THE ETHICS OF ONLINE RESEARCH

ADVANCES IN RESEARCH ETHICS AND INTEGRITY

Series Editor: Dr. Ron Iphofen FAcSS, Independent Consultant, France

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ADVANCES IN RESEARCH ETHICS
AND INTEGRITY   VOLUME 2

THE ETHICS OF ONLINE RESEARCH

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

This volume is dedicated to the members of the #NSMNSS community across the world who continue to push the boundaries of social science and internet mediated research by sharing their experiences and challenges as technology continues to transform how we live, and understand, our everyday lives.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Wasim Ahmed is a Doctoral Researcher at the Information School, University of Sheffield. His PhD looks at understanding pandemics and epidemics on social media platforms. He has many years of experience in social media research working on a number of commercial and industry projects across academia, government, industry for companies such as Manchester United. He has published peer reviewed articles on social media, and has delivered a number of prestigious talks across the world. He runs his own analytics blog, and regularly posts on social media research for the LSE Impact blog with a readership in at least 136 countries. Wasim has an interdisciplinary background with an MSc in Information Systems, and a BA in Philosophy.

Peter Bath is Professor of Health Informatics, Head of the Information School, and Head of the Health Informatics Research Group at the University of Sheffield. As Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), Peter was responsible for the review of University of Sheffield's research ethics policy, which included new policy on the ethical issues relating to social media research. Peter is the Principal Investigator of the 'A Shared Space and a Space for Sharing' project, a transdisciplinary project examining how people in extreme circumstances share information online. He is supervising a number of students who are utilising social media data as part of their PhDs. Peter has published over 200 papers/abstracts, including 116 articles in peer-reviewed journals.

Libby Bishop is currently working 80% at GESIS-Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences in Cologne (Germany) where she is the Leader of the Data Security and Data Linkage Team in the Data Archive. The team is enhancing capacities for the Secure Data Center, including remote access to sensitive data and curation of new forms of data such as social media. With her 20% at the UK Data Service at the University of Essex (UK), Libby is a Manager in the Research Data Management section. She has expertise in the ethics of re-using data and informed consent. She also develops and delivers training on legal and ethical issues in sharing big data and on secondary analysis of qualitative data. During 2017, she is leading the Legal/Ethics strand of a CESSDA (Consortium of European Social Science Data Archives) Research Data Management project.

Pete Burnap is Reader in the School of Computer Science and Informatics, Cardiff University. He is an applied computer scientist with a principal focus on data and computational methods such as machine learning to model Web-enabled human and software behaviour – contributing to the academic fields of Social Computing, Web Science and Cybersecurity. His research outcomes, which include more than 60 academic articles – stemming from funded research projects worth over £8million, are organised and disseminated via the Social Data Science Lab, within which he is a director and the computational lead.

Jenna Condie is a Lecturer in Digital Research and Online Social Analysis at Western Sydney University, and a World Social Science Fellow on transformations to sustainable urbanisation for the International Social Science Council. Her research focuses upon how everyday experiences and social connections are mediated by digital technologies in the places we live, work, play and stay. As an experienced qualitative researcher, Jenna use methods that are participatory, critical, creative, and digital. Current projects include examining the use of social media by non-profit organisations, particularly within the social housing sector; how location-aware technologies are reworking our social relations; and how digital technologies can be harnessed for urban governance, particularly within urban planning and community safety initiatives.

Dr. Gianluca Demartini is a Senior Lecturer in Data Science at the University of Queensland. His main research interests are Information Retrieval, Semantic Web, and Human Computation. His research has been supported by the UK Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and by the EU H2020 framework program. He received the Best Paper Award at the European Conference on Information Retrieval (ECIR) in 2016 and the Best Demo Award at the International Semantic Web Conference (ISWC) in 2011. He has published more than 70 peer-reviewed scientific publications including papers at major venues such as WWW, ACM SIGIR, VLDBJ, ISWC, and ACM CHI. He has given several invited talks, tutorials, and keynotes at a number of academic conferences (e.g., ISWC, ICWSM, WebScience, and the RuSSIR Summer School), companies (e.g., Facebook), and Dagstuhl seminars. He is an ACM Distinguished Speaker since 2015.

Steven Ginnis is a Research Director at Ipsos MORI, leading both Education, Children and Families research, and innovation in research methods across the UK business. With nine years of experience across central and local government research, Steven is responsible for pioneering the use of new and emerging technologies in public sector research, including mobile research, text analytics, biometrics, neuroscience, and social media research.

