

Dr. BRIONY SWIRE-THOMPSON
Senior Research Scientist

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Research Interests

My research investigates what drives belief in inaccurate information, why certain individuals are predisposed to refrain from belief change even in the face of good corrective evidence, and how corrections can be designed to maximize impact.

Education

- Ph.D. in Psychological Science, University of Western Australia Feb 2013 - Dec 2017
Cognitive Science Laboratories
Dissertation title: “The Role of Memory and Ideological Biases in the Correction of Misinformation”
Supervisors: Associate Professor Ullrich Ecker, Professor Stephan Lewandowsky
- Honours¹ in Psychological Science, University of Western Australia Feb 2009 - Dec 2009
Cognitive Science Laboratories
Thesis: “Misinformation in Memory: Strength of Encoding and Retracting Information”
Supervisors: Professor Stephan Lewandowsky, Associate Professor Ullrich Ecker
- Bachelor of Arts, University of Western Australia Feb 2003 - Dec 2005
Double major in Psychological Science, single major in English Literature

Studies / Collaborations Abroad

- Postgraduate Fulbright Scholar, Massachusetts Institute of Technology Aug 2015 - Jun 2016
Host supervisor: Professor Adam Berinsky, Political Experiments Research Laboratory
- Visiting Student, University of Bristol Aug 2014 - Sep 2014
Host laboratory: Dr. Jonathan Brooks, Clinical Research and Imaging Centre
- Visiting Student, University of Bristol Aug 2004 - May 2005
Undergraduate studies: Psychology and English Literature

Employment (*academic / psychology related only*)

- Senior Research Scientist Jul 2020–present
Northeastern University, Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Sciences, Boston
- Associate Research Scientist Aug 2019–Jul 2020
Northeastern University, Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Sciences, Boston
- Postdoctoral researcher Aug 2017- Aug 2019
Northeastern University, Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Sciences, Boston

¹ In Australia, honours is one year course with a substantial research component. It is completed after a bachelor’s degree and is a prerequisite for postgraduate studies.

Publications

Swire-Thompson, B., Miklaucic, N., Wihbey, J., Lazer, D., & DeGutis, J. (in press). Backfire effects after correcting misinformation are strongly associated with reliability. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*.

Johnson, S. B., Parsons M., Dorff, T., Moran, M.S. Ward, J.H., Cohen, S.A., Akerley, W., Bauman, J., Hubbard, J., Spratt, D.E., Bylund, C.L., **Swire-Thompson, B.**, Onega, T., Scherer, L.D., Tward, J., Fagerlin A. (in press). Cancer Misinformation and Harmful Information on Facebook and Other Social Media: A Brief Report. *JNCI: Journal of the National Cancer Institute*.

Swire-Thompson, B. DeGutis, J., & Lazer, D. (2020). Searching for the backfire effect: Measurement and design considerations. *Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition*, 9(3), 286-299.

Swire-Thompson, B. & Lazer, D. (2020). Public health and online misinformation—Challenges and recommendations. *Annual Review of Public Health*.

Pasquetto, I., **Swire-Thompson, B.**, Amazeen, M.A., Benevenuto, F., Brashier, N.M., Bond, R.M., Bozarth, L.C., Budak, C., Ecker, U.K.H., Fazio, L.K., Ferrara, E., Flanagan, A.J., Flammini, A., Freelon, D., Grinberg, N., Hertwig, R., Jamieson, K.H., Joseph, K., Jones, J.J. ... Yang, K.C. (2020). Tackling misinformation: What researchers could do with social media data. *Harvard Kennedy School (HKS) Misinformation Review*, 1(8)

Peterson, J.S., **Swire-Thompson, B.** & Johnson, S.B. (2020). What's the alternative? Responding strategically to cancer misinformation, *Future Oncology*.

Swire-Thompson, B., Ecker, U. K.H., Swire, B., Lewandowsky, S., & Berinsky, A. J. (2020). They might be a liar but they're my liar: Source evaluation and the prevalence of misinformation. *Political Psychology*.

Joseph, K., **Swire-Thompson, B.**, Baum, M., & Lazer D. (2019). Polarized, together: Comparing partisan support for Trump's tweets using survey and platform-based measures. *International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media*.

Grinberg, N., Joseph, K., Friedland, L, **Swire-Thompson, B.**, & Lazer, L. (2019) Voter exposure to fake news on Twitter during the 2016 U.S. election, *Science*.

Swire, B. & Ecker, U. K. H. (2018). Misinformation and its correction: Cognitive mechanisms and recommendations for mass communication. In B. Southwell, E. A. Thorson, & L. Sheble. (Eds), *Misinformation and Mass Audiences*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Aird, M., Ecker, U. K. H., **Swire, B.** Berinsky, A., J., Lewandowsky, S. (2018) Does truth matter to voters? The effects of correcting political misinformation in an Australian sample, *Royal Society Open Science*.

