



**PERITIA**  
Policy, Expertise and Trust

# Trust in Expertise a Changing Media Landscape

Virtual Scientific Conference

Programme | 18 – 19 March 2021

Registration: [peritia-trust.eu/media-conference](https://peritia-trust.eu/media-conference)  
#TrustMediaConf

# Registration

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## Organisers



**Utrecht University**



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# 1 About this conference

This multidisciplinary conference will bring together outstanding researchers from all over the world to discuss how best to assess, establish and maintain the credibility and trustworthiness of expertise in a rapidly changing media environment.

Scholars will present their latest findings on questions of trust and trustworthiness, expertise, science and technology, policy, and the media, touching on a wide range of topics such as the pandemic, climate change, conspiracy theories, social media platforms, and many more.



## 2 Conference Theme

In democratic societies, trust in the provenance and justification of policy measures are essential for their implementation. Trust in scientific expertise – both in experts and in scientific institutions – has become a contested subject in the wake of recent political and social developments, particularly the emergence of populist sentiments. At the same time, newspapers and journalists have always played an important part in the shaping of public trust in public debates. However, the recent contestations also draw attention to questions of trust in media organizations. Are they fulfilling their role as watchdogs of democracy and mediators of informed public debate? Can they be considered ‘pillars of institutional trust’ themselves?

Over the past decade, the traditional media landscape has substantially transformed into a globalized, technologically mediated and commoditized environment – a transformation that coincided with increasingly volatile levels of trust in institutions, whether academia, politics, governments, or legacy media. Online sources for information, including information about various areas of scientific expertise, provide new, low-threshold opportunities to communicate. Social media, blogs and vlogs offer unlimited and boundless sources for the public to inform themselves quickly, mostly free of charge and everywhere. The credibility and hence trustworthiness of such sources are difficult to assess. It is often unclear who says what in which context and based on what authority or expertise, particularly if information is decontextualized from its original source and distributed through social media.

The problem of trust in (social) media has been further exacerbated by the persistent problem

*A growing social media environment increasingly undercuts established societal/sectoral systems of trust, accountability and responsibility.*

of fake news and disinformation. A growing social media environment increasingly undercuts established societal/sectoral systems of trust, accountability and responsibility. Automated accounts (‘social bots’) as well as malicious human users (‘trolls’) play an important role in contemporary forms of disinformation. Reinforced by the anonymity of most online communication, such phenomena may bias users’ perception of the distribution of opinions, views and evidence. Meanwhile, social media platforms have attempted to refurbish trust in their online channels by resorting to human and algorithmic gatekeeping, with so far mixed results.

Some of the most heated global discussions of our time directly implicate scientific knowledge claims. In recent years, the debates on Covid-19 as well as climate change are just two of many popular examples of trust contestation. In 2020, the coronavirus and its aftermath added a new stress test to public trust in science, politics, and media. These (online) contestations show how geopolitical and ideological battles come to target not just political and scientific institutions, but also legacy media or a combination of all three, thus raising the stakes of understanding public trust under changing conditions.

# 3 Programme

Day 1 - 18 March, 2021

**11:30 - 12:00 | Welcome & Opening Keynote**

## **The Shifting Sands of Trust in a Changing Media Landscape**

José van Dijck | PERITIA & University of Utrecht

Donya Alinejad | PERITIA & University of Utrecht

The authority of traditional gatekeepers of truth, knowledge, and expertise are challenged or side-stepped as a burgeoning of new media actors, processes, and institutions takes the stage. The impacts of these changes for policy-making, science journalism, and public deliberation reveal but some of the emerging problems for science, news, and politics. In this talk, we address some of these key issues by zooming in on the role of social media in the initial period of the Covid-19 outbreak in the Netherlands. Analysis of the public debate during the virus' early days helps to demonstrate how social media plays an important role in potentially enhancing, but also possibly undermining, public trust in scientific expertise during a health crisis. We show how the media environments have been transformed by the logics of social media platforms and make proposals for a better understanding of the shifting sands of trust and trustworthiness.

