

[Freedom of Speech: 2nd Global Inclusive Interdisciplinary Conference](#)

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Type:

Conference

Date:

October 12, 2019 to October 13, 2019

Location:

Austria

Subject Fields:

Cultural History / Studies, Digital Humanities, Human Rights, Journalism and Media Studies, Political Science

Freedom of Speech at the Start of the 21st Century

2nd Global Inclusive Interdisciplinary Conference

Saturday 12th to Sunday 13th October 2019

Vienna, Austria

This inclusive interdisciplinary conference aims to explore all aspects of free speech at the beginning of the 21st century with a view to forming a selective and innovative publication to engender further research and collaboration.

Freedom of speech – the right to speak out, to debate, to criticise, to disseminate information on matters of public importance – is one of the most basic of human rights. Article 19 of the United Nation’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights holds that “everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.” The constitutions and laws of countless countries protect the free-speech rights of individuals and journalists, reflecting the crucial role that the free dissemination of information, news and debate plays in democratic systems of government. Yet the right to speak out, to inform, to report and to openly debate is not absolute. Nor is it enjoyed by everyone, everywhere. This fundamental human right is under attack in many societies, and on many fronts.

Some governments pay lip service to guarantees of free expression; others actively censor or repress citizens, political opponents and the media; still others use punitive laws to control, punish and silence critics. The role of the news media as a check on official corruption and wrongdoing is under attack, as governments use threats, intimidation and even violence against journalists who expose and criticise. Misleading information and hate-driven commentary spread via social media platforms are manipulating public opinion, warping political debate and polluting the public sphere. Meanwhile, social stigma and excessive political correctness create intolerance, stifling debate and demonising some speakers. And although defamation laws and human rights codes regulate and penalise those who would use speech to harm and denigrate others, ethnic and racial groups continue to be targets of hostility and hate speech.

In western countries where speech is largely considered to be free, notions such as “post truth,”

“alternative facts” or “fake news” are making headlines, making us wonder about the responsibilities that come with public speech and about where the line should be drawn an individual’s right to express themselves freely and society’s right not to be wilfully misinformed.

This inclusive interdisciplinary conference aims to explore all aspects of free speech at the beginning of the 21st century with a view to forming a selective and innovative publication to engender further research and collaboration.

What can we say about governments, corporations, ethnic groups, and each other? What are we forbidden from saying, and what is the impact of these restrictions? How does censorship in all its forms - official, interpersonal and self-censorship - affect public discourse? What are the legal and political limits on freedom of speech, and how do these limitations vary between countries and between systems of government? How are the Internet, social media, and other communications technologies expanding free speech, and in what ways are these new modes of communication eroding this fundamental freedom? How are statements that promote hatred or defame others disseminated in today’s world, and how are these corrosive forms of speech prohibited or controlled?

Our main goal is to facilitate dialogue and spark innovative collaborations and discussions at an international level, in a dynamic and interactive setting. Thus, we welcome participants from all relevant disciplines, professions and vocations, such as journalists, publishers, lawyers, media and communication experts and researchers, sociologists, media and journalism studies specialists and other social scientists, members of NGOs and think tanks, policy makers, professors and educators in relevant fields, professional bloggers and more. Presentations, informal talks, workshops, directed discussions, performances, screenings and other types of interactive and multimedia engagement might address themes such as (but not limited to):

How free is speech in today’s world - restrictions on free speech across countries, regions and between regimes and forms of government

Where and how is the news media under attack, and what are the implications of these attacks for the media’s freedom - and ethical duty - to report the news, and for the watchdog role of journalists? How do these attacks threaten political diversity, stifle political debate, and undermine democratic systems of governance?

Power, discrimination and freedom of speech - who are the voiceless?

State censorship in an age of instant communication and social media - how effective is it, and how is it changing?

Private-sector practices meant to silence competitors or critics

Free speech vs. true speech - post truth, fake news, alternative facts and journalistic integrity

Free speech, the internet and social media

Social and inter-personal forms of censorship (political correctness, self-censorship, cyberbullying, social media shaming) and their impact on public discourse.

The corrosive effect of allegations of “fake news” on political debate and on public trust in the media, politicians and governments.

What role do Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms play in empowering users and in promoting free speech? How do trolls, anonymous postings, advertising and the creation of virtual communities harm or threaten free speech and the free exchange of information and ideas?

