



PhD-Position at the intersection of Media/ Social Psychology/ Communication and Computer Science (m/f/d, 100% Danish Graduate Employees in Government Regulation, app.5)

The interdisciplinary **Digital Democracy Center (DDC)** at The University of Southern Denmark invites applications for a 3-year position as PhD Student at the intersection of Digital Communication, Media Psychology, and Computer Science for a project on “High-choice platform environments and the spreading of intolerance”. The project is situated between quantitative social sciences and computational social sciences. The successful candidate will work closely with Lena Frischlich, Peter Mayer, the head of the “AI, Cybersecurity, and Programming Languages” section at IMADA, Fabrizio Montesi, and the head of department at DDC, Claes de Vreese. The position is vacant from October 1st, 2024, or soon after. The position is located in Odense, Denmark.

Project description:

We live in an age of high-choice platform environments. Presently, social media users have access to an increasingly diverse array of platforms, each with its unique socio-technological setup. For example, different “genres” of social media (e.g., video blogs, social network sites, instant messengers, etc.) differ regarding their technical affordances (e.g., their level of anonymity) or regarding how they handle artificial intelligence. Social media platforms can also differ in their self-presentation and moderation routines. Notably, users now have access to a growing number of alternative social media platforms positioned as alternatives to the mainstream in their respective contexts, such as BitChute versus YouTube or Truth Social versus X/Twitter versus Blue Sky. Initial research suggests that these varying socio-technological set-ups can create distinct opportunity structures for norm-violating “dark participation” including the spreading of intolerance.

The PhD project will explore the interplay between the socio-technological setup of social media platforms and the dynamics of intolerance. Potential areas of investigation include but are not limited to, examining how specific affordances contribute to polarization, the role of short videos in propagating conspiracy myths, and how varying platform designs influence intolerance dynamics. Methodologically, one approach could involve conducting (semi-)automated content analyses to explore intolerance across selected platforms. Another approach might entail testing the causal effects of specific platform environments on intolerant behavior through mock-up social media platforms.

Applicant Qualifications

The ideal candidate will have...

- A background in either Communication studies or Psychology, respectively adjacent fields
- Initial experiences in quantitative social sciences and computational social sciences (e.g., through working with *R* or *Python*).
- A keen interest in research, particularly in intolerance and its antecedents and consequences (prior experiences with these topics is advantageous but not required)
- Fluency in English. Speaking Danish is advantageous but not necessary.

It is central that applicants have good interpersonal skills and are dedicated to taking part in the everyday professional and social environment at the Centre. The person we are looking for can work both independently and as part of a team and is willing to contribute to the overall supportive climate and the strategic objectives of the Digital Democracy Centre.

What we offer

The DDC offers a supportive, team-oriented environment characterized by interdisciplinary exchange and strong international networks. The DDC aims at being a leading research Centre around ‘digital democracy’ that advances an interdisciplinary, socio-technological perspective and conducts innovative research following a societally relevant research agenda. A key priority is to train and socialize a successful cohort of new scholars and to have a voice in public and policy discussions.

Further information can be obtained from Associate Prof. Dr. Lena Frischlich, email lefr@sam.sdu.dk.

Application, salary, etc.

Your employment as a Salaried PhD Research Fellow is governed by the agreement of 10 November 2015 on Graduate Employees in government appendix 5 – protocol on PhD Research Fellows. The scholarship runs for three years.

Read more about the application at

<https://fa-eosd-saasfaprod1.fa.ocs.oraclecloud.com/hcmUI/CandidateExperi...>