Swire, B., Ecker, U. K. H. & Lewandowsky, S. (2017). The role of familiarity in correcting inaccurate information, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*.

Swire, B., Berinsky, A., J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U. K. H. (2017). Processing political misinformation—Comprehending the Trump phenomenon, *Royal Society Open Science*.

Ecker, U. K. H., **Swire, B.**, & Lewandowsky, S. (2014). Correcting misinformation—A challenge for education and cognitive science. In D. N. Rapp & J. Braasch. (Eds.), *Processing Inaccurate Information: Theoretical and Applied Perspectives from Cognitive Science and the Educational Sciences*. (pp. 13-38). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Ecker, U. K. H., Lewandowsky, S., **Swire, B.**, & Chang, D. (2011). Correcting false information in memory: Manipulating the strength of misinformation encoding and its retraction. *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review*, 18, 570-578.

Honours

Dean's List Honourable Mention—Recognition of an Outstanding Thesis 2017
 Project: "The role of memory and ideological biases in the correction of misinformation"
 University of Western Australia

Funding Awards

Pathway to Independence K99/R00 2021
 Project: Cancer misinformation on social media and its correction
 National Institute of Health: National Cancer Institute

NULab Seedling Grant 2019
 Project: "The prevalence of backfire effects after the correction of misinformation"
 NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks

NULab Seedling Grant 2018
 Project: "The prevalence of backfire effects after the correction of misinformation"
 NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks

Gregory Schwartz Fulbright Enrichment Travel Grant 2016
 Project: To present "Processing political misinformation" at a conference.
 Australian-American Fulbright Association

Fulbright Postgraduate Scholarship 2015
 Project: "The correction of misinformation"
 Australian-American Fulbright Association

University Postgraduate Award 2013
 University of Western Australia
 This is a stipend paid fortnightly for 3.5 years of graduate studies

Safety-net Top Up Scholarship 2013
 University of Western Australia
 This is a stipend paid fortnightly for 3.5 years of graduate studies

Study Abroad Undergraduate Scholarship 2004
 University of Western Australia

Invited Talks

Swire-Thompson, B. (2021) Gaps in empirical data related to misinformation: Symposium on health and medial misinformation, The American Public Health Association, virtual talk

Swire-Thompson, B. (2021) Combatting Misinformation in Health and Health Care: DIA Global Annual Meeting, virtual talk

Swire-Thompson, B. (2020) Addressing Health Misinformation Through Health Literacy Practices: National Academy of Science, virtual talk.

Swire-Thompson, B. (2020) Correcting Health Misinformation Talk at the National Academy of Sciences, Washington DC.

Swire-Thompson, B. (2019). Correcting misinformation and the backfire effect. Talk at Social Psychology Area Meeting, Cognitive Brain Sciences Colloquium, Boston.

Swire-Thompson, B. (2019). Fake news, misinformation, and the 2016 election. Talk at Tufts University, Cognitive Brain Sciences Colloquium, Boston.

Swire-Thompson, B. (2018). Ideas that sell and the correction of misinformation. Talk at NATO StratCom, Latvia.

Swire-Thompson, B. (2018). The psychology of misinformation. Talk to Nordic government officials, Finland.

Swire-Thompson, B. (2018). Cognitive approaches to the correction of misinformation. Fulbright Finland.

Swire-Thompson, B. (2017). Measuring misinformation using social media and cognitive approaches to its correction. Talk to the US Advisory Council, Boston.

Swire-Thompson, B., Berinsky, A., J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U. K. H. (2017). Belief updating and the 2016 presidential election. Talk at Massachusetts, Institute of Technology / University College London's Affective Brain Lab, Boston.

Swire-Thompson, B. (2017). What does cognitive psychology recommend for correcting misinformation? Talk at Fact 4: Global Fact Checking Conference, Madrid.

Swire-Thompson, B., Berinsky, A., J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U. K. H. (2016). Processing political misinformation. Talk at Impact Hub, Boston.

Swire-Thompson, B. (2016) Australian-American Postgraduate Fulbright Scholarships. Talk at the University of Western Australia, Perth.

Conference Presentations

Swire-Thompson, B & DeGutis, J. (2019). The prevalence of backfire effects after the correction of misinformation. Talk at Society for Applied Memory and Cognition (SARAC), Cape Cod.

Swire-Thompson, B., Beauchamp, N., & Lazer, D. (2018). Anchoring and the forecasting of geopolitical events. Talk presented at CompleNet, Boston.

Swire-Thompson, B., Berinsky, A., J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U. K. H. (2017). Source evaluation after disproportionate presentations of misinformation and factual information. Poster presented at Psychonomic Society Conference, Vancouver.

