CONFRONTING THE
DISINFORMATION
AGE

SFU PUBLIC SQUARE'S
2019 COMMUNITY SUMMIT
APRIL 10-18, 2019
How are you confronting the disinformation age?

We’re proud to once again partner with SFU Public Square to present this year’s Community Summit keynote event, *Confronting the Disinformation Age*. Vancity and SFU have a long-standing relationship built around activating civic discourse and engagement on important issues that impact our communities.

In this unprecedented age of technology, what is perceived as true is constantly vulnerable to digital intercepts, manipulation and misrepresentation. This shapes the information we receive on a daily basis, and forms our perspectives on important topics, including environmental sustainability, equity, inclusive societies and social justice. Confronting disinformation is critical to ensure we maintain the integrity of our civic institutions, political processes and community life.

As a values-based credit union, partnering with like-minded organizations such as SFU Public Square, which brings together diverse perspectives on issues that matter, is important to ensuring the community dialogue that is so critical in a democratic society.

To find out more about our values-based banking, visit us at vancity.com
On behalf of the City of Vancouver and Vancouver City Council, it’s my pleasure to welcome you to the SFU Public Square 2019 Community Summit.

This year the Summit is focused on “Confronting the Disinformation Age,” a topic for discussion that comes at a time when traditional civic institutions are under enormous stress. Vancouver is a city that has long held up diversity and openness as strengths that define us. But as societies around the world are learning – no one is immune from the impacts of disinformation and division, and we are no different.

Cities like ours are often on the front lines of global stressors, and we can either choose to resign ourselves to their impacts or we can choose to be leaders and search for solutions. If we want to build a Vancouver that works for everyone, complacency is not an option.

Thank you for being part of this critical dialogue, and my sincere congratulations to the team at SFU Public Square for your hard work and commitment to civic engagement.

On behalf of Microsoft, I am honoured to welcome you to the SFU Public Square 2019 Community Summit.

This year’s Summit is focused on ‘confronting the disinformation age’ and how we, both as individuals and within organizations, navigate the digital world.

When Microsoft expanded its presence in Vancouver, it was with a commitment to creating and supporting opportunities for discussions that advance our understanding of the world around us. Technology is changing the ways in which we engage, both with one another and the organizations that shape our society. Data privacy, ethics in AI and the growth of digital citizenship are top of mind in 2019.

We are pleased to support the SFU Public Square Community Summit in bringing important discussions like this to Vancouver. My thanks to everyone involved, including those who imagined it, engineered it and attended.
Welcome to the 2019 SFU Public Square Community Summit – Confronting the Disinformation Age.

Reliable, trustworthy information is fundamental to a well-functioning society. It is only on the basis of sound, verifiable facts that we can hope to fully understand or effectively respond to events that shape our world. In an age of disinformation, we find ourselves bombarded with everything from self-serving distortions to outright falsehoods – in advertising, on websites, through social media, and even in formerly trusted media. When people lose faith in their sources of information, or don’t know where to turn, democracy itself becomes endangered.

In the face of this onslaught, what are citizens to do? How do we counter disinformation, and separate fact from fiction, in this distorted landscape?

These are the questions at the heart of our seventh annual SFU Public Square Community Summit. Launched in 2012, the Summit exemplifies Simon Fraser University’s commitment to be B.C.’s “public square” for enlightenment and dialogue on key public issues. Driven by our larger mission to be Canada’s most community-engaged research university, we have made it our commitment to create inclusive and vibrant spaces for dialogue and deliberation on essential and sometimes difficult subjects.

This same commitment to engagement may also provide one of the best hopes for confronting disinformation. A key objective of this Community Summit is to provide a public forum in which a range of ideas can be shared and tested. In addition to the keynote event with David Frum, Sue Gardner and Christopher Wylie, the Summit offers a Digital Citizenship Day, sessions on SFU research, and discussions on topics such as: Is Social Media Destroying Democracy?; Competing Visions of Climate Populism; and The Philosophy of Fake News.

