Ruth Elisabeth Appel

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RESEARCH INTERESTS

AI, social media, technology policy, causal inference, deceptive networks, misinformation, elections, ethics and privacy

EDUCATION

09/2019 – 06/2024
Stanford, US
Ph.D. in Political Communication *(Nathan Maccoby Dissertation Award)*
Stanford University; Ph.D. Advisor: Jennifer Pan; GPA: 4.0
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)
Course focus: Research methods, causal inference, science and interpersonal communication

09/2023 – 06/2024
Stanford, US
M.S. in Computer Science
Stanford University, Department of Computer Science; Advisor: Dan Jurafsky; GPA: 4.0
Course focus: AI, natural language processing, data science

09/2017 – 06/2019
Paris, France
Master in Public Policy *(summa cum laude)*
Sciences Po, School of Public Affairs
Course focus: Emerging technologies and public policy, policy analysis

08/2013 – 10/2016
Mannheim, Germany
B.Sc. Economics
University of Mannheim, Department of Economics; Minor: Political Science

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 research methods and R programming

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

WORKSHOP PAPERS

Appel, R. E. (2024). Generative AI Regulation Can Learn from Social Media Regulation. NeurIPS RegML Workshop, December 2024, Vancouver, Canada. https://ruthappel.github.io/assets/pdf/Generative-AI-regulation-can-learn-from-social-media-regulation.pdf

UNDER REVIEW

Appel, R. E., Kim, Y. M., Pan, J., Xu, Y., ..., Kiewiet de Jonge, C., Franco, A., Mason, W., Stroud, N. J. & Tucker, J. A. How deceptive online networks reached millions in the US 2020 elections. Under review at *Nature Human Behaviour*.

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. Under review at *Scientific Reports*.

Pei, R., Grayson, S. J., **Appel, R. E.**, Soh, S., Garcia, S., Huang, E., Jackson, M. O., Harari, G. M., & Zaki, J. Bridging the empathy gap: Reducing empathy misperceptions increases social connectedness. Under review at *Nature Human Behaviour*.

SELECTED WORK IN PROGRESS

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.

Minson, J., Erlich, A., Gans-Morse, J., Higgins, C., **Appel, R. E.**, …, Wang, K., & Zeldin, N. Combating information avoidance in wartime Russia: A multidisciplinary field experiment.

Longpre, S., Kapoor, S., **Appel, R.E.**, Bommasani, R., Klyman, K., Sahar, M., …, Narayanan, A., & Liang, P. The Future of Third-Party AI Evaluations.

POLICY IMPACT AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Appel, R. E. (2024). Strengthening AI Accountability Through Better Third Party Evaluations. https://hai.stanford.edu/news/strengthening-ai-accountability-through-better-third-party-evaluations

Appel, R. E. (2024). EU DSA Election Guidelines Input. https://ruthappel.github.io/assets/pdf/EU-DSA-Election-Guidelines-Input.pdf

Appel, R. E. (2023). It's not just about facts: Democrats and Republicans have sharply different attitudes about removing misinformation from social media. 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." https://hai.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/2020-07/HAI_WhitePaper_v4B.pdf

Matz, S. C., **Appel, R. E.**, & Kosinski, M. (2019). Rethinking privacy in the age of psychological targeting. 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. (2024, September). *How deceptive online networks reached millions in the US 2020 elections*. Cornell Tech, New York, US.

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

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

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

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

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

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, US.

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, US.

CONFERENCE 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. (2024, September). *How deceptive online networks reached millions in the US 2020 elections*. Trust and Safety Research Conference, Stanford, US.

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, US.

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, US.

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, US.

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, US.

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, US.

CONFERENCE POSTERS

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

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, US.

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

SELECTED FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

09/2024 – present	Stanford Impact Labs Postdoctoral Fellowship
09/2024 – 09/2025	Stanford High Impact Technology Fund Award ($38,000)
04/2024 – 04/2025	Stanford TomKat Center Innovation Transfer Grant ($30,000)
12/2023 – 12/2024	Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society Grant ($2,000)
01/2024 – 06/2024	Stanford Emergence Accelerator Program for Impact Entrepreneurs
09/2019 – 06/2024	SAP Stanford Graduate Fellow in Science and Engineering ($52,920 p.a.)
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)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

08/2024 – present Stanford, US	**Stanford University** Postdoctoral Scholar & Stanford Impact Labs Postdoctoral Fellow
09/2019 – 06/2024 Stanford, US	**Stanford University** SAP Graduate Fellow in Science and Engineering & PACS PhD Fellow

06/2020 – 09/2020 San Francisco, US	**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, US	**Duke University, Center for Advanced Hindsight** Health Division Research Associate • Designed behavioral science experiments to improve health behaviors such as vaccine uptake • Led a workshop on using big data for psychological research
06/2018 – 08/2018 New York, US	**Visiting Researcher** Columbia University, Columbia Business School; Advisor: Sandra Matz
04/2017 – 06/2017 Bonn, Germany	**Telekom Deutschland GmbH** Strategy Department Intern • Initiated and presented to senior management research on market potential in edtech
09/2016 – 12/2016 New York, US	**Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations** Fifth Committee Section (Administration and Budget) Intern • Prepared and participated in high-level meetings on budget issues and the 2030 Agenda
06/2015 – 08/2015 Rabat, Morocco	**Konrad Adenauer Foundation** Policy Research Intern • Researched subsidies in Morocco, drafted and edited publications
06/2014 – 06/2015 Mannheim, Germany	**Centre for European Economic Research** Executive Department Research Assistant • Created and maintained an international research cooperation database • Drafted, edited and translated reports

SELECTED ACTIVITIES AND VOLUNTEER WORK

07/2020 – 06/2024 Stanford, US	**Communication for Diversity** Group Member • Advised PhD applicants from underrepresented groups • Organized information events about Stanford's Communication PhD program
05/2020 – 06/2024 Stanford, US	**Stanford German Student Association** Vice President • Co-led Transatlantic Summit on geopolitics and tech (200 participants, $150,000 budget) • Coordinated visits from international leaders in politics and business
09/2023 – 06/2024 **01/2020 – 05/2021** Stanford, US	**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, US	**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

SKILLS

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

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Reviewer	Nature Communications, PNAS Nexus, Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, Journal of Elections, Public Opinion & Parties, British Journal of Political Science, ACM Designing Interactive Systems (DIS)

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS

Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP)