

1st WORKSHOP

THE RISKS OF PLATFORM SOCIETY: INEQUALITY, DISCRIMINATION, MANIPULATION

Panel 1.
Ethics and
environment

Panel 2.
Education and
journalism

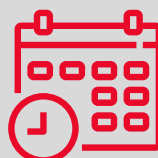
Panel 3.
Vulnerable
groups



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Dipartimento
Culture, Politica
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MAY 8-9, 2023
TORINO

CAMPUS LUIGI
EINAUDI
AULA 3D233

MONDAY MAY 8, 2023

h. 14.00 | Welcome

h. 14.30-16.00

PANEL 1 | ETHICS AND ENVIRONMENT

Federico Vegetti and Moreno Mancosu | University of Turin)
"The gatherer's dilemmas. Ethical, legal and practical issues with scraping social media data"

Francis Jauréguiberry | Université de Pau et Pays de l'Adour
"Big data, subject and ethic"

Lamia Berrah and Eric Benoit | Université Savoie-Mont Blanc "Towards a framework for the risk measurement and analysis in the virtual platform context"

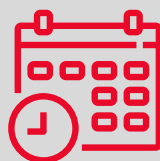
Cecilia Biancalana | University of Turin)
"The risks of platform society for the environment: literature review and research agenda"



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MONDAY MAY 8, 2023

h. 16.00 | Coffee break

h. 16.30-18.00

PANEL 2 | EDUCATION AND JOURNALISM

Gabriela Grosseck | University of Timișoara
"Digital ethics in higher education"

Valentina Goglio | University of Turin
Jonatan Castaño Muñoz | University of Seville
"Digital education and training for the reskilling of the labour force: a comparative analysis of Italy and Spain"

Pedro Jerónimo and Luísa Torre | University of Beira Interior
"How to find news in deserts? Local journalism gap and disinformation in Portugal"

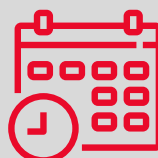
Antonio Martella | University of Turin)
João Canavilhas | University of Beira Interior
Pedro Jerónimo | University of Beira Interior
"News media and Tik Tok: adoption, presence and communicative strategies"



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TUESDAY MAY 9, 2023

h. 9.30-11.00

PANEL 3 | VULNERABLE GROUPS

Camilla Borgna | University of Turin

Effrosyni Charitopoulou, Marica Miglio | European University Institute
"Online hate speech, prejudice, and discriminatory intentions among adolescents: a randomised controlled trial"

Pablo Bautista Alcaine, Javier Fernández Albás, Tatiana Íñiguez-Berrozpe | University of Zaragoza

"Application of collective intelligence tools for the prevention of adolescents' vulnerability on social networks: cyberbullying, abuse and other risky behaviours"

Giovanni Cellini | University of Turin

"The use of digital devices and digital platforms in social work: challenges and risks"

h. 11.00 | Coffee break

h. 11.30-13.00

PARTNERS' MEETING

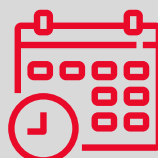
future developments of the network, future plans of visiting, special issue/edited book



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MAY 8-9, 2023

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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

PANEL 1 | ETHICS AND ENVIRONMENT

Federico Vegetti and Moreno Mancosu | University of Turin

"The gatherer's dilemmas. Ethical, legal and practical issues with scraping social media data"

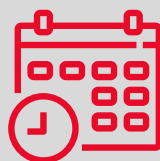
Social network sites have become an important setting for human interaction. It comes as no surprise that, over the last decade, they have become the main field of observation for many researchers studying social and political behavior: the possibility to collect large amounts of digital trace data to study attitudes and behaviors with very little effort is of great allure. Initially the platforms were helpful, as they provided researchers free access to much of their public data through their application programming interfaces (APIs). However, in the last five years things have changed. First, in 2018 Facebook restricted the access to their API in reaction to the Cambridge Analytica scandal. While some of the data remain accessible via the CrowdTangle platform, it is now impossible to obtain data about users' interactions using Facebook API, even when they are public. More recently, Twitter announced a policy change, to take effect in 2023, that would close the free API and introduce several paid (and according to rumors very expensive) alternatives. In the wake of these events, researchers have been discussing the possibility to give up on APIs altogether, and resort to web scraping - namely, using automated ways to gather information visible on web pages, and save it as structured data. While scraping can in principle allow researchers to collect everything that is public on the web, these techniques are often difficult to implement. Moreover, collecting social media data without telling the users poses a



