Speaker biographies

Mr Alexandre Alaphilippe

Alexandre is Executive Director of EU DisinfoLab. During his career, he gained 15 years of experience in digital communications, planning and implementing campaigns for clients in both the public and private sector.

Since 2017, he has specialized in researching and analyzing disinformation campaigns across the European Union, using methodologies such as social network analysis and open source investigation.

As EU DisinfoLab's co-founder and Executive Director, he coordinates the research of a team of five experts. Alexandre's expertise has been requested by major European and international media, including BBC World, Le Monde, CNN, Vice, CBC-Radio Canada, The Next Web, CBC, Le Temps, etc.

Dr Leticia Bode

Leticia Bode is a Provost's Distinguished Associate Professor in the Communication, Culture, and Technology master's program at Georgetown University.

She researches the intersection of communication, technology, and political behavior, emphasizing the role communication and information technologies may play in the acquisition, use, effects, and implications of political information and misinformation.

Dr Julii Brainard

Julii started out as an expert in geographic information systems. With this springboard she moved into mapping risks posed by movements of hazardous waste, carbon sequestration, groundwater recharge, benefits of woodland recreation, environmental pollution and inequities in cancer outcomes.

Along the way she became a specialist in systematic reviews (Cochrane reviewer), modelling human behaviour and information spread (including misinformation or fake news), health communication (health literacy) and epidemiology (assessing risk factors and calculating risk ratios).

She has a BA in applied geography and a PhD in Environmental Economics. She can read very fast and has learnt to apply lots of great statistical methods to interesting data.

Dr Sylvie Briand

Dr Sylvie Briand (MD, MPH, PhD) is the director of the Global Infectious Hazard Preparedness (GIH), WHO Emergency Preparedness (WPE) at the World Health Organization (WHO/WHE), HQ Geneva

The Department of Global Infectious Hazard Preparedness (GIH) advances global efforts to prevent and control existing and emerging infectious diseases by increasing access to evidence-based interventions; fostering impactful innovation; and leveraging technical, operational and strategic partnerships. The scope of GIH includes COVID-19 but also other dangerous pathogens such as pandemic influenza, plague, Nipah virus, smallpox and other pox viruses and arboviruses (Zika, and Chikungunya).

Since 2001, Dr Briand has been actively involved in the detection, preparedness and response to global threats, leading the scientific and strategic component of the WHO response (avian and pandemic influenza, Ebola, Zika, Plague, yellow fever, cholera, MERS).

Before joining WHO, Dr Briand worked as public health project director for different global health agencies in various geographic regions.

Dr Ian Brooks

Ian Brooks, PhD, is the director of the Center for Health Informatics, the WHO/PAHO Collaborating Center for Information Systems for Health, at the University of Illinois.

His research focuses on the use of data from traditional and non-traditional sources to understand population health and support public health decision makers.

Previously, Brooks was the director of Health Sciences at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications, co-director of the bioinformatics core of the UIC Center for Translational Science, and a member of the CDC external advisory committee for high-performance computing.

Dr Neville Calleja

Prof Calleja has fifteen years of experience lecturing medical statistics, epidemiology and public health to all health care professionals, together with ethical and scientific review of projects at local and international level. He has been employed at the Directorate for Health Information and Statistics within the Ministry responsible for Health since 2001, taking on its helm in 2007, and also served as Acting Chief Medical Officer during 2014 and 2015. As part of the Chief Medical Officer's office, Neville has been long involved in the drafting of strategies and the planning of capital projects within the Ministry for Health in Malta.

He is also active at European level in the field of Health Information for both the European Commission and WHO (Europe), as chair of the European Health Information Initiative within WHO(Europe). Prior to this, he was the first chair of the Small Countries Health Information Network for WHO(Europe) and he is still an active member of the WHO Collaborating Centre for Health Systems and Policies in Small States within the Islands and Small States Institute within the University of Malta. He has also been assisting WHO (Europe) with health information system assessments in the region and is part of the team involved in the revision of the WHO (Euro) tool for this purpose.

Like all other public health physicians in Malta, he has been drafted into the Maltese COVID-19 response team since the very beginning, in which team he has been performing several duties, including actively seeking out infodemic posts within the Maltese social media groups and actively engaging with the press and the media to push the right messages to the population.

Mr Marcelo D'Agostino

System Analyst (Argentina) with a Master's degree in Information and Knowledge Management (Spain). Two postgraduate courses on: 1) Digital Diplomacy (Malta), and 2) Designing e-Learning for Health (Nottingham, UK).

In 1987, he worked for the Pan American Health Organization as a programmer at the Pan American Center for Zoonosis, Buenos Aires, Argentina. In 1991, he was a consultant in the area of information systems at the Pan American Center for Foot-and-Mouth Disease Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In 1992, he was a program analyst at the Pan American Institute for Food Protection and Zoonosis (INPPAZ), and in 2002, was the Chief of Information Systems. In 2002, Marcelo worked in Latin American Center for Health Science Information based in San Pablo, Brazil, and was the Coordinator of the Technical Cooperation Agreement between this Center and the National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA). In 2005, he became the project manager for marketing and innovation, and then became the Regional Advisor for Information Dissemination in Washington, D.C. in the area of Information and Knowledge Management, and was responsible for the Web, Intranet, Social Networks and the PAHO/WHO Central Library.

Since 2008 he has held different managerial positions such as Senior Advisor for Knowledge Management and Director for Knowledge Management and Communications, Bioethics and Research. He is currently the Senior Advisor on Information Systems for Health.

Dr Manlio De Domenico

Manlio De Domenico is a physicist, Researcher at Fondazione Bruno Kessler (Italy), where he leads the interdisciplinary Complex Multilayer Networks (CoMuNe) Lab, and national coordinator of the Italian Chapter of the Complex Systems Society.

His research is focused on the study of collective phenomena emerging from natural and artificial interdependent systems, with leading contributions to modeling and analysis of multilayer networks, their structure, dynamics, information capacity and resilience to shocks.

His applications range from biological to socio-technical systems, with impact on personalized medicine, smart city engineering, risk assessment and policy-making in response to spreading phenomena such as epidemics and infodemics.

Ms Yana Dlugy

Yana Dlugy, currently project leader with AFP's Digital Verification Team.

Previous roles with AFP have included bureau chief in Ukraine, deputy bureau chief in Jerusalem, senior correspondent in Moscow, head of blogs, senior editor.

Prior to AFP, Yana had served as a reporter for Newsweek in the former Soviet Union and as a freelance journalist in the US.

Dr Eve Dubé

Eve Dubé is a medical anthropologist. She is affiliated with Quebec National Institute of Public Health and the Research Center of the CHU-Québec. She is also an invited professor in anthropology at Laval University.

Her research focuses on social, cultural and ethical issues around infectious diseases prevention. Most of her research aims at understanding why people accept, refuse or hesitate to receive vaccines and why healthcare providers adhere or not to vaccination recommendation for themselves, their families and their patients.

She is the lead investigator of a research project describing community dynamics, sociocultural factors and local knowledge systems that may impact the acceptance of countermeasures for COVID-19, including a future vaccine. As part of her public health mandates, she is in charge of daily surveys of the public's adherence to public health recommendations. She is also looking at online discourses related to the generation and spread of rumours, misinformation and disinformation on COVID-19 in Canada.

Dr Gunther Eysenbach

Gunther Eysenbach, MD, MPH, FACMI, born in Germany but for the past 20 years based in Toronto/Canada, is considered the "father" of infodemiology, a term he coined in 2002 in a series of publications.

Gunther has a life-long passion for information and communication technologies and medical information and has been recognized as the most impactful medical informatician in the world. He studied medicine, computer science, and epidemiology at Harvard School of Public Health, and, as a medical student, wrote books and worked for a major scholarly publisher as an editor.

He is a visionary who recognized the importance of the internet for both medical information dissemination as well scholarly publishers in the 90s, became a pioneer of the gold Open-Access movement, created one of the first open-access journals, co-founded the OASPA (Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association), and built a respected global publishing firm, JMIR Publications, known for its quality and forward-thinking innovations (one of Canada's Fastest Growing Companies). He is also the co-inventor of TrendMD, a company he co-founded as Chief Science Officer, which is another avenue to disseminate scientific information in a targeted manner.

