

**Dr. BRIONY SWIRE-THOMPSON**

Senior Research Scientist

Network Science Institute; Northeastern University  
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**Citizenship:** Australian / British**Email:** b.swire-thompson@northeastern.edu**CV updated:** 30/11/2021**Research Interests**

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My program of research is focused on what drives belief in misinformation, 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. I conduct my research primarily from a cognitive psychology perspective, but also take inspiration from social psychology, health psychology, political psychology, and communications.

**Education and Training**

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Ph.D. in Psychological Science, University of Western Australia 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	Feb 2013 - Dec 2017
Honours <sup>1</sup> in Psychological Science, University of Western Australia Cognitive Science Laboratories Thesis: Misinformation in Memory: Strength of Encoding and Retracting Information Supervisors: Professor Stephan Lewandowsky, Associate Professor Ullrich Ecker	Feb 2009 - Dec 2009
Bachelor of Arts, University of Western Australia Double major in Psychological Science, single major in English Literature	Feb 2003 - Dec 2005

**Positions and appointments** (*academic related only*)

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Senior Research Scientist Northeastern University, Network Science Institute, Boston Other appointment: Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Sciences, Cambridge	Jul 2020–present
Associate Research Scientist Northeastern University, Network Science Institute, Boston Other appointment: Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Sciences, Cambridge	Aug 2019–Jul 2020
Postdoctoral fellow Northeastern University, Network Science Institute, Boston Other appointment: Harvard Institute for Quantitative Social Sciences, Cambridge Supervisor: Professor David Lazer	Aug 2017- Aug 2019

**Honors and Awards**

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Dean's List Honourable Mention—Recognition of an Outstanding Thesis Project: The role of memory and ideological biases in the correction of misinformation From: University of Western Australia	2017
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<sup>1</sup> In Australia, honours is a one year course with a substantial research component. It is completed after a bachelor's degree and is a prerequisite for postgraduate studies.

- Fulbright Scholarship to Massachusetts Institute of Technology 2015 - 2016  
 From: Fulbright Australia  
 Host supervisor: Professor Adam Berinsky, Political Experiments Research Laboratory
- Study Abroad Scholarship to the University of Bristol 2004 - 2005  
 From: The University of Western Australia

### **Peer-reviewed Publications**

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**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*.

**Swire-Thompson, B.**, Cook, J., Butler, L., Sanderson, J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U.K.H. (in press). Correction format has a limited role when debunking misinformation. *Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications*.

**Swire-Thompson, B.** & Lazer, D. (in press). Reducing Health Misinformation in Science: A Call to Arms. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*.

Peterson, J., Wilson, T., Gruhl, J. D., Davis, S., Olsen, J., Parsons, M. W., Kann, B.H., Watt, M., **Swire-Thompson, B.**, & Johnson, S. B. (2021). The Association Between Conventional Cancer Treatment History and Dissatisfaction Among Those Seeking Alternative Cancer Therapies: Insights From a Crowdfunding Platform. *International Journal of Radiation Oncology, Biology, Physics*, 111(3), e344-e345.

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*, 41, 433-451.

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*, 1883-1888.

**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*, 41(1), 21-34.

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*, Vol. 13, pp. 290-301

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*, 363(6425), 374-378.

**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, 195-221.

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*, 5(12), 180593.

**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*, 43 (12), 1948-1961.

**Swire, B.**, Berinsky, A., J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U. K. H. (2017). Processing political misinformation—Comprehending the Trump phenomenon, *Royal Society Open Science*, 4(3), 160802.

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.

### **Competitive Funding Awarded**

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Pathway to Independence: K99/R00 Role: PI Project: Cancer misinformation on social media and its correction Funder: National Institute of Health: National Cancer Institute Amount: \$1,056,885	2021-2026
Volkswagen Foundation Award Role: Co-PI (PIs: Ralph Hertwig, Stephan Lewandowsky, Tina Eliassi-Rad, Stefan Herzog, & Awais Rashid). Project: Controlling the Jekyll and Hyde of Artificial-Intelligence Assisted Information Architectures: Accepting Customization while Resisting micro-targeted Manipulation. Funder: Volkswagen Foundation Amount: €148,000	2019-2023
NULab Seedling Grant Role: PI Project: Backfire effects after the correction of misinformation Funder: NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks Amount: \$1,100	2019
NULab Seedling Grant Role: PI Project: The prevalence of backfire effects after the correction of misinformation NULab for Texts, Maps, and Networks Amount: \$2,000	2018
Gregory Schwartz Fulbright Enrichment Travel Grant Project: To present “Processing political misinformation” at a conference. Funder: Australian-American Fulbright Association Amount: \$1,200	2016
Fulbright Postgraduate Scholarship Project: The correction of misinformation Funder: Australian-American Fulbright Association Amount: \$30,000	2015-2016
Study Abroad Undergraduate Scholarship Funder: University of Western Australia Amount: \$2,500	2004-2005

## **Invited Talks**

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**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 Sciences*, virtual talk.