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Francis Jauréguiberry | Université de Pau et Pays de l'Adour
"Big data, subject and ethic"

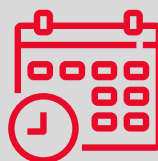
Big data, data mining, profiling and the individual and collective decision-making apps derived from them rightfully alarm those among us who feel concerned by the protection of our privacy in an environment that keeps records of all our actions and by the development of new forms of governance ever better informed by predictive algorithms. My contribution, however, argues in favor of the opposite assumption. It indeed suggests that, far from sustaining the decline of individual autonomy or the annihilation of the self as an autonomous and reflexive person entitled to freedom of choice, personal profiles may lead to a re-awakening of the self while being repeatedly confronted to purely quantitative and utilitarian images of oneself. Choices are therefore being made based not only on narcissistic, utilitarian and quantitative motives but also on principles of individual, ethical and moral coherence which ultimately make life more meaningful.



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MAY 8-9, 2023

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"Towards a framework for the risk measurement and analysis in the virtual platform context"

TBD

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"The risks of platform society for the environment: literature review and research agenda"

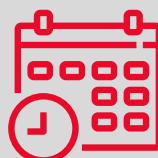
Among the many social and political risks of the so-called platform society, one is particularly under-studied: the risks and costs for the environment. Indeed, not only big data and platform society rely on a physical infrastructure, potentially harmful for the environment, but platforms can influence citizens' behavior (e.g. in the case of mobility apps) in ways that are harmful for the environment. As it is a new topic, the first aim of this paper is to review the existing literature. The second goal is to imagine some research questions that could be answered by future research.



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MAY 8-9, 2023

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"Digital ethics in higher education"

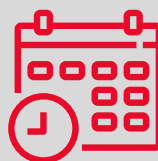
The proposal refers to information on digital ethics in higher education together with illustrative examples. We intend to explore some relevant issues and corresponding questions that educators need to address to harness the benefits of digital technologies in assessment, while avoiding some of the possible downsides. Topics to be covered include: academic dishonesty (plagiarism, copyright, cheating), security and privacy issues (confidentiality, data protection), alternative pathways for assignments, as well as other contemporary topics dealing with digital ethics, such as artificial intelligence generative tools – see the madness of ChatGPT in HE, big data, blockchain, micro-credentials etc.



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MAY 8-9, 2023

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"Digital education and training for the reskilling of the labour force: a comparative analysis of Italy and Spain"

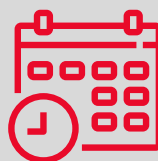
It is widely recognized that the 4th Industrial Revolution requires a more and better skilled workforce. In this respect online educational and training resources have been considered as a viable, flexible and cost-effective solution to an increasing demand of reskilling and upskilling. However, not all individuals can fully benefit from these resources if they do not have the necessary skills to cope with it, contributing to widen the gap between insiders and outsiders or between low and high skilled workers. Moreover, free and flexible digital education could be seen as a substitute for training provided by employers and used more by unemployed or employed in low level position jobs. Finally, institutional factors can play a relevant role, as different levels of digitalization of a country can make the transition to use digital resources smoother (or the opposite). The paper will explore the use of online courses among the labour force in two countries, Italy and Spain, who share some commonalities (eg. the structure of the educational system, the welfare state model, high unemployment rates) but also differ in terms of the level of digitalization (es. DESI index). We will use quantitative data coming from the EU-LFS and the Eurostat's Community survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals and will try to complement it with different data sources.



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MAY 8-9, 2023

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"How to find news in deserts? Local journalism gap and disinformation in Portugal"

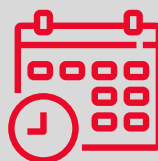
The concept of "news desert(s)" has aroused interest in recent years, especially from studies carried out in the US and Brazil. Abernathy (2018) defines it as "a community, whether rural or urban, with limited access to the sort of credible and comprehensive news and information that feeds democracy at the grassroots level". Meanwhile, the study has already begun to arouse interest in Europe, not only through mapping carried out in Portugal (Ramos, 2021; Jerónimo, Ramos & Torre, 2022), but also in the interest of the European Commission that this can take place in all 27 countries of the European Union. Data from the study carried out in Portugal, points out that more than half of the municipalities are news deserts or are on the verge of becoming so or that over a quarter of municipalities are in some type of news desert, which means they don't have frequent or satisfactory news coverage (Jerónimo, Ramos & Torre, 2022). These data raise a question: how do people get information in territories that are "news deserts"? If we consider that, on the one hand, media consumption is increasingly marked by platforms, mobility and social media, and that, on the other hand, it is precisely in these environments that disinformation also circulates and spreads, it will be important to debate and respond, especially to these situations of news gap. Will we have cases in which information needs at a more local level are met by citizen / non-journalistic initiatives? What role can citizens assume, not only to fill these gaps, but also to take an active role in fact-checking processes or in blocking the spread of disinformation? This proposal aims to raise debate, framing it within the scope of the project that mobilizes it (The risk of the platform society: inequalities and manipulations).