While these conversations benefit us all, they cannot take place without you. Nor could we fulfil our ambition to be Canada’s “Engaged University” without the commitment and dedication of our community partners, our staff and volunteers, and our Summit sponsors.

To them and you, thank you. We welcome your participation in this inclusive, thoughtful, and important dialogue. And we hope you will return to SFU Public Square many times throughout the year.
As we explored the theme for this year’s Community Summit, we quickly realized that we had hit on something big. From our early research to meetings with academics, partners and advisors, we began to understand that disinformation, and the need to confront it, is one of the biggest issues facing society today.

As we dug deeper into the problem, I found it difficult not to be overwhelmed by its complexity and enormity. There is a long history of information being manipulated and fabricated, but we’re seeing this problem exacerbated by the tremendous power of today’s technologies which increase our risk of exposure to weaponized information. There are many negative impacts to society including public health crises, the creation of misinformed public policy, and the erosion of trust in our political and public institutions, not to mention each other.

This year’s Community Summit, Confronting the Disinformation Age is intended to raise awareness, investigate, and create the space for attendees to learn, think and talk about misinformation, disinformation, fake news and other ways our information ecosystem is being polluted. It is more important than ever that we hear from each other and communicate with those whose views may differ from our own. Our aim is to bring experts and community members together, to encourage networks to form and collective responses to emerge. Research and education, political will, corporate responsibility, and a shared sense of the problem and our obligation therein is required for us to address and overcome these challenges.

Each year, the Community Summit provides us with opportunities to work with our longstanding supporters and collaborators such as the Jarislowsky Foundation, Vancity and the City of Vancouver, without whom we could not do this work. We are also excited to welcome new and exciting partnerships this year with Microsoft, the Digital Justice Lab, Check Your Head, the Discourse, and the Museum of Vancouver, to name a few. Additionally, each Community Summit is a chance to amplify the important work happening here at SFU. I am truly inspired by the innovative research taking place within our community, and encouraged that we can create solutions to confront the disinformation age.

A healthy democracy depends first and foremost on participation. Thank you for joining us. Welcome to the 2019 Community Summit.
The Origins of Totalitarianism / Hannah Arendt

On Truth / Simon Blackburn

The Politics of Misinformation / Murray J. Edelman

The Death of Truth: Notes on Falsehood in the Age of Trump / Michiko Kakutani

A Field Guide to Lies: Critical Thinking in the Information Age / Daniel J. Levitin

Post-Truth / Lee C. McIntyre

Nineteen Eighty-Four / George Orwell

Amusing Ourselves to Death / Neil Postman

The Flight from Truth: The Reign of Deceit in the Age of Information / Jean-François Revel

On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century / Timothy Snyder

The Attention Merchants: The Epic Scramble to Get inside Our Heads / Tim Wu

For more resources to help you confront disinformation, visit sfu.ca/publicsquare/resources
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>CONFRONTING THE DISINFORMATION AGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An Evening with David Frum, Sue Gardner &amp; Christopher Wylie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>A SPECIAL PHILOSOPHERS’ CAFÉ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COMPETING VISIONS OF CLIMATE POPULISM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>INNOVATIONS IN RESEARCH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IS SOCIAL MEDIA DESTROYING DEMOCRACY?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>WORKING TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE DIGITAL SOCIETY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MEDIA, MISINFORMATION, &amp; WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>FACE TO FACE(BOOK)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YOUTH TAKE ACTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>THE PHILOSOPHY OF FAKE NEWS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>SFU CITY CONVERSATIONS: WHEN FACTS FAIL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>FABRICATING MEANING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>SFU PUBLIC SQUARE TEAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>THANK YOU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>PARTNERS &amp; SUPPORTERS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ART EXHIBITS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Information, though fundamental to our existence, has always been vulnerable to manipulation. Today, in what many are calling the “post-truth” era, we’re witnessing an epidemic of disinformation. How did we get here?

Leading thinkers David Frum, Sue Gardner and Christopher Wylie will discuss how information is being co-opted, monetized, and polluted in our current context and the impacts on our society.

