

# MICHAEL GEERS

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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Center for Adaptive Rationality  
Max Planck Institute for Human Development  
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<https://michael-geers.com>

## EDUCATION

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<b>Max Planck Institute for Human Development &amp; HU Berlin</b> Dr. rer. nat. (Ph.D.) in Psychology Dissertation: Rebalancing Human and Algorithmic Decision Making Advisors: Stefan M. Herzog, Ralph Hertwig	Expected 2024
<b>University of Pennsylvania</b> Master of Behavioral and Decision Sciences	2019
<b>Trinity Business School, Trinity College Dublin</b> M.Sc. in Marketing, with Distinction	2018
<b>Provdavis School of International Management and Technology</b> B.A. in Business Administration	2017

## VISITING POSITIONS

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<b>Network Science Institute, Northeastern University</b> Visiting Ph.D. Student Host: Briony Swire-Thompson	Aug–Sep 2022
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## RESEARCH INTERESTS

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Consumer Psychology of Technology, Digital Marketing, Consumer Empowerment (Boosting)

## PUBLICATIONS

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**Geers, M.**, Swire-Thompson, B., Lorenz-Spreen, P., Herzog, S.M., Kozyreva, A., & Hertwig, R. (in press). [The Online Misinformation Engagement Framework](#). *Current Opinion in Psychology*.

**Geers, M.** (2023). [Linking lab and field research](#). *Nature Reviews Psychology*, 2(8), 458.

Sultan, M., Tump, A.N., **Geers, M.**, Lorenz-Spreen, P., Herzog, S.M., & Kurvers, R.H.J.M. (2022). [Time pressure reduces misinformation discrimination ability but does not alter response bias](#). *Scientific Reports*, 12(1), 1-12.

Roozenbeek, J., Maertens, R., Herzog, S.M., **Geers, M.**, Kurvers, R.H.J.M., Sultan, M., & van der Linden, S. (2022). [Susceptibility to misinformation is consistent across question framings and response modes and better explained by myside bias and partisanship than analytical thinking](#). *Judgment and Decision Making*, 17(3), 547–573.

Lorenz-Spreen, P.\*, **Geers, M.**, Pachur, T., Hertwig, R., Lewandowsky, S., & Herzog, S.M.\* (2021). [Boosting people’s ability to detect microtargeted advertising](#). *Scientific Reports*, 11(1), 1-9. \*denotes equal contribution

## MANUSCRIPTS UNDER REVIEW

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Kozyreva, A., Lorenz-Spreen, P., Herzog, S.M., Ecker, U.K.H., Lewandowsky, S., Hertwig, R., Basol M., Berinsky, A.J., Betsch, C., Cook, J., Fazio, L.K., **Geers, M.**, Guess, A.M., Maertens, R., Panizza, F., Pennycook, G., Rand, D., Rathje, S., Reifler, J., Roozenbeek, J., Schmid, P., Smith, M., Swire-Thomson, B., Szewach, P., van der Linden, S., & Wineburg, S. [Toolbox of interventions against online misinformation and manipulation](#). Revise and resubmit at *Nature Human Behaviour*.

**Geers, M.**, Fischer, H., Lewandowsky, S., & Herzog, S.M. [The political \(a\)symmetry of metacognitive insight into detecting misinformation](#). Under review at *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*.

## SELECTED RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

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Straub, V., Burton, J., **Geers, M.**, & Lorenz-Spreen, P. How to design more ethical social media field experiments. *Data collection complete. Finalizing manuscript to submit to Nature Human Behaviour*.

Lorenz-Spreen, P., Kozyreva, A., Arslan, R.C., Swire-Thompson, B., **Geers, M.**, Herzog, S.M., & Hertwig, R. Assessing the motives for sharing on Twitter. *Data collection complete. Finalizing manuscript to submit to Nature Human Behaviour*.

**Geers, M.\***, Fischer, H.\*, Lewandowsky, S., & Herzog, S.M. Confidence in detecting misinformation increases with political extremism, not conservatism. *Data analysis. Target: Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*. \*denotes equal contribution

**Geers, M.**, Lorenz-Spreen, P., Teich, P.\*\*, Hertwig, R., Lewandowsky, S., & Herzog, S.M. Boosting consumers' resilience against microtargeted advertising. *Early-stage data collection. Target: Journal of Consumer Psychology*. \*\*denotes student mentee

**Geers, M.** & Lorenz-Spreen, P. Social cues and news persuasiveness. *Conceptualization. Target: Journal of Consumer Research*.

Building a better toolkit (for fighting inaccurate health information): Large collaborative project to compare misinformation interventions. With L. Fazio, D. Rand, S. Lewandowsky, and about 80 others.

