Colin Henry, PhD

Postdoctoral Researcher, Improving Online Discourse Project   colinmhenry@pm.me
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University of Zurich

EDUCATION

Ph.D.   Political Science, Vanderbilt University, 2023.
          Dissertation: "Governance, Competition, & Extremism: How the Structure of Social Media Platforms
          Radicalizes Communities."
          Advised by: Jennifer Larson (co-chair), Cassy Dorff (co-chair), Emily Ritter,
          and Anita Gohdes (Hertie School).

RESEARCH AGENDA

Computational social scientist studying the interaction between social and political communities and digital
communications technologies. Interested in the interaction between socio-technical systems, political violence, and
extremism; complex communities and emergent forms of private governance; combining machine learning and
digital ethnographic methods.

EMPLOYMENT

2024–   Post-doctoral Researcher, Improving Online Discourse Project. University of Zurich.

2023–2024 Post-doctoral Research Fellow, Dynamic Online Networks Lab. George Washington University.

RESEARCH

Peer-reviewed

2022   Colin Henry, Anita Gohdes, and Cassy Dorff. "Digital Footprints and Data-Security Risks for Political
         Scientists" *PS: Political Science*, 55: (4), 804-808. doi:10.1017/S1049096522000543

2022   Cassy Dorff, Colin Henry, and Sandra Ley. "Does Violence Against Journalists Deter Detailed
         Reporting? Evidence From Mexico" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 67: (6), 1218-1247.
         doi:10.1177/00220027221128307

Under review

Colin Henry, Sean Long, Rick Sear, Nicholas Johnson, Stefan Wuchty, Neil Johnson, & Yonatan Lupu.
"When Do Social Media Platform Intervene in Online Hate Communities?"
Revise and resubmit, Journal of Politics.

Colin Henry. "Content and Competition: Structural Sources of Online Extremism."
Under review. Preprint.

Colin Henry, Sean Long, Rick Sear, Nicholas Johnson, Stefan Wuchty, Neil Johnson, & Yonatan Lupu.
"Ecologies of Hate: Indiscriminate Targeting of Online Hate Speech" *Under review.*

Colin Henry. "From Seeds to Communities: Adaptive Snowball Sampling and Community Detection
in Cross-Platform Political Networks." *Under review.*

Colin Henry & Karsten Donnay. "How AI Changes Democratic Politics." Chapter, *Handbook of
Democracy and Artificial Intelligence. Under review.*

Working papers

 Colin Henry, Giuliano Formisano, Adiba Mahbub Proma, Karsten Donnay, & Fabrizio Gilardi. "Indirect Effects of Content Moderation Errors:
A Chatroom Experiment with AI Agents." *Draft available.*

 Colin Henry, Karsten Donnay, Fabrizio Gilardi, Gloria Gennaro, Dominik Hangartner, Michael Jacobs. "[Audit Experiment on Social Media Platform]". *Title and paper withheld for research embargo.*

 Colin Henry, Karsten Donnay, Fabrizio Gilardi, Gloria Gennaro, Dominik Hangartner, Benjamin Guinaudeau, Solomon Messing, Joshua A. Tucker. "Scrolling through Hate: TikTok, Hate Speech and Content Moderation". *Draft available.*

Colin Henry, Sean Long, Rick Sear, Nicholas Johnson, Stefan Wuchty, Neil Johnson, & Yonatan Lupu. "The Effects of Offline Events on the Intensity and Volume of Online Hate Speech" *Draft available.*

Colin Henry. "Varieties of Platform Governance." *Draft available.*

Public writing

2022   Cassy Dorff, Colin Henry, and Sandra Ley. "How violence against journalists affects the news." *Political Violence at a Glance*, December 2022. Link.

Media

2024   *MSNBC, Alex Witt Reports*, "Groyper War II." Link. (Delisted for researcher safety)

2024   *USA Today*, "Trump admits he lost in 2020, leading white nationalist Nick Fuentes to disavow him." Link.

2024   *Washington Post*, "Far-right influencers turn against Trump campaign." Link.

2023   *Washington Post*, "Violent videos and 'brutal voyeurism' are redefining modern war." Link.

2023   *Weird Machine*, "What are these violent videos doing to us?" Link.