Join us for an informative evening during which we will consider the distortion of our information landscape and how we can all work together to confront it.
DAVID FRUM
Whether it is the latest foreign policy debate or the inner workings of the White House, David Frum offers refreshing and clear insights. As the Senior Editor at *The Atlantic* and the author of *New York Times* Bestseller *Trumpocracy: The Corruption of the American Republic*, David’s commentary on social and political issues generates thought-provoking discussions throughout America and around the world.

CHRISTOPHER WYLIE
Best known for his role in setting up — and then taking down — the cyberwarfare firm Cambridge Analytica, Christopher witnessed first hand how culture, information and algorithms were being weaponised by militaries, governments and companies to undermine elections around the world.

SUE GARDNER
Sue Gardner’s work is motivated by the desire to ensure that everybody in the world has access to the information they want and need, equipped to make the best possible decisions. Today, Gardner serves as executive director of *The Markup*, breaking stories that explore technology and its impact on people and society.

IAN HANOMANSING
Ian Hanomansing hosts *THE NATIONAL*, alongside Adrienne Arsenault, Rosemary Barton and Andrew Chang. Born in Trinidad and raised in Sackville, NB, veteran host and reporter Ian Hanomansing began his broadcasting career in Amherst, NS, working at radio stations in Moncton and Halifax before joining CBC in 1986. His assignments eventually took him to Vancouver, where he was a national reporter for fourteen years.

PRESENTING SPONSOR

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CBC VANCOUVER
 Lies and mistruths have always been used to sway people’s beliefs, and people have always created false personas. Plato wrestled with how to tell appearance from reality, and suggested that those in “the cave” might choose shadows and reflections over being truly enlightened. Are current times different and, if so, why and how?

And—the big questions—how important is all this? Is truth essential? Why? And what truth? Can we live with lies?

The SFU Philosophers’ Café invites people of all ages to an open and inclusive discussion about truth in the modern age.

**COMPETING VISIONS OF CLIMATE POPULISM**

**4:00–6:00PM, WEDNESDAY APRIL 10**

**SFU’S MORRIS J. WOSK CENTRE FOR DIALOGUE**

How does the rise of populism shape debates about climate and energy in Canada? Can left visions of ecological populism combat disinformation and challenge the forces of extractive populism?

In a panel discussion featuring Shane Gunster, Bob Neubauer, Paul Saurette, and Shannon Daub, these four speakers discuss how competing visions of extractive and ecological populism are shaping political debate in Canada.

**PART OF MEDIA DEMOCRACY DAYS**

Populism has become an increasingly prominent force in Canadian political life, with significant implications for how the public engages with the intersecting politics of climate change and energy.

**Presented in Partnership with** Media Democracy Days, SFU’s School of Communication, and SFU’s Faculty of Communication, Art, and Technology

#confrontingdisinformation
INNOVATIONS IN RESEARCH
7:00–9:00PM, WEDNESDAY APRIL 10
SFU SEGAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

PART OF SFU VANCOUVER’S 30TH ANNIVERSARY  Research doesn’t just live in libraries and academic papers; it has a profound impact on our day to day lives. Innovations in Research is a dynamic evening that showcases the SFU researchers and innovators who are designing solutions to confront the disinformation age.

Hosted by Joy Johnson, Vice-President, Research and International at SFU, this event features rapid-fire presentations, in-depth discussions, and interactive demonstrations by faculty, staff, students and alumni from across SFU’s faculties, departments, programs and campuses. Enjoy light refreshments as you move throughout the space, interacting with researchers and watching presentations from SFU’s remarkable research community.

Presented in Partnership with  SFU Vancouver, SFU’s Vancity Office of Community Engagement, and SFU Innovates

IS SOCIAL MEDIA DESTROYING DEMOCRACY?
7:00–9:00PM, THURSDAY APRIL 11
VANCOUVER PUBLIC LIBRARY, CENTRAL BRANCH

Is social media a tool that informs and unites, or is it responsible for deeper divisions and a more polarized society? Are misinformation, digital propaganda, algorithmic biases, and campaign hacking scandals determining the results of our elections? Do unintended flaws in the platforms and sluggish regulation threaten to undermine our democratic process?