Swire-Thompson, B., Berinsky, A., J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U. K. H. (2016). Correcting political misinformation. Talk at Massachusetts, Institute of Technology, Graduate Student Seminar, Boston.

Swire-Thompson, B., Berinsky, A., J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U. K. H. (2016). Processing political misinformation—Comprehending the Trump phenomenon. Poster presented at Psychonomic Society Conference, Boston.

Swire-Thompson, B., Berinsky, A., J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U. K. H. (2016). Processing political misinformation—Comprehending the Trump phenomenon. Talk in the Midwest Political Science Conference Junior Scholar Symposium, Chicago.

Swire-Thompson, B., Berinsky, A., J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U. K. H. (2016). Correcting political misinformation. Talk at Massachusetts, Institute of Technology, Graduate Student Seminar, Boston.

Swire-Thompson, B., Ecker, U. K. H. & Lewandowsky, S. (2015). Correcting misinformation and the familiarity backfire effect. Talk at the University of Western Australia School of Psychology Colloquium, Perth.

Swire-Thompson, B., Berinsky, A., J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U. K. H. (2015). Misinformation and backfire effects. Poster presented at Massachusetts Fulbright Seminar, Boston.

Swire-Thompson, B., Berinsky, A., J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U. K. H. (2015). Misinformation and backfire effects. Poster Presented at the Western Australian Fulbright Seminar, Perth.

Swire-Thompson, B., Ecker, U. K. H. & Lewandowsky, S. (2015). Misinformation in memory. Talk at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Graduate Student Seminar, Boston

Swire-Thompson, B., Berinsky, A., J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U. K. H. (2015). Misinformation and backfire effects. Poster presented at the Australian-American National Fulbright Seminar, Perth.

Swire-Thompson, B., Ecker, U. K. H. & Lewandowsky, S. (2015). Correcting misinformation and the familiarity backfire effect. Talk at the Australasian Experimental Psychology Conference, Sydney.

Teaching

Coordinating Graduate Research Instructor for Cognitive Psychology Feb - Jun 2015
University of Western Australia
Responsibilities: Teaching the graduate student instructors content and activities for the laboratories, helping the unit-coordinator create laboratory content, managing the course website, and preparing individualized content for students with special needs.

The responsibilities for the Graduate Student Instructor and Sessional Academic positions below involved teaching laboratories of up to 40 students, demonstrating SPSS, and marking assignments, exams, and oral presentations. Average teaching rating 4.66 / 5 across courses.

Graduate Student Instructor for Cognitive Psychology Feb - Jun 2013, Feb - Jun 2015
University of Western Australia
This second and third-year undergraduate course covered attention, executive functioning, principles and dissociations of human memory, information updating, problem solving and reasoning, judgement and decision making, applied cognition including forensic analysis, eyewitness testimony, and human error.

Sessional Academic for Introduction to Psychology Feb - Jun 2013, Feb - Jun 2014
Curtin University
This first-year undergraduate course was an introduction to social psychology, personality, development, learning, memory, motivation, and the methodological issues related to psychology.

Graduate Student Instructor for Research Methods: Design and Analysis Feb – Jun 2014
University of Western Australia
This third-year undergraduate course covered performing and interpreting statistical analyses. The laboratories involved analyzing sets of data using SPSS, writing reports of analyses, and evaluating research design.

Sessional Academic for Brain and Behavior Jun – Nov 2013
Curtin University
This first-year undergraduate course covered the structural and functional organization of the central nervous system, and the interrelationships between physiological functioning and behavior.

Media (examples)

How to detect, resist and counter the flood of fake news (2021) *Science News*
<https://www.sciencenews.org/article/fake-news-misinformation-covid-vaccines-conspiracy>

The pernicious contagion of misinformation (2020) Knowable Magazine
<https://knowablemagazine.org/article/society/2020/pernicious-contagion-misinformation>

Fake news is more likely to be shared by older people — but we don't know why (2019). *ABC News*.
<https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2019-01-25/older-people-share-more-social-media-fake-news-2016-election/10746348>

Tired of being manipulated by fake news? This Northeastern researcher is creating the tools we need to fight against it. (2018). *News@Northeastern*. Available from <https://news.northeastern.edu/2018/06/18/tired-of-being-manipulated-by-fake-news-this-northeastern-researcher-is-creating-the-tools-we-need-to-fight-against-it/>

These academics are on the research frontlines of fake news research. (2018). *Poynter*. Available from <https://www.poynter.org/news/these-academics-are-frontlines-fake-news-research>

Why we lie: The science behind our deceptive ways (2017). *National Geographic*. Available from <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2017/06/lying-hoax-false-fibs-science/>

There's probably nothing that will change Clinton or Trump supporters' minds. (2016). *FiveThirtyEight*. Available from <http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/theres-probably-nothing-that-will-change-clinton-or-trump-supporters-minds/>