Gunther spends most of his time as President of JMIR Publications, but also invests in innovative startups in medicine and science as an angel investor, holds the position of Adjunct Professor at the University of Victoria, School of Health Information Science, and is working on his charitable organization to help authors from developing countries publish their work. More info: jmirpublications.com
Infodemiology: https://www.jmir.org/themes/69
COVID19: https://publichealth.jmir.org/themes/895

Dr Sebastian Garcia Saiso

Expert in public health, health systems and the response to health challenges. M.D. from the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) and MSc in Health Policy Planning and Financing from the London School of Economics and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Over 15 years of international and national experience in universal health, health policies, quality and training of human resources. Relevant academic and work experience in epidemiology, pharmaceutical regulation and patient safety. Author of more than 40 publications in international journals and books on the organization of health systems and response to health challenges. National and international lecturer. He served as Director General for Quality of Health Care and Education at the Ministry of Health in Mexico for the last 6 years before joining PAHO as Director of Evidence and Intelligence for Action in Health. Public policy specialist focused on health systems strengthening through the use of data, evidence and the introduction of technologies.

Dr Anatoliy Gruzd

Anatoliy Gruzd, PhD is a Canada Research Chair in Social Media Data Stewardship, Associate Professor at the Ted Rogers School of Management at Ryerson University and Director of Research at the Social Media Lab.

Anatoliy is also a Member of the Royal Society of Canada's College of New Scholars, Artists and Scientists; a co-editor of a multidisciplinary journal on Big Data and Society; and a founding co-chair of the International Conference on Social Media and Society.

His research initiatives explore how social media platforms are changing the ways in which people and organizations communicate, collaborate and disseminate information and how these changes impact the norms and structures of modern society.

Dr Philipp Mai

Philip Mai, M.A., J.D. is the Director of Business and Communications and a Senior Researcher at the Social Media Lab at the Ted Rogers School of Management, Ryerson University and co-founder of the International Conference on Social Media and Society.

In his work, he focuses on tech policy issues, knowledge mobilization, information diffusion, business and research partnerships, and practical application of social media analytics.

As a proponent of computational social science, Mai's work and commentary have been sought out by various national media outlets, including CBC The National, the Globe and Mail, the Toronto Star and Global National.

Mr Tim Nguyen

Mr Tim Nguyen is the Head of Unit for High Impact Events in the Global Infectious Hazard Preparedness Department of the WHO Health Emergencies Programme (WHE). His team manages (i) the WHO Information Network for Epidemics (EPI-WIN), a platform to unite the work on managing disease infodemics during emergencies, and (ii) the strategic global governance of pharmaceutical interventions including pandemic influenza and smallpox vaccine as well as influenza antivirals.

He joined WHO in 2006 initially working as a Technical Officer in the Yellow Fever Programme which managed an initiative funded by the GAVI Alliance to provide 40 million doses of vaccine to most at risk populations in low resource settings. In 2008, he joined WHO's Global Influenza Programme and took part in the global response work to the first influenza pandemic of the 21st century. In 2011, he was the founding member of WHO's Global Hepatitis Programme and project manager for the development of the first WHO treatment guideline for HCV.

From 2014-2017, he was the Unit leader for Knowledge Management, Evidence and Research for Policy-Making at the WHO Regional Office for Europe based in Copenhagen, Denmark. There, he established the scientific journal Public Health Panorama and was responsible for the development of the WHO/Europe resolution and action plan for evidence-informed policy-making. Before joining WHO, he worked as management consultant in the pharmaceutical industry.
Please visit

Mr Athas Nikolakakos

Athas is an interdisciplinary leader in the online content moderation field, bringing together experiences as a software developer, attorney, policy lead, and product manager. He currently serves as the lead Product Manager for Facebook's Health Integrity team, which focuses on minimizing harmful health-related content and experiences on Facebook's platforms. He brings 5+ years of experience working on complex content moderation problems across issues including privacy, cyber security, connected devices, hate speech, terrorism and health. He's previously worked at Google, where he led a product policy team that advised products and developer policies affecting 1B+ users, at a boutique law firm specializing in transactional and technology law, and as the General Counsel to an online advertising business.

Professor Kisoo Park

Professor Kisoo PARK is currently with the Institute for Occupational and Environmental Medicine at Korea University after he had been served as a spokesperson of KCDC(Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) from 2016 to 2019 and had worked as a deputy spokesperson at the Ministry of Health and Welfare from 2011 to 2016. He also had taught as an adjunct professor in the department of health policy and management, Korea University from 2012 to 2017.

Previously, he had 15 years of experience as a journalist in Korea, covering economy, politics, health & welfare policy and many other social issues in Yonhapnews Agency and Korea times from 1996 to 2011.