Don’t miss this oxford-style debate on social media in the disinformation age, hosted by the CBC’s Stephen Quinn, featuring Nasma Ahmed, Director of the Digital Justice Lab; Colin Bennett, Professor of Political Science at the University of Victoria; Francesca Fionda, Journalist at The Discourse; and David Moscrop, postdoctoral fellow at the University of Ottawa.

Presented in Partnership with  SFU’s School of Public Policy, the British Columbia Civil Discourse Society, and CBC Vancouver
WORKING TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE DIGITAL SOCIETY
10:00AM–3:00PM, FRIDAY APRIL 12
DJAVAD MOWAFAGHIAN WORLD ART CENTRE,
SFU GOLDCORP CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

PART OF SFU VANCOUVER’S 30TH ANNIVERSARY

This interactive forum addresses current practices, challenges and possibilities for a justice-based approach to digital literacy education in communities that experience various forms of marginality across income, ability, health, gender and race. It adopts an intersectional approach to consider relationships between digital literacy and digital justice, paying close attention to equity, and how different groups are being positioned within digital ecosystems.

The Forum is Organized by SFU Continuing Studies, SFU’s Faculty of Education, SFU Vancouver, UBC Learning Exchange, UBC Department of Language and Literacy Education, and the Downtown Eastside Literacy Roundtable, with financial and in-kind support from the Digital Rights Community Grant Program, a partnership between Digital Justice Lab, Tech Reset Canada, and the Centre for Digital Rights.

MEDIA, MISINFORMATION, & WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT
12:00–4:00PM, MONDAY APRIL 15
SFU’S MORRIS J. WOSK CENTRE FOR DIALOGUE

Canadians are becoming more aware of issues around fake news, disinformation, and the dominance of social media bubbles but most do not have the chance to creatively engage with, understand and address these challenges. As the number of journalists across Canada is declining and misinformation is growing, it’s more important than ever to address this head on.

That’s why The Discourse is inviting journalists, academics, students, stakeholders and citizens to come together for a workshop on the media, misinformation, and what can be done about it. Together we’ll co-create recommendations for coverage and best practices that can help shape how stories are told leading up to Canada’s 2019 federal election.

Presenting Partner The Discourse

CANADA’S ENGAGED UNIVERSITY
FACE TO FACE(BOOK) WITH CHRISTOPHER WYLIE
12:00–1:15PM, TUESDAY APRIL 16
VANCOUVER PUBLIC LIBRARY, CENTRAL BRANCH

PART OF MEDIA DEMOCRACY DAYS  Named as “the millennials’ first great whistleblower” and “a pink-haired, nose-ringed oracle sent from the future,” Christopher Wylie is best known for his role in setting up—and then taking down—the cyberwarfare firm Cambridge Analytica. His revelations exposing the rampant misuse of data rocked Silicon Valley and forced numerous Fortune 500 companies to overhaul cybersecurity and user privacy practices.

In this intimate, student-only conversation moderated by the CBC’s Anita Bathe and hosted by Sabrina Smai, Software Engineer at Microsoft, Wylie discusses the digital threats facing students today, take questions from the audience, and give suggestions for how they can take control and fight back.

Presented in Partnership with  Media Democracy Days, SFU’s School of Communication, SFU’s Faculty of Communication, Art, and Technology, Cobalt Strategy Group, Cinyras, and CBC Vancouver

YOUTH TAKE ACTION: DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP DAY
9:00AM–3:00PM, WEDNESDAY APRIL 17
ROUNDHOUSE COMMUNITY ARTS & RECREATION CENTRE

Digital citizenship is a new and evolving concept which grapples with the complex reality of new digital technologies that impact all aspects of our lives today. The event brings together 150 high school students for a workshop that supplements B.C.’s digital literacy framework and explores the following questions:

· What are the rights of youth digital citizens?
· What are their responsibilities, and what are those of governments and private companies?
· How can we ensure that new technologies do not deepen existing injustices or create new ones?
· How can we equip students with the skills to navigate online spaces that are dominated by “fake news” and misinformation?
· How can we use exponentially advancing technology to create a better future for all of us?