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MAY 8-9, 2023

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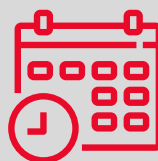
Pedro Jerónimo | University of Beira Interior

"News media and Tik Tok : adoption, presence, and communicative strategies"

Latest research on news media (Newman, 2023; Newman et al., 2022) highlighted the consolidation of several entwined trends in news consumption which represent a challenge for media outlets (Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2021). First, smartphones and social media have become the main device and channel for news consumption, and second, there is the increasingly growth of the news avoidance phenomenon especially in younger generations (Newman et al., 2022). All these processes present a challenge for news media both in terms of reaching news consumers and specific demographic, and in the way they produce news and adapt journalistic practice and norms to new platforms.

Among social media, TikTok represents both the platform that has gained the most users in recent years and an opportunity for news media to engage with younger audiences. Differently from other social media, Tik Tok's news feed is heavily influenced by its algorithm instead of following/follower relationships (Newman, 2022). Its algorithm seems to identify the virality of a content a priori based also on some specific factors including sound, hashtags, interactions by specific users groups as well as the content itself (Klug et al., 2021; Negreira-Rey et al., 2022). Thus media and journalists are developing different strategies based on several aims in order to preside over and compete in a new space that is increasingly attractive not only to younger generations (Klug & Autenrieth, 2022; Vázquez-Herrero et al., 2022).

Recent research tried to map media outlets and journalists on Tik Tok but due to the novelty of the platform not all countries are included or systematically compared. To fill this gap, we decided to compare Italy and Portugal, which have been somewhat overlooked in the studies presented so far, partly because they showed a low rate of media adoption of the platform.

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MAY 8-9, 2023

TORINO

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BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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Pablo Bautista Alcaine, Javier Fernández Albás, Tatiana Íñiguez-Berrozpe | University of Zaragoza

"Application of collective intelligence tools for the prevention of adolescents' vulnerability on social networks: cyberbullying, abuse and other risky behaviours"

Collective intelligence was defined and identified by Woolley et al. (2010). Such intelligence arises when a large group of people are faced with complex situations such as solving moral dilemmas, discussions, solving puzzles or complex mathematical problems. When 152 groups of 3 participants were confronted with such tasks, it was found that the performance of the task and the solutions provided by taking into account the whole group of participants were more complex and of higher quality than those provided by small groups or a single individual. Knowledge about collective intelligence has been advancing in recent years, and its existence has been proven in experiments where participants are face-to-face. However, progress has been made towards the emergence of this intelligence in online contexts, environments in which difficulties arise in organising groups and where there are several variables to be taken into account for this intelligence to emerge, such as, for example, the interaction model or the qualities of the participants. Based on this construct and the atomic model of magnetic fields, the BIFI team (Institute for Biocomputing and Physics of Complex Systems) and the company Kampal Data Solutions developed the online collective intelligence tool "Collective Learning". Through this tool, large groups of people are confronted with different problems and are able to reach a final solution of the highest possible quality. To achieve this, the platform works through 7 phases, a first individual phase where the participant answers the questions posed on the topic presented and six subsequent phases of interaction moderated through various algorithms that guide an artificial intelligence.



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e Società



MAY 8-9, 2023

TORINO

CAMPUS LUIGI

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AULA 3D233

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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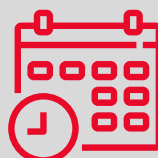
Taking its platform, several projects have been carried out in which participants of different ages have been confronted with complex problems. This presentation deals with the results obtained from three projects: a) a large group of first-year high school students (n = 793) in the resolution of a case of adolescent sexting, b) a large group of primary school students (n = 220) faced with a real case of cyberbullying in the classroom and c) a large group of 4th year ESO students (n = 243) faced with a case of fake news to address critical thinking. Once the results of the studies and how they have been carried out within the university and with the educational centres are presented, the possibilities of the "Collective Learning" platform and the collective intelligence that emerges from it are discussed as a new learning methodology that could improve the competences of the students who participate in it in a short space of time, as well as its implications for university teaching.