Dr. Park studied economics at Korea University and completed his education with Master of Graduate Journalism and Broadcasting from the Graduate School of Journalism & Mass Communication, Yonsei University in August 2009. He received his Ph.D. from the Department of Journalism and Communication, Graduate School of Kwangwoon University in February 2009 and He also earned another Ph.D. from the Department of Public Health, College of Medicine, Korea University in February 2019.

Ms Rebecca Petras

Rebecca is the H2H Network's programme/humanitarian adviser and acting coordinator.

She handles strategy and sustainability of the network and DFID's investment in the network and its fund, including oversight of monitoring, evidence and learning program for DFID's Humanitarian Global Services programme. In early February, the network proactively activated a support package to fight the COVID-19 infodemic.

Previously Rebecca was deputy director of Translators without Borders (TWB) where she oversaw global operations of the international NGO and was one of the founding members of the H2H Network. She developed TWB's financial sustainability model, created and funded the first-ever crisis relief translation network, and developed and funded the Gamayun language technology initiative.

Rebecca has 25 years of experience in management, strategy, fundraising, partnership development, and communications for small and start-up non-profit and for-profit entities, with emphasis on H2H and B2B service organizations.

Ms Tina Purnat

Tina Purnat is a Technical Officer for Digital Health Technologies in the newly established Department of Digital Health and Innovation at WHO. She works on (i) developing frameworks for assessment and evaluation of AI and other digital health technologies, (ii) standards and tools for health information exchange, and (iii) related aspects of health data governance supporting health information exchange and use of data in health. As part of the WHO response to the COVID-19 epidemic, she currently also supports the WHO infodemic management response pillar.

Tina has worked at the intersection of health research, analysis and policy-making with an emphasis on health information analysis and health information systems. She left basic science research in 2007 to join the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, where she led data collection, capacity building, and reporting of data on notifiable infectious diseases in the EU. She later worked at WHO and University of Munich as an analyst and clinical data manager in clinical trials and implementation research studies in LMICs.

Between 2015-2019, she was Unit Leader for Health Informatics and Information Systems, and 2016-2018 acting Unit Leader and Programme Manager for Health Information, Monitoring and Analysis at WHO Regional Office for Europe. There, she led the European Health Information Gateway; capacity building courses Autumn Schools/ Advanced Courses in health information and evidence-informed policymaking; and integration and strengthening of health information systems. She was managing editor of the European Health Report 2018, which outlined the vision for improved use of evidence, research and health information to inform policy-making in the WHO European Region.

Dr Praveen Raja

Praveen's passion is to develop, launch and scale innovative products and solutions to advance health at a global scale. Throughout his career, he has developed and led high-performing innovative teams across start-ups, large global corporations, and NGOs to deliver cutting-edge innovation that have achieved significant health impact. Across his roles, Praveen has developed strong partnerships across the health ecosystem with companies, academic and research institutions, NGOs, foundations, bilateral organizations and governments.

In his most recent role, Praveen served as Chief Operating Officer and VP of Technology Development & Market Introduction at PATH, a large, international NGO focused on solving global health challenges through innovation and partnerships. Praveen's prior roles at Johnson & Johnson, Amgen, and Proteus Digital Health have encompassed innovation, product development and commercialization roles across medical devices, pharmaceuticals, and digital health. Prior to his industry roles, Praveen's medical career included serving as the Chief of Behavioral Medicine at Kaiser Permanente as part of an effort to redesign primary care to integrate medical and psychosocial interventions, address social determinants of health, and delivering lower cost, personalized care that improved health outcomes.

Praveen's academic background includes a Ph.D. from UCLA where he completed training as a clinical psychologist with a focus on behavioral medicine (integration of medicine and psychology) and served in research, teaching and clinical roles. In addition to his professional positions, Praveen has entrepreneurial experience as co-founder of a successful cloud-based medical software company and an education focused NGO that has built a K-12 school for underserved children in rural India. Praveen also serves on advisory boards of several global health technology accelerators

Dr Pier Luigi Sacco

Pier Luigi Sacco is Professor of Cultural Economics, IULM University Milan, Senior Advisor and Head of the Venice Office of the OECD, Co-director of the Computational Human Behavior (CHuB) Lab, Bruno Kessler Foundation, Trento, Faculty Associate at the Berkman-Klein Center for Internet and Society, Harvard University, and Senior Researcher at metaLAB (at) Harvard.