**12:00 - 12:45 | Keynote**

## **Old and New Intermediaries**

Onora O'Neill – PERITIA & University of Cambridge

The media are so named because they are intermediaries: they enable originators of communication to reach recipients. Traditional intermediaries – publishers, newspapers, broadcasters – also help ensure that communication meets certain ethical and epistemic standards. Online providers enable originators to reach recipients, but they are not publishers. They provide 'platforms', collect data from their users and market the distribution of content to clients. Platforms are therefore intermediaries of a very different sort, and cannot be regulated as publishers. However, the ethical and epistemic standards of the communication these new intermediaries enable could be improved by removing the anonymity that currently cloaks and protects clients who purchase the targeted distribution of content. This would help recipients to assess the content they receive, by revealing which ethical and epistemic standards the new intermediaries respect or flout.

**12:45 - 13:15 | Lunch Break**

**13:15 - 14:45 | 1<sup>st</sup> Parallel Panel Sessions**

## 1.1 Distrust and Disinformation

### **Trust and Misinformation: The Case of Plandemic**

Tarun José Kattumana – KU Leuven, Belgium

### **Expulsion or Inclusion? Why Taking Conspiracy Theories Seriously Safeguards Truthful Knowledge**

Jaron Harambam – KU Leuven, Belgium

### **Distrust of Scientific Findings and Expertise: Worldview, Ideology, and the Norms of Science**

Stephan Lewandowsky – University of Bristol, UK

Co-author: Klaus Oberauer (University of Zurich)

## 1.2 Trust and Complex Media Environments

### **Drivers of Trust and Mistrust in Scientific Communication: The Differences between Legacy Media and Digital Media**

João Pedro Estevens – University of Lisbon, Portugal

Co-authors: Ana Delicado (University of Lisbon), Jussara Rowland (University of Lisbon)

### **How Behavioural Science can Redesign Online Environments that Empower People to make Informed Decisions for Themselves**

Philipp Lorenz-Spreen – Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Germany

Co-authors: Stephan Lewandowsky (University of Bristol), Cass R. Sunstein (Harvard Law School) and Ralph Hertwig (Max Planck Institute for Human Development)

### **From Information Sources to Mediators: Who Feeds the Networks for and against Bolsonaro about Coronavirus**

Nina Santos - National Institute of Science & Technology in Digital Democracy, Brazil

### **When Trust Equals Popularity: How Facebook impacts Indian Journalism Start-ups' Pursuit of Alternative Journalism**

Darsana Vijay – University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

## 1.3 Mediations of Climate and Ecology

### **Making (Micro)plastics News: Reflections on Media Storytelling, Policy, and Publics**

Lesley Henderson – Brunel University London, UK

### **Imagination, Scale and Belief in Climate Science**

Fergal McHugh – University College Dublin, Ireland

### **Trust in Media and Expertise Among Climate Concerned and Climate Sceptics**

Hallvard Moe – University of Bergen, Norway

Co-authors: Synnøve Lindtner (University of Bergen), Brita Ytre-Arne (University of Bergen)

## 15:00 - 16:30 | 2<sup>nd</sup> Parallel Panel Sessions

### 2.1 Populism and Elites: Polarization and Expertise

#### Science Related Populism, its Prevalence, Antecedents, and Outcomes

Niels Mede – University of Zurich, Switzerland

Co-authors: Mike S. Schäfer (University of Zurich), Julia Metag (University of Münster), Kira Klinger (University of Münster)

#### The Rise of the Partisan Nurse and the Challenge to Move Beyond: Rethinking the Role of Populism in Dutch Healthcare

Martijn Felder – Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands

Co-authors: Syb Kuijper, Roland Bal and Iris Wallenburg (Erasmus University Rotterdam)

#### “People Have Had Enough of Experts”: Epistemic Injustice and Expertise

Carline Klijnman – University of Genoa, Italy

#### The Rise and Fall of Social Hierarchical Systems: A Cognitive and Information-Theoretical Model

Mauricio Martins – Institut Jean Nicod, France

Co-author: Stefano Palminteri (LNC, DEC, ENS).

### 2.2 Science in Social Media Events

#### One Biologist, One Million Deaths: Expertise Between Politics, Platforms and Science During the Covid-19 Pandemic in Brazil

Carlos d’Andréa – Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), Brazil

Co-author: Verônica Soares da Costa (Catholic University of Minas Gerais (PUC Minas))

#### Trust, Ethos, and Expertise in Facebook Fan Sites for Health Experts

Jens Kjeldsen – University of Bergen, Norway

Co-authors: Ragnhild Mølster (University of Bergen), Øyvind Ihlen (University of Oslo), Sine Nørholm Just (Roskilde University).

#### The Dramaturgy of Expertise in Times of COVID-19. An Analysis of the Science-Policy Interface of the Dutch ‘Intelligent Lockdown’

Hedwig te Molder – Free University Amsterdam, Netherlands

Co-authors: Robert Prettner (University of Amsterdam), Rens Vliegthart (University of Amsterdam), Maarten Hajer (Utrecht University)

#### Chinese Chicken Soup and its Platformized Discontents

Shuaishuai Wang – University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

Co-author: Jeroen de Kloet (University of Amsterdam)





## 2.3 Psychological and Philosophical Perspectives on Trust in Media

### A Media for Vigilant Social Creatures

Arshak Balayan – American University of Armenia

### Group Testimony in Online and Offline Environments

Kenneth Boyd – University of Southern Denmark

### Regulating Trust in an Age of Intellectual Isolation: Examining the Role that Evolutionary Mismatch Plays in Driving the Growth of Social Media Filter Bubbles

Kurtis Boyer – University of Saskatchewan, Canada

Co-author: Andreas Falck (Institut Jean Nicod)

### The Value of Clear Labels: Meta-Regulation as Measure for Building Trust

Lisa Herzog – University of Groningen, Netherlands

**16:30 - 17:00 | Coffee Break**

**17:00 - 17:45 | Keynote**

## The Digital Transformation of the Knowledge Order

Christoph Neuberger - Freie Universität Berlin

Digitisation fundamentally changes the way knowledge is generated, verified, presented, disseminated and appropriated in society. The Internet and especially social media facilitate access to knowledge and participation in knowledge processes. Science and journalism are opening up in part: They make research and editorial work more transparent and give citizens the opportunity to participate (citizen science, citizen journalism). In addition, independent knowledge projects such as Wikipedia are emerging. Media are losing their monopoly as gatekeepers who check knowledge before publication. As a result, false information can spread unhindered on the Internet. Or they are only examined afterwards (fact-checking). In addition, forms of pseudo-science and pseudo-journalism ('alternative media') can be observed. Public criticism of science and journalism ('lie press') as epistemic authorities is also increasing. How can they maintain the trust of the public in this environment? The lecture will explore this question.

**17:45 - 18:00 | Closing Remarks**

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## Day 2 - 19 March, 2021

**11:00 - 12:00 | Digital Morning Coffee**

**12:00 - 12:45 | Keynote**

### **In the Digital Service Act we Trust**

**Natali Helberger - University of Amsterdam**

Over the past year(s), governments and society have entrusted digital platforms with important governance functions in our online world: to act as guardians of fundamental rights and the public sphere, to remove Covid-19 related disinformation, sanction politicians that invite anti-democratic behaviour, and to further our rights to privacy and freedom of expression, even if doing so runs counter to business interests and shareholder expectations. Entrusting the realisation of fundamental rights online, and the wellbeing of the digital society to a small number of non-European, globally operating commercial tech companies requires a solid governance framework. Such are the demands of democratic legitimacy and the positive obligations of governments to protect and promote our fundamental rights. In my contribution I will explore whether the proposed governance framework in the European Commission's Digital Service Act can live up to these high expectations and create an environment in which our trust in platforms to perform these important governance functions is justified.

**12:45 - 13:15 | Lunch Break**

**13:15 - 14:45 | 3<sup>rd</sup> Parallel Panel Sessions**

### **3.1 Trust and Competing (Group) Ideologies**

#### **How the General Trends During the COVID 19 Pandemic Affected the Media Environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Nedzma Džananović – University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Co-author: Sarina Bakić (University of Sarajevo)

#### **Mediatized Mistrust of Scientific Expertise Relating to MMR Vaccination in Danish Web Archive Data**

Antoinette Fage-Butler – Aarhus University, Denmark

Co-authors: Kristian Hvidtfelt Nielsen, Loni Ledderer, Niels Brügger, Kristoffer Laigaard Nielbo (Aarhus University)

#### **Populism and the Political Mobilization of Echo Chambers**

Natascha Rietdijk – Tilburg University, Netherlands

#### **Mediating Trust: Two Lessons for Media Attempts to Boost Trust in Science**

Jason Sulik - Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany



### 3.2 News Media Discourses and Trust in Science

#### **Social Construction of Trust in Scientific Expertise and Traditional Media in a Changing Media Landscape: Emphasis on Shark Risk in Reunion Island**