Presented in Partnership with  Check Your Head
MUNICIPAL POLICY IN THE DISINFORMATION AGE  
Biased, misleading, and incorrect information has long influenced public policy development to varying degrees, but in our current age of disinformation, we’re witnessing a rise in “alternative facts” and the public delegitimization of experts.

Are we trending toward a future where facts are less essential to the formation of public policy than exaggerations, falsehoods, and outrage? How has policy formation and analysis been disrupted in the disinformation age, and what can we do about it? Should public policy formation change to reflect our new realities? What does this mean on a local level?

Join June Francis, Melody Ma and Gordon Price for a conversation moderated by Meg Holden.

Presented in Partnership with  SFU City Conversations, SFU Vancouver, SFU’s City Program, and SFU Urban Studies
Language is the principle means through which we form an understanding of the world and the foundation in which social and political relations are built. Science provides a language that quantifies and objectifies, encouraging transparency and creating accessibility, when in reality, few have access. The question that emerges is how does objectivity function as a method of understanding rather than a purveyor of truth in science? How do language and narratives shape perceptions?

Dr. Eldon Yellowhorn and Dr. J. Steven Dodge present their approaches to how language is used in science, as objective or embedded with cultural histories and subjectivities.

PRESENTING PARTNER   SFU Galleries
THANK YOU FROM SFU PUBLIC SQUARE

STEPHEN A. JARISLOWSKY For his generous support as a member of the SFU Public Square Founding Council. Dr. Jarislowsky’s continuing record of philanthropy and civic leadership stands as one of the best examples of global citizenship and democratic engagement. He has been active in educational, cultural, and charitable activities of many kinds, has endowed more than twenty-three University Chairs, and contributes frequently to television, radio, magazines, and newspapers.

SPONSORS, PARTNERS, & ADVISORS Whether you’re a long-standing partner or a new friend, none of this would be possible if we didn’t have your guidance, advice, support, and collaboration. Every year, we start our planning with not much more than a shell of an idea, and each year we produce a distinct Summit for thousands of attendees. Your contributions have left an indelible mark on this year’s program.

VOLUNTEERS We can’t say enough about the incredible work that you do. The researching, e-mailing, designing, promoting, street-teaming, campus engaging... the list goes on. This work is a vital part of the Community Summit, and we literally couldn’t do it without you. We are incredibly grateful for the energy, commitment, and excitement you bring to our team every single day.

PARTICIPANTS & ATTENDEES A Community Summit event is only meaningful when we have you, the community, here in the public square with us. You are what makes it all worthwhile. From speakers and presenters to in-person and online audiences, from those that are with us for the first time to those that have been around since the beginning, thank you. You don’t just make the Community Summit a success, you are the Community Summit.
THERE IS TRUTH HERE – MUSEUM OF VANCOUVER

Community Summit attendees are eligible for a 50% discount on admission to There is Truth Here, showing at the Museum of Vancouver. To receive the discount, show a digital or printed copy of your ticket to any Community Summit event at the Museum of Vancouver box office before May 31, 2019.

OTHER EXHIBITIONS EXPLORING TRUTH, TRUST, AND DISINFORMATION

Ann Beam and Carl Beam: Spaces for Reading
SFU Gallery, AQ3004, SFU’s Burnaby Campus
Until July 11, 2019

Krista Belle Stewart: Eye Eye
Teck Gallery, 515 W. Hastings Street, SFU’s Vancouver Campus
Until April 27, 2019

Adad Hannah: The Decameron Retold
Richmond Art Gallery, 7700 Minoru Gate, Richmond
Until April 20, 2019

Kali Spitzer: An Exploration of Resilience
grunt gallery, 350 E. 2nd Ave, Vancouver
Until April 27, 2019

A Handful of Dust: From the Cosmic to the Domestic
Polygon Gallery, 101 Carrie Cates Crescent, North Vancouver
Until April 28, 2019