Ruth Elisabeth Appel

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

Large language models, social media, content moderation, misinformation, election interference, political bias, personalization, behavioral economics, experiment design, ethics and privacy

EDUCATION

09/2019 – 06/2024 Stanford, USA	**Ph.D. in Political Communication and Media Psychology** Stanford University; Ph.D. Advisor: Jennifer Pan Dissertation: Countering Social Media Manipulation: Three Studies of Social Media Manipulation and Efforts to Counter It Dissertation Committee: Jennifer Pan, Jeffrey Hancock, Susan Athey, Dan Jurafsky (Chair) Project highlight: Lead data analyst for one of the projects of the Facebook and Instagram Election Study, a first-of-its-kind analysis of Facebook's impact on elections Selected courses: CS224N: NLP with Deep Learning, ECON281: Experiments for Impact, POLISCI450B-C: Political Methodology, OB374: Interpersonal Dynamics
09/2023 – 06/2024 Stanford, USA	**M.S. in Computer Science** Stanford University, Department of Computer Science; Advisor: Dan Jurafsky
09/2017 – 06/2019 Paris, France	**Master in Public Policy (summa cum laude)** Sciences Po, School of Public Affairs
06/2018 – 08/2018 New York, USA	**Visiting Researcher** Columbia University, Columbia Business School; Advisor: Sandra Matz
08/2013 – 10/2016 Mannheim, Germany	**B.Sc. Economics** University of Mannheim, Department of Economics; Minor: Political Science
09/2015 – 04/2016 Kingston, Canada	**Visiting Student in Economics and Political Studies** Queen's University at Kingston, Faculty of Arts and Science

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

06/2020 – 09/2020 San Francisco, USA (Remote from Stanford, USA)	**Google LLC** Quantitative User Experience Research Intern • Analyzed large-scale Google Cloud user log data to provide UX recommendations • Added to Google's research infrastructure by importing machine learning software packages
02/2019 – 06/2019 Durham, USA	**Duke University, Center for Advanced Hindsight** Associate in Research in the Health Division • Designed behavioral science experiments to improve health behaviors such as vaccine uptake • Led a workshop on using big data for psychological research
04/2017 – 06/2017 Bonn, Germany	**Telekom Deutschland GmbH** Intern in the Strategy Department • Initiated and presented to senior management research on market potential in edtech
09/2016 – 12/2016 New York, USA	**Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations** Intern in the Fifth Committee Section (Administration and Budget) • Prepared and participated in high-level meetings on budget issues and the 2030 Agenda
06/2015 – 08/2015 Rabat, Morocco	**Konrad Adenauer Foundation** Intern • Researched subsidies in Morocco, drafted and edited publications
06/2014 – 06/2015 Mannheim, Germany	**Centre for European Economic Research** Research Assistant in the Executive Department • Created and maintained an international research cooperation database • Drafted, edited and translated reports

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

09/2021 – 12/2021 **01/2021 – 03/2021** Stanford University	**Communication Research Methods** Teaching Assistant for Professor Jennifer Pan's class • Led sections and created materials teaching the statistical programming language R

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Appel, R. E., Pan, J., & Roberts, M. E. (2023). Partisan conflict over content moderation is more than disagreement about facts. *Science Advances*. https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.adg6799

Matz, S. C., **Appel, R. E.**, & Croll, B. (2022). Privacy and ethics in the age of Big Data. In S. C. Matz (Ed.), *The psychology of technology: Social science research in the age of Big Data* (pp. 379–420). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/0000290-012

Appel, R. E., & Matz, S. C. (2021). Psychological targeting in the age of Big Data. In *Measuring and Modeling Persons and Situations*. Elsevier. https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-12-819200-9.00015-6

Matz, S. C., **Appel, R. E.,** & Kosinski, M. (2020). Privacy in the Age of Psychological Targeting. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 31*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2019.08.010

WORK IN PROGRESS

Appel, R. E., Kim, Y. M., Pan, J., Xu, Y., ..., Kiewiet de Jonge, C., Franco, A., Mason, W., Stroud, N. J. & Tucker, J. A. Reach of deceptive online networks is limited but highly concentrated.