Barbara Losen – University of Reunion Island

#### **Dr. Fauci versus President Trump: Contesting Discourses on Medical Expertise**

Graham Smart – Carleton University, Canada

#### **High levels of trust in science in the context of the coronavirus pandemic – results from the German public opinion survey ‘science barometer’**

Ricarda Ziegler – Wissenschaft im Dialog, Germany

### 3.3 Trust and Algorithmic Platform Design

#### **Social Media as (Dis)Information: Structural, Algorithmic, and Design Choices**

Marc Cheong – University of Melbourne, Australia

#### **Mass Personalization of Truth: Mutuality, Sociality, and Continuity of Trust in Platform Society**

Hossein Derakhshan – London School of Economics, UK

#### **Boosting the Detection of Microtargeted Advertising**

Michael Geers – Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Germany

Co-authors: Philipp Lorenz-Spreen\* (Max Planck Institute for Human Development), Michael Geers (Max Planck Institute for Human Development), Thorsten Pachur (Max Planck Institute for Human Development), Ralph Hertwig (Max Planck Institute for Human Development), Stephan Lewandowsky (University of Bristol) and Stefan Herzog\* (Max Planck Institute for Human Development). \* denotes equal contribution

## **15:00 - 16:30 | 4<sup>th</sup> Parallel Panel Sessions**

### 4.1 Political Impacts of Science Disinformation

#### **COVID-19, (Hydroxy)chloroquine, Expertise and the Political Uses of Disinformation in Brazil**

Marina Fontolan – University of Campinas, Brazil

Co-authors: Dayane Machado, Leda Gitahy, Leandro Tessler (University of Campinas)

#### **Mediating Trust in Medical Expertise During the Covid-19 Pandemic: : A Four Country Audience Study**

Sabina Mihelj - Loughborough University, UK

Co-authors: Kathy Kondor (Loughborough University), Vaclav Stetka (Loughborough University)

#### **Systemic and Event Conspiracy Narratives in the Polish Daily Newspapers during the Presidential Election Campaign in 2020**

Olivia Rachwol – Lund University, Sweden

## 4.2 The Changing Landscape of Journalism

### Hope on the Horizon of (Dis)trust: Democracy, Empowerment and the Changing Media Scene

Suddhasatwa Guharoy – University of Manchester, UK

### 'Never Let the Truth Get in the Way of a Good Story'. How Digital Media Distort our Relation to Facts

Simon Truwant – KU Leuven, Belgium

### Open Source Investigations as Public Practice: An Inquiry into New Methods of Trust Building

Lonneke van der Velden – University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

## 4.3 Roundtable Discussion | **Governing Trust in European Platform Societies**

Stefan Larsson – Lund University, Sweden

Jo Pierson – Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium

Alison Powell – London School of Economics & Political Science, UK (TBC)

Judith Simon – University of Hamburg, Germany

José van Dijck (Moderator)

### **16:30 - 17:00 | Coffee Break**

### **17:00 - 17:45 | Keynote**

## **Trust and Faith in Automated Algorithmic Selection**

**Michael Latzer - University of Zurich**

Changing media landscapes are marked by a growing reliance on algorithmic selection in online applications – the automated assignment of relevance to selected pieces of information. This affects gatekeeping, agenda setting, power relations and, consequently, our perception of the world and our behaviour. Algorithmic selection applications are institutions and agents in social and political decision-making. They represent expertise and experts, and reveal the religious character of digitalization. This keynote discusses how and with what implications the algorithmic co-construction of individual realities and social order build on and shape trust and faith in the context of social and political decision-making.

### **17:45 - 18:00 | Closing Remarks**

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## 4 Digital Café

Join us for a virtual coffee!

Look forward to our Digital Café, an open space on **wonder.me**. It is ideal to get to know other conference participants, have an informal chat, or continued discussions from the various sessions throughout the conference.

There is also a Digital Information Desk in the Café should you need help.

The Café is open for everyone before, during, and after the official conference programme.

On the day of the conference, you will find a link **[here](#)** to join the fun!

## 5 How to join

Registration is mandatory for attending this virtual scientific conference. Your registration will be valid for all public lectures on both days of the conference.

Public lectures include all Keynote Lectures and the Roundtable Discussion.

Panel Sessions are restricted to active participants and invited guests. Please write an email to [peritia@allea.org](mailto:peritia@allea.org) with a short introduction should you be interested in being invited to the panel sessions as a guest.

### Registration

[peritia-trust.eu/media-conference](https://peritia-trust.eu/media-conference)



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## Contact

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