



Louisville Section Technical Meeting

Date: Tuesday, February 22, 2022

Time: 11:00 AM – Sign-In
11:30 AM – Lunch
12:00 PM – Presentation

Location: University Club of Louisville
200 East Brandeis Ave.
Louisville, KY 40208

Directions: <https://uclub.squarespace.com/location>

Menu: University Club Sandwich Buffet

Price: \$10 members and guests, \$5 students

RSVP: Charlie Waters, Section Secretary
Email: cwaters8@gmail.com

Vegetarian requests must be made in advance.

We must give the University Club a guaranteed number of guests no later than Tuesday, February 15. Please call or email Charlie Waters by then.

Topic: Combatting the Spread of Online Misinformation

Speaker: Speaker: Dr. Pamela Thomas, Asst. Prof. of Computer Science and Engineering, J.B. Speed School of Engineering, University of Louisville

Abstract:

The discussion will describe several different methods to understand, describe human behavior on the Internet, and the effect of offline events on online communities. The central focus of this work is a broad investigation into how groups of people behave online.

Research will be presented that seeks to better understand the effect of policies enacted by governments or other social media companies on online behavior. Included will be an alternative to censorship as a way to stop the spread of misinformation and propaganda online, as well as preliminary results on this intervention. GitHub was used to research how new information is adopted into a group, and the resulting struggle that emerges from fights over how to apply this new knowledge. The results suggest that censorship has an impact on the structure of groups, and that deplatforming results in users leaving Reddit more frequently, for example. Additionally, results in piloting a social media literacy site suggest that people can be taught to do their own fact checking when they come across misinformation on social media. This will hopefully result in less misinformation in the news feeds of citizens, and a more informed public.

Biography:

Dr. Pamela Thomas is an assistant professor at the Speed School of Engineering at the University of Louisville. Her research focuses on computational social science, data science, and machine learning for the common good. She has expertise in a variety of different areas including social media research, misinformation spread, media literacy programming, healthcare analytics, data mining, neural networks, and graphs.