Appel, R. E., Roozenbeek, J., Rayburn-Reeves, R., Corbin, J., Basol, M., Compton, J., & van der Linden, S. Psychological inoculation improves resilience to and reduces willingness to share vaccine misinformation. https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/ek5pu

Appel, R. E., Pan, J., & Roberts, M. E. How partisanship affects preferences for content moderation in large language models.

Appel, R.E., Athey, S., Karlan, D., Koutout, K., Luca, M., Manjeer, U., Sacher, S., & Wernerfelt, N. Combating misinformation on social media.

Appel, R. E., Garcia, S., Grayson, S. J., Harari, G. M., Jackson, M. O., Pei, R., Soh, S., & Zaki, J. Shifting social cognition and behavior using norms-based campaigns and smartphone-delivered nudge interventions.

WHITE PAPERS, POLICY INPUT AND POPULAR PRESS ARTICLES

Appel, R. E. (2024). EU DSA Election Guidelines Input.

Appel, R. E. (2023). It's not just about facts: Democrats and Republicans have sharply different attitudes about removing misinformation from social media. Retrieved from https://theconversation.com/its-not-just-about-facts-democrats-and-republicans-have-sharply-different-attitudes-about-removing-misinformation-from-social-media-216809

Schaake, M., **Appel, R. E.**, Duplichen, D. M., Einstein, L., Elhai, W., Dhafer Muhammad Faishal, M., … Zhao, J. (2020). *Input on the European Commission White Paper "On Artificial Intelligence – A European approach to excellence and trust."*

Matz, S. C., **Appel, R. E.**, & Kosinski, M. (2019). Rethinking privacy in the age of psychological targeting. Retrieved from https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/businessreview/2019/11/21/rethinking-privacy-in-the-age-of-psychological-targeting/

INVITED TALKS

Appel, R. E., Kim, Y. M., Pan, J., Xu, Y., ..., Kiewiet de Jonge, C., Franco, A., Mason, W., Stroud, N. J. & Tucker, J. A. *Reach of deceptive online networks is limited but highly concentrated* (2024, January). Google Jigsaw, virtual.

Appel, R. E. (2023, November). *Countering misinformation on social media*. NABE TEC, Santa Clara, CA, USA.

Appel, R. E., Pan, J., & Roberts, M. E. (2023, November). *Partisan conflict over content moderation is more than disagreement about facts*. Stanford Data Science Democracy Day, Stanford, CA, USA.

Appel, R. E., Pan, J., & Roberts, M. E. (2023, October). *Partisan conflict over content moderation is more than disagreement about facts*. Content Moderation and Free Speech on Social Media Workshop, Munich, Germany.

Appel, R. E. (2021, December). *Ethics and Privacy in the Age of Psychological Targeting*. Promoting Research in Social Media and Health Symposium, San Francisco, CA, USA.

CONFERENCE TALKS

Appel, R. E., Pan, J., & Roberts, M. E. (2024, February). *Partisan conflict over content moderation is more than disagreement about facts*. SPSP Annual Convention, San Diego, USA.

Appel, R. E., Pan, J., & Roberts, M. E. (2023, September). *Partisan conflict over content moderation is more than disagreement about facts*. Trust and Safety Research Conference, Stanford, USA.

Appel, R. E., Pan, J., & Roberts, M. E. (2023, July). *Partisan conflict over content moderation is more than disagreement about facts*. IC2S2 Conference, Copenhagen, Denmark.

Appel, R. E., Basol, M., Rayburn-Reeves, R., Corbin, J., van der Linden, S., & Roozenbeek, J. (2022, May). *Bad Vaxx Online Game Intervention Increases Discernment and Reduces Willingness to Share Vaccine Misinformation*. ICA Annual Conference, Paris, France.