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MAY 8-9, 2023

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"Online hate speech, prejudice, and discriminatory intentions among adolescents: a randomised controlled trial"

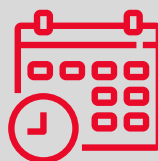
Adolescents spend an ever-increasing amount of their lives on social media, where online hate speech (OHS) is highly prevalent. Socialization within such discourses can desensitize them towards what constitutes OHS and its harmful consequences (Soral et al., 2017; Álvarez-Benjumea, 2022). This can increase the perceived distance with respect to OHS victims, which ultimately can raise exclusionary attitudes towards the groups the victims belong to. Drawing on insights from social psychology and political sciences (Paluck and Green 2009; Kalla & Broockman, 2021), we investigate the potential of 'perspective-taking' interventions in rising sensitivity to OHS and, in turn, in decreasing outgroup prejudice. In doing so, we focus on prejudice towards people of different ethnicity, body shape; we also consider the intersection between these two dimensions. We conducted a randomized controlled trial by randomizing the timing of access to an educational intervention inducing the students to adopt the perspectives of victims of OHS. The intervention involved 1,073 students (51 classes) in three high schools in Turin, Italy, during the school year 2022/2023. Professional educators delivered the intervention during school hours, over three in-person meetings of two hours each. Half of the students (the 'treated' group) were exposed to the intervention in November-December 2022 and the remaining half (the 'control' group), received the delayed treatment in January-May 2023. In order to understand the dynamics of the intervention and the behaviour of the key actors involved (educators, students, teachers), we additionally conducted non-participatory observation of eight classes.



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MAY 8-9, 2023

TORINO

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AULA 3D233

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

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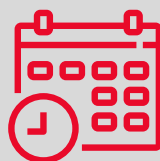
Namely, these were selected so as to achieve variation in terms of student body diversity and educators' teams. Preliminary findings from the experiment indicate that the intervention decreased emotional indifference towards online hate speech and increased emotional warmth towards social groups that are often victims of OHS (Black and overweight people). However, when scrutinizing different dimensions of OHS, a different picture is uncovered. On the one hand, when focusing on fat-shaming, the intervention increased negative emotions (anger, sadness, and disgust) and decreased positive emotions (amusement and irony), especially among overweight adolescents and boys. On the other hand, when focusing on anti-Black OHS, the intervention polarized emotions, increasing both students' sadness and amusement. These results resonate with the findings from the qualitative fieldwork, which suggest that adolescents use a variety of social media identities to circumvent social norms and freely express their attitudes, including aggressive and discriminatory ones. Yet, when pushed to reflect on the harmful consequences of this discourse, they show a high degree of empathy towards its victims.



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e Società



MAY 8-9, 2023

TORINO

CAMPUS LUIGI

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"The use of digital devices and digital platforms in social work: challenges and risks"

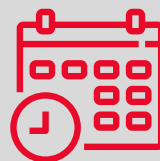
Social work developed using ICTs within a techno-social sphere has been defined as "e-social work" (Lopez Pelaez & Marcuello-Servós, 2018). It is a social work field that includes, among others, the use of digital devices and digital platforms in the professional relationship (with individuals, groups and communities), in the social services programs' monitoring, in the social work education. Through a literature review, the paper will explore some parts of the international debate on e-social work. It seems to especially emphasize the positive aspects of digitization in social work; at the same time, questions and ethical issues (Reamer, 2015) are proposed, especially about the social work clients' digital gaps and the need to protect vulnerable people. Digitalization influences clients' behavior and affects processes of social exclusion and inclusion. With reference to the elders, for example, the impact of digital divide is very significant; hence, social workers need to promote every tool at their disposal to reduce it to the bare minimum (de la Fuente Robles & del Carmen Martín Cano, 2019). At the same time, social workers face some risks of using digital devices and digital platforms in the professional one-to-one relationship, which especially during the Covid 19 pandemic have been increased in the social services system. Especially in working with children and families, there are some critical aspects concerning the use of professional tools (Cook & Zschomler, 2020) that need to be investigated.



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MAY 8-9, 2023
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