## HONORS AND GRANTS

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Society for Personality and Social Psychology Graduate Travel Award (\$500)	2023
Joachim Herz Add-On Fellowship for Interdisciplinary Business Administration (€12,500)	2022
Psychonomic Society Graduate Student Conference Award (\$1,000)	2022
Volkswagen Foundation, "AI and the Future of Societies" (€1,440,000; team member)	2021–2025
SSRC/Summer Institutes in Computational Social Science Research Grant (\$1,764)	2021
Max Planck Ph.D. Fellowship (IMPRS LIFE)	2020-2023
Trinity Business School Scholarship (€1,000)	2017

## INVITED TALKS

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University of Bristol, TeDCog (Technology, Democracy, and Cognition) Group	2023
Northeastern University, Lazer Lab	2022
University of Cambridge, Cambridge Social Decision-Making Lab (Virtual)	2021

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

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Assessing the motives for sharing on Twitter

- Conference of Experimental Psychologists (TeaP) 2023

The political (a)symmetry of metacognitive insight into detecting misinformation

- Society for Personality and Social Psychology 2023

- Psychonomic Society, Virtual (Poster) 2022
- International Society of Political Psychology, Virtual 2021
- Conference of Experimental Psychologists (TeaP), Virtual (Poster) 2021

Boosting people's ability to detect microtargeted advertising

- PERITIA International Conference: Trust in Expertise in a Changing Media Landscape, Virtual 2021
- Society for Judgment and Decision Making, Virtual (Poster) 2020
- Psychonomic Society, Virtual (Poster) 2020

## CHAired SYMPOSIA

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Misinformation Research - Quo Vadis? Conference of Experimental Psychologists (TeaP), Trier, Germany, 2023.

New Frontiers in Misinformation Research (Symposium Co-Chair: Rakoen Maertens). Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Atlanta, GA, 2023.

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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Instructor

- Reading Group "Cognition in Online Environments", MPI for Human Development 2020–Present

Organizer

- Summer Institute on Bounded Rationality, MPI for Human Development 2022
- Colloquium (weekly seminar), MPI for Human Development 2020–2021

## TEACHING INTERESTS

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Consumer Behavior, Judgment and Decision Making, Managerial Decision Making, Computational Social Science, Marketing Analytics, Digital Marketing, Consumer Psychology of Technology, Influence and Persuasion in the Digital Age, Consumer Behavior Research Methods

## UNDERGRADUATE ADVISING

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Bachelor Thesis Co-Supervision (with Stefan M. Herzog): Madlen Hoffstadt (Humboldt University, 2021), Eric Neumann (Free University of Berlin, 2020)

Research Assistants and Interns: Amanda Fink (Technical University Berlin, 2022), Paula Teich (University of Potsdam, 2021), Johanna Forbriger (University of Konstanz, 2021)

## ADDITIONAL TRAINING

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- European Summer School on Computational and Mathematical Modeling of Cognition, ESCoP 2022
- PhD Workshop on AI/ML Research and Democracy, University of Tübingen 2022
- Nature Masterclass in Scientific Writing and Publishing, Nature 2021
- Summer Institute in Computational Social Science, UCL School of Management 2021
- Linking Twitter & Survey Data, GESIS Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences 2021
- Summer Institute on Bounded Rationality, Max Planck Institute for Human Development 2019

## PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

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- Reviewer, Summer Institute on Bounded Rationality, MPI for Human Development 2022–2023
- Program Fellow Speaker, International Max Planck Research School on the Life Course 2021–2022

## PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

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Association for Consumer Research (ACR)  
 European Association for Decision Making (EADM)  
 European Marketing Academy (EMAC)  
 German Psychological Society (DGPs)  
 Psychonomic Society (PS)  
 Society for Consumer Psychology (SCP)  
 Society for Judgment and Decision Making (SJDM)  
 Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP)

## RESEARCH EXPERIENCE PRIOR TO PHD

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<b>Intern</b>	Center for Adaptive Rationality, MPI for Human Development (Stefan M. Herzog)	2019
<b>R.A.</b>	The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania (Barbara Mellers)	2018–2019
<b>R.A.</b>	Trinity Business School, Trinity College Dublin (Kristian Myrseth)	2017–2018

## SKILLS

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<b>Computer Skills</b>	R, Git, Qualtrics, formr, L <sup>A</sup> T <sub>E</sub> X
<b>Languages</b>	German (native), English (fluent)

## REFERENCES

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### Stefan M. Herzog

*Ph.D. Co-Advisor*

Senior Research Scientist

Center for Adaptive Rationality

Max Planck Institute for Human Development

herzog@mpib-berlin.mpg.de

### Ralph Hertwig

*Ph.D. Co-Advisor*

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### Kristian Myrseth

*MSc Advisor*

Professor of Management

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## APPENDIX: SELECTED RESEARCH ABSTRACTS

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**Geers, M., Fischer, H., Lewandowsky, S., & Herzog, S.M.** [The political \(a\)symmetry of metacognitive insight into detecting misinformation](#). Under review at *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*.

