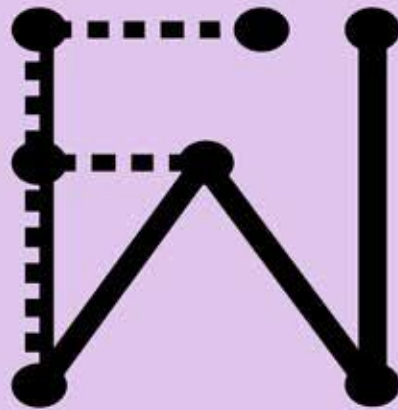
**2nd Seminar
26 September
10:30-15:30**

**The Library of Mistakes
33A Melville St Ln,
Edinburgh EH3 7QB**

Getting There

The Library of Mistakes is at 33A Melville St Ln, Edinburgh EH3 7QB in Edinburgh West End. This is very close to the West End Tram Stop and Haymarket Train Station, and is easily accessed by the 13, 19, 22, 36, 37, and 113 buses. On-street parking is available, but is metered hourly.

Seminar Details

This seminar, hosted at the Library of Mistakes, will begin at 10:30, though coffee will be available from 10. This year, we have six speakers and one panel discussion timeslot, broken up by Lunch. Talks will be around 15 minutes, with time for Q&A.

Seminar Schedule

10:30 – Introduction (Marina Wimmer)

Speakers Slot 1

10:50 – David Robertson – Detecting and Sharing Fake News: an Individual Differences Approach

11:15 – Anna Talley – This is Not Breaking News: A Short History of The Design of Information Disorder

11:40 – Paul Reisthuis – "That's just like, your opinion, man": the Illusory Truth Effect on Opinions
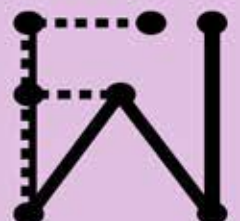
12:00-1:30 – Lunch

1:30-2:30 – Forum Discussion - Outlining Network Recommendations

Speakers Slot 2

2:30 – Pip Brown – Inconstant Vigilance: Adolescent Selective Trust in Online Information

2:50 – Mansi Pattni – Enhancing Human Detection of Real and AI-Generated Hyperrealistic Faces

3:10 – Ted Carlson Webster – A Neuroscience Perspective on Suspicion from Factchecking

Detailed Schedule

10:30 - Introduction (Marina Wimmer)

Speakers Slot 1

10:50 - Speaker: David Robertson, University of Strathclyde
        Collaborators: Mark Shepard, Narisong Huhe, and Tony Anderson

Title: Detecting and Sharing Fake News: An Individual Differences Approach

Here we present the findings from some recent work which has focused on assessing whether individual differences in cognitive measures are associated with fake news detection ability and the news sharing propensity.

11:15 - Anna Talley, The University of Edinburgh

Title: This is Not Breaking News: A Short History
        of the Design of Information Disorder

In this talk, I will provide a broad history of the design of information disorder, exploring the production, distribution and form of "fake news", from yellow journals to pink slime websites. The talk will focus on production technologies and distribution strategies, with specific reference to the economic forces driving information disorder, and break down the visual language of information disorder with case studies from nineteenth-century sensationalist papers and twenty-first century "fake news" websites. With an eye towards policymaking, the talk will conclude with recommendations of how design might be incorporated into policy initiatives to combat information disorder, including media literacy programmes and changes in communication systems.

11:40 - Paul Riesthuis, Maastricht University
        Collaborator: Josh Woods

Title: "'That's just like, your opinion, man": the illusory truth effect on opinions'

Through the constant exposure of information on social media platforms such as X (twitter), it has become increasingly important for people to assess what information is trustworthy and what should be discarded. Interestingly, research has shown that repeated information tends to be regarded as more truthful than new information, also known as the Illusory Truth Effect. In the presentation, I will show recent findings that show that such an illusory truth effect can be found for true information, misinformation, and (social political) opinion statements but that the manner in which the information is encoded is crucial.

12:00-1:30 – Lunch hosted at a nearby restaurant

1:30-2:30 – Forum Discussion: Outlining our network's recommendations

This forum-style discussion will be useful in going over our recommendation document and creating an outline for our future output of a policy paper for the Scottish Government in 2025

Speakers Slot 2

2:30 – Speaker: Pip Brown, Warwick University

Title: Inconstant Vigilance: Adolescent Selective Trust in Online Information The development of epistemic vigilance towards online information is crucial for adolescents in the context of widespread online 'information pollution'. My doctoral research focuses on trust decisions between online sources. While pre-adolescents have demonstrated selective mistrust of webpages with typographical errors, this is not the case for webpages with semantic errors. We use a selective trust task to investigate whether this pattern of results changes through adolescence. In this task, participants read two pairs of sources about different scientific topics, each pair containing a webpage with either semantic or typographical errors. When asked a novel factual question, which source participants draw the answer from indicates the presence or absence of selective trust in the source. I will discuss findings from our first experiment and their implications for our understanding of adolescent epistemic vigilance. Additionally, in view of the fact that dialogic collaboration helps buttress adolescent reasoning skills, I will also present some initial findings from our second experiment, in which we investigate collaborative selective trust judgements through the use of online dyads.

2:50 – Speaker: Mansi Pattni, University of Southampton
Collaborators: Philip Higham and Tina Seabrooke

Title: Enhancing Human Detection of Real and AI-Generated
Hyperrealistic Faces

Sophisticated artificial intelligence (AI) systems can now produce realistic images of synthetic human faces, making it difficult for people to distinguish them from images of real human faces. Indeed, participants sometimes perceive these synthetic images as more real than images of real faces, an effect called AI hyperrealism. Our research aimed to develop a training intervention to enhance people's ability to discriminate between real and synthetic facial images, and the intervention significantly improved participants' performance with a large effect size (Cohen's d ≥ 0.80). These findings suggest that the intervention effectively reverses AI hyperrealism, thereby potentially providing some protection against deep-fake images.

3:10 – Speaker: Ted Carlson Webster, Edinburgh Napier University
Collaborators: Marina Wimmer and Faye Skelton

Title: A Metamemory and Neuroscience Look at Fake News

Memory is tricky to measure, even before adding the biases that follow news. I will explain considerations for measuring memory, show research on why general misinformation warnings may not work effectively, and expand on some recent findings that use fNIRS brain scanning to gain some early insight into the brain's response to fake news when warned.

3:30 – End of Seminar, Pub Social