

Conspiracy, Misinformation, AND THE Infodemic

CAS 2021-22 INITIATIVE

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, Americans are facing another challenge—an “infodemic” of “fake news,” disinformation, and conspiracy theories spreading at an unprecedented rate, exacerbating anxiety and widening political divides. Dishonest communication has plagued democratic societies across the millennia, but new technologies broaden its reach, accelerate its spread, and demand new approaches to governing public discourse. The Center for Advanced Study invites you to participate in a series of public conversations about the origins of conspiracy theories; the dissemination of misinformation; rumors and fake news; the uses of propaganda; and other forms of information manipulation that change behavior and public opinion.

CAS Director May Berenbaum and Deputy Director Masumi Iriye oversee this new initiative featuring UI faculty as well as invited guests.

Co-hosted by the Center for Advanced Study and the Office of the Provost.

Misinformed About the “Infodemic?”—Science’s Ongoing Struggle With Misinformation

Wednesday, March 9, 2022 | 7:00 pm CST

Dietram A. Scheufele

Taylor-Bascom Chair and Villas Distinguished Professor, Department of Life Sciences Communication, University of Wisconsin-Madison

CAS Director and Professor of Entomology **May Berenbaum** will moderate.

For a while now, a growing chorus of voices of scholars and policy actors has warned about an alleged “infodemic” surrounding public debates about science. The term infodemic typically refers to a flood of truth claims, especially online, that makes it difficult for citizens to distinguish high-quality actionable science from incorrect or misleading claims. This talk cautions against thinking about interventions primarily in terms of “correcting” individual perceptions among information consumers. In fact, informational interventions targeted toward recipients of information underappreciate (a) the power of algorithmically targeted (mis)information, and (b) the policy complexities surrounding uncertain, emerging science. Instead, Professor Scheufele argues that we need to start defining (in)accuracy as intersecting (un)certainities associated with the nature of science, sociopolitical climates, and media systems.

Registration is required for this Zoom event.
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<https://cas.illinois.edu/node/2573>