SOFTWARE

2025   *SpeakNow:* python suite for gathering, processing, transcribing, and analyzing audio data from short-form video social media platforms. Colin Henry. *In alpha.*

2023   *netify: R* package for modeling network data. Ha Eun Choi, Colin Henry, Cassy Dorff, and Shahryar Minhas. *Forthcoming on CRAN.*

CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

Conference participation

2025   "Scrolling through Hate: TikTok, Hate Speech and Content Moderation" American Political Science Association Conference. Vancouver, Canada. September 9–13.

2025   "Indirect Effects of Content Moderation Errors:
A Chatroom Experiment with AI Agents" European Political Science Association Conference. Madrid, Spain. June 26–28.

2025   "Content and Competition: Structural Sources of Online Extremism." Political Methodology Society: Europe. London, United Kingdom. April 7–8.

2025   "Content and Competition: Structural Sources of Online Extremism." Peace Science Society (International). Ann Arbor, Michigan. November 6–9.

2023 "Content and Competition: Structural Sources of Online Extremism." Political Networks Conference. Los Angeles, California. August 31.

2023 "Community Formation on Multimodal Platforms: #DiedSuddenly on TikTok." (Poster) Society of Political Methodology Annual Conference. Stanford, California. July 9–11.

2022 "Multi-Platform Networked Extremism." Midwest Political Science Association. Chicago, Illinois. April 6–9.

2020 "Foreign Fighters and War-time Sexual Violence." Midwest Political Science Association. Chicago, Illinois. Cancelled due to COVID-19.

2018 "Using machine learning to estimate the prevalence of sexual violence." (Poster) Society of Political Methodology Annual Conference. Provo, Utah. July 18–21.

2017 "Measuring Sexual Violence: A Comparison of Existing Measures and Sources." Midwest Political Science Association. Chicago, Illinois. April 6–9.

2017 "Water Provision Institutions and Intrastate Conflict." International Studies Association Annual Conference. Baltimore, Maryland. February 22–25.

2016 "Measuring Sexual Violence: A Comparison of Existing Measures and Sources." International Studies Association Annual Conference. Atlanta, Georgia. March 16–19.

2015 Participant, Southwest Workshop on Mixed Methods Research. Albuquerque, New Mexico. October 19–20.

Meetings organized

2023 Vanderbilt Graduate Idea Symposium II (co-founder and organizer). Nashville, Tennessee. April 12.

2021 Vanderbilt Graduate Idea Symposium I (co-founder and organizer). Nashville, Tennessee. December 3.

INVITED PRESENTATIONS

2025 "Best Practices in Deploying AI at Scale." Digital Society Initiative, University of Zurich.

2025 "Network Analysis for Social Scientists." Project ECHO, University of New Mexico.

2025 "Basics of Web Scraping and Language Models" Political Science Department, University of New Mexico.

2023 "Intro to Natural Language Processing." Data Science Institute, Vanderbilt University.

2022 "Machine Learning and Text Analysis." Methods Workshop Series, Vanderbilt University.

2019 "Intro to Natural Language Processing." Data Science Institute, Vanderbilt University.

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

External

2023 Travel Grant ($1,600). Society of Political Methodology Annual Conference.

Internal

2022 GATEways: Gifted and Talented Education Project ($6,000). Data Science for Social Good, Vanderbilt Data Science Institute.

2021 Digital Humanities Research Grant ($5,000). The Center for Digital Humanities, Vanderbilt University

2020 Travel and Professionalization Grant ($1,000, returned due to COVID-19). Graduate School, Vanderbilt University.

COURSES TAUGHT

University of New Mexico, Instructor of Record

Introduction to International Relations. Undergraduate, Political Science. Spring 2019.

Introduction to Political Analysis. Undergraduate, Political Science. Spring 2019.

Service to the University

Graduate Research Director, Research on Conflict and Collective Action (ROCCA) Lab. Vanderbilt University, 2021-2024.

LANGUAGES

Proficient   *python, R, SQL.*

Familiar   *Lisp, Go, Rust, Swift, C++, PHP*

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

2012–15   Software Development Consultant; Missoula, Montana; Chicago, Illinois.

2013–15   App Developer, SpotMe Inc.; Chicago, Illinois.

2011–13   IT Security, University of Montana; Missoula, Montana.

REFERENCES

Vanderbilt University   Dr. Cassy Dorff, cassy.dorff@vanderbilt.edu

Vanderbilt University   Dr. Jennifer Larson, jennifer.larson@vanderbilt.edu

Vanderbilt University   Dr. Emily Ritter, emily.h.ritter@vanderbilt.edu

University of Zurich   Prof. Dr. Karsten Donnay, donnay@ipz.uzh.ch

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