Political misinformation poses a major threat to democracies worldwide, often inciting intense disputes between opposing political groups. Despite its central role for informed electorates and political decision making, little is known about how aware people are of whether they are right or wrong when distinguishing accurate political information from falsehood. Here, we investigate people's metacognitive insight into their own ability to detect political misinformation. We use data from a unique longitudinal study spanning 12 waves over 6 months that surveyed a representative U.S. sample ( $N = 1,191$ ) on the most widely circulating political (mis)information online. Harnessing signal detection theory methods to model metacognition, we found that people's knowledge accuracy and confidence accuracy were closely aligned: People were equally adept at reasoning about the accuracy of political information as they were at reasoning about the accuracy of their own evaluation of the information. This level of metacognitive insight was symmetrical across the political and ideological spectrum, with one exception: Levels of metacognitive insight were considerably lower for Republicans and conservatives for incongruent news—that is, when the information in question challenged their ideological commitments. These results reveal the intricate and systematic ways in which political preferences are linked to the accuracy with which people assess their own truth discernment. More broadly, by identifying a specific political asymmetry—for incongruent relative to congruent news—our findings highlight the role of metacognition in the persistence and aggravation of ideological divides.

**Geers, M., Swire-Thompson, B., Lorenz-Spreen, P., Herzog, S.M., Kozyreva, A., & Hertwig, R.** (in press). [The Online Misinformation Engagement Framework](#). *Current Opinion in Psychology*.

Research on online misinformation has evolved rapidly, but organizing its results and identifying open research questions is difficult without a systematic approach. We present the Online Misinformation Engagement Framework, which classifies people's engagement with online misinformation into four stages: selecting information sources, choosing what information to consume or ignore, evaluating the accuracy of the information and/or the credibility of the source, and judging whether and how to react to the information (e.g., liking or sharing). We outline entry points for interventions at each stage and pinpoint the two early stages—source and information selection—as relatively neglected processes that should be addressed to further improve people's ability to contend with misinformation.

Kozyreva, A., Lorenz-Spreen, P., Herzog, S.M., Ecker, U.K.H., Lewandowsky, S., Hertwig, R., Basol M., Berinsky, A.J., Betsch, C., Cook, J., Fazio, L.K., **Geers, M.**, Guess, A.M., Maertens, R., Panizza, F., Pennycook, G., Rand, D., Rathje, S., Reifler, J., Roozenbeek, J., Schmid, P., Smith, M., Swire-Thompson, B., Szewach, P., van der Linden, S., & Wineburg, S. [Toolbox of interventions against online misinformation and manipulation](#). Revise and resubmit at *Nature Human Behaviour*.

The spread of misinformation through media and social networks threatens many aspects of society, including public health and the state of democracies. A wide range of individual-focused interventions aimed at reducing harm from online misinformation have been developed in the behavioral and cognitive sciences. We, an international group of 26 experts, introduce and analyze our toolbox of interventions against misinformation, which includes an up-to-date account of the interventions featured in 42 scientific papers. A resource for scientists, policy makers, and the public, the toolbox delivers both a conceptual overview of the breadth of interventions, including their target and scope, and a summary of the empirical evidence supporting the interventions, including the methods and experimental paradigms used to test them. The toolbox covers 10 types of interventions: accuracy prompts, debunking, friction, inoculation, lateral

reading, media-literacy tips, rebuttals of science denialism, self-reflection tools, social norms, and warning and fact-checking labels.

Lorenz-Spreen, P.\*, **Geers, M.**, Pachur, T., Hertwig, R., Lewandowsky, S., & Herzog, S.M.\* (2021). [Boosting people’s ability to detect microtargeted advertising](#). *Scientific Reports*, 11(1), 1-9. \*denotes equal contribution

Online platforms’ data give advertisers the ability to “microtarget” recipients’ personal vulnerabilities by tailoring different messages for the same thing, such as a product or political candidate. One possible response is to raise awareness for and resilience against such manipulative strategies through psychological inoculation. Two online experiments (total  $N = 828$ ; female UK residents) demonstrated that a short, simple intervention prompting participants to reflect on an attribute of their own personality—by completing a short personality questionnaire—boosted their ability to accurately identify ads that were targeted at them by up to 26 percentage points. Accuracy increased even without personalized feedback, but merely providing a description of the targeted personality dimension did not improve accuracy. We argue that such a “boosting approach,” which here aims to improve people’s competence to detect manipulative strategies themselves, should be part of a policy mix aiming to increase platforms’ transparency and user autonomy.