Appel, R. E. (2021, February). *Mental Health in Context: Individual Differences, Activities, and Locations as Predictors of Momentary Stress, Anxiety, and Loneliness*. SPSP Annual Convention, online.

Appel, R. E. (2019, August). *Privacy in the Age of Psychological Targeting*. SPSP Summer Psychology Forum, St. Louis, USA.

Appel, R. E., Kovel-Lazzarini, M. J., Hamon, L. M., Bitton, C. M., & Young, Z. M. (2018, February). *Community Against Sexual Harassment: A Mobile App Solution to Counter Sexual Harassment*. Global Public Policy Network (GPPN) Conference, New York, USA.

INVITED POSTERS

Appel, R. E., Pan, J., & Roberts, M. E. (2023, March). *How Partisanship Influences Perceptions of Censorship*. D3 Conference on Inequality in the Digital Age at Harvard Business School, Cambridge, USA.

CONFERENCE POSTERS

Appel, R. E., Pan, J., & Roberts, M. E. (2023, February). *How Partisanship Influences Perceptions of Censorship*. SPSP Annual Convention, Atlanta, USA.

Appel, R. E., Basol, M., Rayburn-Reeves, R., Corbin, J., van der Linden, S., & Roozenbeek, J. (2022, February). *Bad Vaxx Online Game Intervention Increases Discernment and Reduces Willingness to Share Vaccine Misinformation*. Psychology of Media and Technology Preconference at the SPSP Annual Convention, San Francisco, USA.

Appel, R. E. (2020, February). *Privacy in the Age of Psychological Targeting*. SPSP Annual Convention, New Orleans, USA.

FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

09/2019 – present	SAP Stanford Graduate Fellow in Science and Engineering ($52,920 p.a.)
04/2024 – 04/2025	Stanford TomKat Center Innovation Transfer Grant ($30,000)
12/2023 – 11/2024	Stanford Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society Small Grant ($2,000)
09/2022 – 07/2023	Siegel Family Endowment Research Fellow
09/2022 – 06/2023	Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society PhD Research Fellow ($79,650)
06/2022 – 09/2022	Stanford Impact Labs Summer Collaborative Research Fellow ($4,000)
02/2020 – 01/2021	Stanford Center for American Democracy Fellow ($2,000)
01/2014 – 06/2019	Student Fellow of the German Academic Scholarship Foundation (€27,665)
09/2016 – 12/2016	German-American Internship Program Grant (€3,000)
10/2013 – 08/2016	Student Fellow of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation (€24,185)
09/2015 – 04/2016	Ontario/Baden-Württemberg Student Exchange Tuition Grant (C$30,530)

SELECTED PRIZES AND AWARDS

05/2024	Stanford Communication Department Nathan Maccoby Dissertation Award ($1,000)
01/2024 – 06/2024	Stanford Emergence Accelerator Program for Impact Entrepreneurs

10/2023	LLM Agents Hackathon at AGI House, 3rd prize

SKILLS

Language Skills	German (native), English (fluent), French (advanced), Spanish (basic)
Computer Skills	Programming languages R, Python, C++, and SQL, Tools like GitHub, Markdown, LaTeX, and Mendeley

ACTIVITIES

07/2020 – present
Stanford, USA

Communication for Diversity
Group Member
- Advised PhD applicants from underrepresented groups
- Organized information events about Stanford's Communication PhD program

05/2020 – present
Stanford, USA

Stanford German Student Association
Vice President
- Co-led Transatlantic Summit on geopolitics and tech (200 participants, $150,000 budget)
- Met with international leaders from politics and business

09/2023 – present
01/2020 – 05/2021
Stanford, USA

Wonks and Techies at Stanford University
Group Member
- Co-authored a white paper with suggestions for the EU AI strategy
- Participated in discussions and a talk series on ethics, technology and policy

10/2019 – 09/2022
Stanford, USA

Stanford Network of Wellbeing at Stanford University
Steering Committee Member
- Established a network of mental health stakeholders at Stanford and beyond
- Promoted student and community wellbeing by organizing large-scale events