

MICHAEL GEERS

<https://michael-geers.com>

geers@mpib-berlin.mpg.de

Last updated June 2024

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

Max Planck Institute for Human Development
Postdoctoral Fellow

May 2024–Present

EDUCATION

Max Planck Institute for Human Development & HU Berlin

Expected August 2024

Dr. rer. nat. (Ph.D.) in Psychology

Advisors: Stefan M. Herzog, Ralph Hertwig

Committee: Rasha Abdel Rahman (Chair), Ralph Hertwig, Bram Van den Bergh, Joshua Becker

University of Pennsylvania

2019

Master of Behavioral and Decision Sciences

Trinity Business School, Trinity College Dublin

2018

M.Sc. in Marketing, with Distinction

Provadis School of International Management and Technology

2017

B.A. in Business Administration

VISITING POSITIONS

Network Science Institute, Northeastern University

Aug–Sep 2022

Visiting Ph.D. Student

Host: Briony Swire-Thompson

RESEARCH INTERESTS

General Areas: Consumer Behavior, Judgment and Decision Making, Computational Social Science

Current Topics: Psychology of Technology, Evidence-Based Public Policy (Boosting)

PUBLICATIONS

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

Kozyreva, A., Lorenz-Spreen, P., Herzog, S.M., Ecker, U.K.H., Lewandowsky, S., Hertwig, R., Ayesha, A., Bak-Coleman, J., Barzilai, S., Basol M., Berinsky, A.J., Betsch, C., Cook, J., Fazio, L.K., **Geers, M.**, Guess, A.M., Huang, H., Larreguy, H., Maertens, R., Panizza, F., Pennycook, G., Rand, D., Rathje, S., Reifler, J., Schmid, P., Smith, M., Swire-Thomson, B., Szewach, P., van der Linden, S., & Wineburg, S. (2024). [Toolbox of individual-level interventions against online misinformation](#). *Nature Human Behaviour*.

Geers, M., Swire-Thompson, B., Lorenz-Spreen, P., Herzog, S.M., Kozyreva, A., & Hertwig, R. (2024). [The Online Misinformation Engagement Framework](#). *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 55, 101739.

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

SELECTED RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Straub, V.J., Burton, J.W., **Geers, M.**, & Lorenz-Spreen, P. [Towards more ethical social media field experiments](#). Under review at *Scientific Reports*.

Lorenz-Spreen, P., Arslan, R.C., Kozyreva, A., Swire-Thompson, B., **Geers, M.**, Herzog, S.M., & Hertwig, R. Real-time assessment of motives for sharing and producing content among highly active Twitter users. 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: *Psychological Science*. *denotes equal contribution

Geers, M., Lorenz-Spreen, P., Teich, P.**, Hertwig, R., Lewandowsky, S., & Herzog, S.M. Unveiling microtargeting: Consumer empowerment against online manipulation. Data collection. Target: *Journal of Consumer Research*. **denotes student mentee

Geers, M. & Lorenz-Spreen, P. What makes consumers click? The effect of ad labels and social cues in the Facebook news feed. Conceptualization. Target: *Journal of Consumer Research*.

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

HONORS AND GRANTS

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

University of Bristol, TeDCog (Technology, Democracy, and Cognition) Group (Virtual)	2024
WU Vienna, Department of Strategy and Innovation (Virtual)	2024
Northeastern University, Lazer Lab	2022
University of Cambridge, Cambridge Social Decision-Making Lab (Virtual)	2021

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Real-time assessment of motives for sharing and producing content among highly active Twitter users	
• 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

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

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

Judgment and Decision Making, Consumer Behavior, Consumer Psychology of Technology, Influence and Persuasion in the Digital Age, Consumer Behavior Research Methods, Consumer Insights and Analytics

STUDENT ADVISING

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

- Job Market Simulation, European Marketing Academy (EMAC) 2024
- 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

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

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

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

SKILLS

Computer Skills	R, Git, Qualtrics, formr, L ^A T _E X
Languages	German (native), English (fluent)

REFERENCES

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

Director

Center for Adaptive Rationality

Max Planck Institute for Human Development

sekhertwig@mpib-berlin.mpg.de

APPENDIX: SELECTED RESEARCH ABSTRACTS

Geers, M., Fischer, H., Lewandowsky, S., & Herzog, S.M. (in press). [The political \(a\)symmetry of metacognitive insight into detecting misinformation](#). *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 from both the political left and the political right were aware of how well they distinguished accurate political information from falsehood across all news. However, this metacognitive insight was considerably lower for Republicans and conservatives—than for Democrats and liberals—when the information in question challenged their ideological commitments. That is, given their level of knowledge, Republicans' and conservatives' confidence was less likely to reflect the correctness of their truth judgments for true and false political statements that were at odds with their political views. 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 discordant relative to concordant news—our findings highlight the role of metacognition in perpetuating and exacerbating ideological divides.

Geers, M., Swire-Thompson, B., Lorenz-Spreen, P., Herzog, S.M., Kozyreva, A., & Hertwig, R. (2024). [The Online Misinformation Engagement Framework](#). *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 55, 101739.

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.

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.

Kozyreva, A., Lorenz-Spreen, P., Herzog, S.M., Ecker, U.K.H., Lewandowsky, S., Hertwig, R., Ayesha, A., Bak-Coleman, J., Barzilai, S., Basol M., Berinsky, A.J., Betsch, C., Cook, J., Fazio, L.K., **Geers, M.**, Guess, A.M., Huang, H., Larreguy, H., Maertens, R., Panizza, F., Pennycook, G., Rand, D., Rathje, S., Reifler, J., Schmid, P., Smith, M., Swire-Thomson, B., Szewach, P., van der Linden, S., & Wineburg, S. (2024). [Toolbox of individual-level interventions against online misinformation](#). *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. One approach to mitigating the effect of misinformation focuses on individual-level interventions, equipping policymakers and the public with essential tools to curb the spread and influence of falsehoods. Here we introduce a toolbox of individual-level interventions for reducing harm from online misinformation. Comprising an up-to-date account of interventions featured in 81 scientific papers from across the globe, the toolbox provides both a conceptual overview of nine main types of interventions, including their target, scope and examples, and a summary of the empirical evidence supporting the interventions, including the methods and experimental paradigms used to test them. The nine types of interventions covered are accuracy prompts, debunking and rebuttals, friction, inoculation, lateral reading and verification strategies, media-literacy tips, social norms, source-credibility labels, and warning and fact-checking labels.