He has been the Special Adviser of the EU Commissioner to Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, and currently is a member of the scientific board of Europeana Foundation, of the Advisory Council on Scientific Innovation of the Czech Republic and of the Advisory Council of Creative Georgia. He works and consults internationally on culture-led local development and policy design, and has authored more than 200 papers on economics, social and behavioral sciences on peer reviewed journals and edited books with major international publishers.

Dr Philipp Schmid

Philipp Schmid is an interim lecturer for statistics and research methods at the Department of Psychology (University of Erfurt Germany) and a scientific researcher at the Psychology and Infectious Disease Lab (PIDI: University of Erfurt Germany).

Philipp Schmid is a psychologist by profession. His research aims at analysing the psychological reasons of vaccine hesitancy as well as designing interventions to reduce the influence of misinformation on health decision making. He is a co-author of the WHO guideline on how to respond to vocal vaccine denier in public and has co-organized five WHO workshops on addressing vaccination opposition (2016: Belgrade, Serbia; 2016: Copenhagen, Denmark; 2017: Copenhagen, Denmark; 2017: Stuttgart, Germany, Berlin, Germany, 2018) that were attended by national immunization managers of 17 different Member States. He is the first author of the empirical evaluation of the WHO approach that was published in Nature Human Behaviour (Schmid & Betsch, 2019). His contributions to the field are published in various scientific journals and he has given numerous talks on the issue of how to counter misinformation on vaccination.

Philipp Schmid is currently a member of the "COVID-19 Snapshot Monitoring" (COSMO) consortium. Once a week, the consortium uses an online live survey to determine how people subjectively perceive the risks of the COVID-19 virus, which countermeasures are known, which of them are already being used or rejected.

Dr Tavpritesh Sethi

Dr Tavpritesh Sethi | https://twitter.com/Tavpritesh | tavpriteshsethi@iiitd.ac.in |Dr. Tavpritesh Sethi is a physician-scientist and Assistant Professor of Computational Biology at Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology Delhi, India and a fellow of the Wellcome Trust/DBT India Alliance at All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, India. Prior to joining IIITD he was a visiting faculty member at Stanford University, School of Medicine from February 2017 to January 2019. He received his M.B.B.S from Government Medical College, Amritsar and PhD from CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, New Delhi, India.

Dr Viroj Tangcharoensathien

Viroj Tangcharoensathien, MD. PhD, is the Senior Adviser to International Health Policy Program (IHPP), Ministry of Public Health.

Trained in medicine at Mahidol University, he served for almost 10 years in small rural hospitals in north-eastern Thailand. He received the Thai Medical Association's Best Rural Doctor Award in 1986. He completed a PhD on community health financing at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, supported by Rockefeller Foundation Scholarship, where his thesis won the Woodruff Medal in 1991 for the most outstanding PhD thesis of that year in the School.

In 2001 he co-found International Health Policy Programme (IHPP), Ministry of Public Health, Thailand as first Deputy Director, then Director, then Senior Advisor and now Secretary General.

He received Edwin Chadwick Medal in 2011 for his contributions to improve health systems in the interests of the poor; and the Sam Adjei Distinguished Public Service Award in 2018 by the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research and Health Systems Global for his engagement in health systems development and research. He received WHO Director-General's Health Leaders 2019 Award in recognition of his outstanding leadership in Global Health. He published 243 articles in international peer review journals since 1989.

Professor Jay Van Bavel

Jay Van Bavel is an Associate Professor of Psychology & Neural Science at New York University, an affiliate at the Stern School of Business in Management and Organizations, and Director of the *Social Identity & Morality Lab*.

Jay's research examines how collective concerns — group identities, moral values, and political beliefs — shape the mind and brain. This work addresses issues of group identity, social motivation, cooperation, implicit bias, moral judgment and decision-making, and group regulation.

Mr Tim Zecchin

Making sense of digital media data Tim leads the media analytics consultancy Media Measurement, where has been based since 2006, delivering research programmes to a range of international NGOs and businesses.

He focuses on leveraging different technology stacks to help organisations to make smarter decisions on large datasets, typically derived from social and digital media data, examining citizens communications on topics of interest.

Most recently his work with UNICEF won the 2019 International association for the measurement and evaluation of communication award for innovation and social media measurement. His other clients include ICRC, WHO, European Commission and the World Bank.