Free speech, intolerance and education: Who enjoys the right to speak freely in educational settings?

Should certain books, speakers and alternative points of view be restricted or banned, and who decides who is heard? How do calls for tolerance, sensitivity and “safe spaces” affect learning and academic debate on campuses?

The role played by civil society (NGOs, individuals) in challenging official acts of censorship

Legal aspects surrounding the protection or limitation of free speech (defamation laws, human rights acts, protections against invasion of personal privacy etc.). How are they evolving? What are the challenges and implications for freedom of speech?

Best practices in ensuring and protecting freedom of speech

Free speech, personal and collective responsibility (when words lead to harm, who pays the price?)

What to Send

The aim of this inclusive interdisciplinary conference and collaborative networking event is to bring people together and encourage creative conversations in the context of a variety of formats: papers, seminars, workshops, storytelling, performances, poster presentations, panels, q&a's, round-tables etc. Please feel free to put forward proposals that you think will get the message across, in whatever form.

300 word proposals for participation should be submitted by Friday 12th April 2019. Other forms of participation should be discussed in advance with the Organising Chair.

All submissions will be minimally double reviewed, under anonymous (blind) conditions, by a global panel drawn from members of the Project Development Team and the Advisory Board. In practice our procedures usually entail that by the time a proposal is accepted, it will have been triple and quadruple reviewed.

You will be notified of the panel's decision by Friday 26th April 2019.

If your submission is accepted for the conference, a full draft of your contribution should be submitted by Friday 23rd August 2019.

Abstracts and proposals may be in Word, PDF, RTF or Notepad formats with the following information and in this order:

a) author(s), b) affiliation as you would like it to appear in the programme, c) email address, d) title of proposal, e) body of proposal, f) up to 10 keywords.

E-mails should be entitled: Free Speech Submission.

Where to Send

Abstracts should be submitted simultaneously to the Organising Chair and the Project Administrator:

Professor Dean Jobb: dean.jobb@ukings.ca

Project Administrator: viennafreedom@progressiveconnexions.net

What's so Special About Progressive Connexions Events?

A fresh, friendly, dynamic format - at Progressive Connexions we are dedicated to breaking away from the stuffy, old-fashion conference formats, where endless presentations are read aloud off PowerPoints. We work to bring you an interactive format, where exchange of experience and information is alternated with captivating workshops, engaging debates and round tables, time set

aside for getting to know each other and for discussing common future projects and initiatives, all in a warm, relaxed, egalitarian atmosphere.

A chance to network with international professionals - the beauty of our interdisciplinary events is that they bring together professionals from all over the world and from various fields of activity, all joined together by a shared passion. Not only will the exchange of experience, knowledge and stories be extremely valuable in itself, but we seek to create lasting, ever-growing communities around our projects, which will become a valuable resource for those belonging to them.

A chance to be part of constructing change - There is only one thing we love as much as promoting knowledge: promoting real, lasting social change by encouraging our participants to take collective action, under whichever form is most suited to their needs and expertise (policy proposals, measuring instruments, research projects, educational materials, etc.) We will support all such actions in the aftermath of the event as well, providing a platform for further discussions, advice from the experts on our Project Advisory Team and various other tools and intellectual resources, as needed.

An opportunity to discuss things that matter to you - Our events are not only about discussing how things work in the respective field, but also about how people work in that field - what are the struggles, problems and solutions professionals have found in their line of work, what are the areas where better communication among specialists is needed and how the interdisciplinary approach can help bridge those gaps and help provide answers to questions from specific areas of activity.

An unforgettable experience - When participating in a Progressive Connexions event, there is a good chance you will make some long-time friends. Our group sizes are intimate, our venues are comfortable and relaxing and our event locations are suited to the history and culture of the event.

Ethos

Progressive Connexions believes it is a mark of personal courtesy and professional respect to your colleagues that all delegates should attend for the full duration of the meeting. If you are unable to make this commitment, please do not submit an abstract or proposal for presentation.

Please note: Progressive Connexions is a not-for-profit network and we are not in a position to be able to assist with conference travel or subsistence, nor can we offer discounts off published rates and fees.

Enquiries: viennafreedom@progressiveconnexions.net

Web address: <http://www.progressiveconnexions.net/interdisciplinary-projects/human-ri...>

Sponsored by: Progressive Connexions

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