He directed the Wisdom of the Crowd project, working with Demos, University of Sussex and Centre for Analysis of Social Media to help embed rigour and ethics at the heart of the social media research process. More widely, he recently led the Dialogue on Data Science Ethics commissioned by the Government Data Science partnership looking at public attitudes towards government use of data science.

Daniel Gray is a PhD student in the Economic and Social Research Council Wales Doctoral Training Partnership in the School of Social Sciences at Cardiff University. His research investigates misogynistic hate speech found on Twitter and other social media, employing big data collection and critical discourse analysis. He has worked with the Social Data Science Lab at Cardiff, using its guidelines for social media research for his projects, including his M.A dissertation on misogynist speech, which is included as a case study in this volume.

Susan Halford is a Professor of Sociology, Director of the Web Science Institute at the University of Southampton and Deputy Director of the EPSRC Centre for Doctoral Training in Web Science Innovation. She was a founding Director of the University's Work Futures Research Centre and has over 25 years' experience of research on organizational change, including digital innovation, employee driven innovation and the voluntary workforce. .

Curtis Jessop is a Research Director in the Longitudinal Surveys team at NatCen Social Research where he manages the NatCen Panel, an open mixed-mode random-probability research panel, and works on large-scale longitudinal surveys such as Understanding Society and the British Birth Cohort Studies. Curtis is the lead for the 'New Social Media, New Social Science' collaborative network which facilitates discussion and knowledge sharing between researchers using social media in their research, including a particular focus on research ethics. He has a particular interest in the ethics and practicalities of linking social media and social survey data to enhance the research potential of both.

Garth Lean is a Lecturer in Geography and Urban Studies in the School of Social Sciences and Psychology at Western Sydney University. His research and writing primarily investigate experiences of travel in a modern, mobile world. He is the lead researcher of the Transformative Travel Research Project (www.transformativetravel.com) and co-lead of the TinDA (Travel in the Digital Age) Project (www.tindaproject.com). He has published a variety of papers on travel, tourism and mobilities, along with the monograph *Transformative Travel in a Mobile World* (CABI Books, 2016), and the edited volumes *Travel and Representation* (Berghahn, 2017), *Travel and Imagination* (Ashgate, 2014) and *Travel and Transformation* (Ashgate, 2014). He is Vice

President of the Geographical Society of New South Wales and a member of the Geographies of Leisure and Tourism Research Group with the Royal Geographical Society.

At the time of contributing to this chapter: Hayley Lepps was a Researcher in the Health Policy team at NatCen Social Research, having previously worked in the Questionnaire Development and Testing Hub at NatCen. Hayley is a mixed-methods researcher with experience in conducting research through depth interviews, focus groups and observations; developing and testing survey questions through cognitive interviews; and managing web and telephone surveys. Hayley is a member of the #NSMNSS (New Social Media, New Social Science) network and is particularly interested in how ethical guidelines for social research apply to research using social media data, following her work on the NatCen project entitled 'Research using Social Media; Users' Views'. Through this work, Hayley was invited to contribute towards 'Social Media Research: A Guide to Ethics', a document intended to provide clear guidelines on the ethical use of social media data in research.

Sarah Quinton is currently the Chair of Research Ethics at Oxford Brookes University where she teaches and researches in the Business School. Her particular area of research interest is how the digital environment is shaping behaviour change across society, business, consumers and citizens. Her recent publications include the *Journal of Industrial Marketing Management*, the *International Journal of Management Reviews*, and the *Journal of Marketing Management*. She believes that digitalisation is impacting on the tools and perspectives within social science research methods and that the new complex research environment that we inhabit requires further consideration.

Nina Reynolds is currently the Professor of Marketing at the University of Wollongong where she teaches and researches in the School of Management, Operations and Marketing. She has a longstanding interest in research methods, originally focusing on design and analysis issues related to international survey research, but now focusing on how technological changes impact on how researchers gain insights into individuals' behaviours. Her other research currently focuses on how we, as consumers, manage and use our personal resources in today's consumption environment, and on the influence of consumption experiences on our wellbeing. Her work has been published in a number of journals including the *Journal of International Business Studies*, the *Journal of Service Research*, the *European Journal of Marketing*, the *Journal of Business Research* and *International Marketing Review*.

Janet Salmons, PhD, is an independent scholar through Vision2Lead. She has authored numerous books and articles about online research approaches

and related ethical issues. Her most recent book is *Doing Qualitative Research Online*. Dr. Salmons is based in Boulder, Colorado.

