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The impact of digital technologies on the democratic process

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In today's world, digital tech and democracy intersect deeply, changing governance, participation, and public discourse. At this event, we'll discuss how digital innovations impact democracy to offer opportunities and pose challenges. Technology has revolutionised how we access information, with social media becoming pivotal for political expression and debate, but it also brings risks like misinformation and echo chambers.

Political engagement can also be reshaped with technologies that empower citizens through online activism and participation tools. Yet, concerns linger about the digital divide and equitable access. The rise of digital platforms raises concerns about election integrity, including safeguarding against interference and cyber threats, posing significant challenges for policymakers and technologists.

Our event seeks to deepen our understanding of this complex relationship, exploring ways to leverage digital innovations while safeguarding democracy through interdisciplinary dialogue and knowledge-sharing.

All SASIG events operate under Chatham House Rule, and there is no charge to attend.

Wednesday 26 June 2024

3.30pm to 6.30pm

University of Surrey, Guildford

Chair

Dr Andrew Rogoyski Innovation Strategy Lead, The Surrey Institute for People-Centred AI, University of Surrey

3.30pm **Registration and networking**

4pm **Welcome and introductions**

Dr Andrew Rogoyski Innovation Strategy Lead, The Surrey Institute for People-Centred AI, University of Surrey

Professor Steve Schneider Head of Computer Science Research Centre, University of Surrey

Danny King Managing Director, The SASIG

4.10pm **Key opportunities and threats posed by AI to democratic elections: How worried we should be?**

Professor Rachel Gibson Professor of Political Science, University of Manchester

This session will dissect the pivotal role of AI in democratic elections, illuminating its transformative potential and formidable challenges. While AI streamlines processes, enhances transparency, and empowers voter engagement, it also amplifies risks such as misinformation, bias, and deepfakes, threatening the integrity of elections. By evaluating the dual impact of AI, we aim to gauge the appropriate level of concern. Rachel will discuss this complex terrain, prioritising proactive measures to safeguard democracy while harnessing AI's innovations.

4.30pm **Unveiling online political advertising: Global insights**

Dr Charles Kriel Senior Fellow - AI & Technology, Sympodium Institute of Strategic Communications

Charles will explore the evolution, impact, and challenges of online political advertising, including a summary of his report on the subject to the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. He will delve into the rise of misinformation, privacy concerns, and algorithmic biases and provide insights on enhancing transparency, promoting digital literacy and how we can shape a future where democracy thrives in the digital age.

4.50pm **Electronic voting and the Swiss Post system**

Dr Sasa Radomirovic Senior Lecturer in Secure Systems, University of Surrey

In this presentation, we will delve into the innovative realm of electronic voting through the lens of Switzerland's Swiss Post system. This electronic voting platform empowers citizens to participate in elections remotely with confidence through accessibility, security, and efficiency. Sasa will discuss the seamless integration of technology into Switzerland's democratic fabric, revolutionising the voting experience. By dissecting the features and safeguards of this pioneering system, we will unravel the potential of electronic voting to enhance democratic engagement while addressing concerns of integrity and privacy.

5.10pm **Q&A session**

A closing Q&A session, where you'll have the chance to share your thoughts, ask questions, and get answers from our speakers regarding their sessions.

5.30pm **End of meeting and networking**

About



The Security Awareness Special Interest Group (SASIG)

SASIG is a subscription-free networking forum, membership now represents thousands of organisations of all sizes from across the world and from all sectors, public and private. Its 9,800+ membership is drawn from CIOs, CISOs and their staff with responsibility for cybersecurity within their organisations. Professionals from other disciplines (risk, HR, legal, supply, etc.) and representatives from government, law enforcement and academia are also being increasingly welcomed at events. The Chatham House Rule is strictly enforced and universally respected at all meetings, and vendors and the Press are routinely excluded. Thus, the level of debate is extraordinarily revealing and rewarding.

SASIG has a members' website at www.thesasig.com. Please register here for membership.

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