Luke Sloan is Deputy Director of the Social Data Science Lab (http://socialdatalab.net/) and Reader at the School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University. His research is concerned with increasing the utility of Twitter data for the social science community, through the development and evaluation of demographic proxies, to establish who is and who is not represented. He also directs the Cardiff the Q-Step Centre.

Leanne Townsend is a senior researcher based at the University of Aberdeen. Her work explores how technologies can transform rural communities and economies. Her interests include the ethics of social media research; the rural creative economy; rural food producers; marginalised groups; crafting communities; rural economic in-migration and the transformational potential of social media for communities of practice and place. She has led various projects and brought together new networks. She is on the board of directors at the Scottish Sculpture Workshop and on the editorial board at Local Economy. She works collaboratively to co-produce research which seeks positive change and new academic understandings.

Claire Wallace is Professor of Sociology at the University of Aberdeen. She was Leader of the Enterprise and Culture theme of the RCUK dot.rural Digital Economy Hub at the University of Aberdeen. She also worked on the ESRC project on Social Media at the same University on which this report is based. Claire Wallace has published widely on digital communications, quality of life, community and other topics. Her most recent book is *The Decent Society* together with Pamela Abbott and Roger Sapsford and published by Routledge in 2015.

Matthew Williams is Professor of Criminology at the School of Social Sciences, Cardiff University. He was a lead researcher on the Cardiff Online Social Media Observatory (COSMOS) programme (2012–15), and now continues this work as the Director of the Social Data Science Lab (http://socialdatalab.net/), part of the ESRC Big Data Network. He has published extensively on the use of social media data in crime and security research. He was appointed to the ESRC's Big Data Network Phase 3 working group and is Principal Investigator on the ESRC's New and Emerging Forms of Data Policy Demonstrator Grant Centre for Cyberhate Research and Policy.

Brittany Wilcockson is a research assistant and PhD candidate (psychology) within the School of Social Sciences and Psychology at Western Sydney University, Australia. Her research is situated within social and political psychology and explores the cognitive underpinnings of language about 'outsider' groups (groups which are positioned by themselves or

government as outside the law, e.g., outlaw motor cycle gangs). Her work also explores the intersection of online research methods and ethics. She is more broadly interested in the use of language data in forensic and investigative settings, and the security and privacy implications of online information storage and use.

ABOUT THE SERIES EDITOR

Dr. Ron Iphofen FAcSS is Executive Editor of the Emerald book series *Advances in Research Ethics and Integrity* and edited Volume 1 in the Series: *Finding Common Ground: Consensus in Research Ethics Across the Social Sciences* (2017). He is an Independent Research Consultant, a Fellow of the UK Academy of Social Sciences, the Higher Education Academy and the Royal Society of Medicine. Since retiring as Director of Postgraduate Studies in the School of Healthcare Sciences, Bangor University, his major activity has been as an adviser to the European Commission (EC) on both the seventh framework programme (FP7) and Horizon 2020. His consultancy work has covered a range of research agencies (in government and independent) across Europe. He was Vice Chair of the UK Social Research Association and now convenes their Research Ethics Forum. He was scientific consultant on the EC RESPECT project (establishing pan-European standards in the social sciences) and chaired the ethics and societal impact advisory board for SECUR-ED (a European Demonstration Project on passenger transport security). He has advised the UK Research Integrity Office; the National Disability Authority (NDA) of the Irish Ministry of Justice; and the UK Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology among many others. Ron was founding Executive Editor of the Emerald gerontology journal *Quality in Ageing and Older Adults*. He published *Ethical Decision Making in Social Research: A Practical Guide*, with Palgrave Macmillan (2009/2011) and coedited with Martin Tolich *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research Ethics* (to appear in 2018).

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ABOUT THE VOLUME EDITOR

Kandy Woodfield is a social researcher and learning & development professional. She is Head of Learning and Development at Samaritans and her previous roles include Head of Social Sciences at the Higher Education Academy and Director of Learning & Enterprise at NatCen Social Research. Kandy is a Chartered Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), a Fellow of the Learning & Performance Institue (LPI) and has worked across the academic, public and third sectors. Kandy spent over twenty years in social policy research working across a range of topics including welfare reform and crime & justice before moving into learning & development. She is the founder of the New Social Media New Social Science? (#NSMNSS) community of practice and most recently edited a crowd sourced book of blogs on 'Social Media in Social Research'.*

* Woodfield, K. Ed. 2014 *Social Media in Social Research: Blogs on Blurring the Boundaries* (NatCen Social Research; London)