**Swire-Thompson, B.** (2019). Public health and online misinformation: Challenges and recommendations. *Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health Alumni Weekend*, Boston, in-person talk.

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

**Swire-Thompson, B.** (2019). Fake news, misinformation, and the 2016 election. *Tufts University, Cognitive Brain Sciences Colloquium*, Boston, in-person talk.

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

**Swire-Thompson, B., Berinsky, A., J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U. K. H.** (2017). Belief updating and the 2016 presidential election. *University College London's Affective Brain Lab*, Boston, in-person talk.

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

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

**Swire-Thompson, B.** (2016). Australian-American Postgraduate Fulbright Scholarships. *Fulbright Australia University of Western Australia*, Perth, in-person talk.

## **National and International Advisory Meetings**

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**Swire-Thompson, B.** (2020). Correcting health misinformation. *National Academy of Sciences*, Washington DC.

**Swire-Thompson, B.** (2018). The correction of misinformation. *NATO StratCom*, Latvia.

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

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

## **Conference Presentations: Talks**

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**Swire-Thompson, B.** (2021). Memory and belief in the correction of misinformation. *Workshop on online interventions 2021 (WOI2021)*, virtual talk.

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

**Swire-Thompson, B., Beauchamp, N., & Lazer, D.** (2018). Anchoring and the forecasting of geopolitical events. *CompleNet*, Boston, in-person talk.

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **Conference Presentations: Posters**

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

**Swire-Thompson, B.,** Berinsky, A., J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U. K. H. (2015). Misinformation and backfire effects. Massachusetts Fulbright Seminar, Boston, in-person poster.

**Swire-Thompson, B.,** Berinsky, A., J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U. K. H. (2015). The correction of misinformation. *Western Australian Fulbright Seminar*, Perth, in-person poster.

**Swire-Thompson, B.,** Berinsky, A., J., Lewandowsky, S., & Ecker, U. K. H. (2015). Political misinformation and its correction. *Australian-American National Fulbright Seminar*, Perth, in-person poster.

### **Teaching**

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Coordinating Graduate Research Instructor for Cognitive Psychology Feb - Jun 2015  
 University: The University of Western Australia  
 Responsibilities: I helped the unit coordinator, Dr. Ullrich Ecker, run the Cognitive Psychology unit of 550 students. I taught 10 graduate student instructors what content to teach and how to conduct activities for the laboratories. I assisted with the creation of laboratory content, managed the course website, and prepared individualized content for students with special needs.

Graduate Student Instructor for Cognitive Psychology Feb - Jun 2013, Feb - Jun 2015  
 University: The University of Western Australia  
 Responsibilities: My role involved teaching laboratories of up to 40 students and marking assignments and exams. 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  
 University: Curtin University  
 Responsibilities: My role involved teaching laboratories of up to 40 students and marking assignments, oral presentations, and exams. 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: The University of Western Australia  
 Responsibilities: My role involved teaching laboratories of up to 40 students, demonstrating SPSS, and marking assignments and exams. This third-year undergraduate course covered performing and interpreting statistical analyses. The laboratories involved analyzing sets of data, writing reports of analyses, and evaluating research design.

Sessional Academic for Brain and Behavior Jun – Nov 2013  
 University: Curtin University  
 Responsibilities: My role involved teaching laboratories of up to 40 students and marking assignments and exams. This first-year undergraduate course covered the structural and functional organization of the central nervous system, and the interrelationships between physiological functioning and behavior.

## **Service**

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Special Issue Journal Editor (with Sander van der Linden and Jon Roozenbeek) 2022  
 Journal: Applied Cognitive Psychology  
 Title: The Truth is Out There: The Psychology of Conspiracy Theories and How to Counter Them

Dissertation Committee 2021  
 PhD candidate: Sacha Altay  
 University: Paris Sciences et Lettres University  
 Dissertation title: Understanding misinformation and fighting for information

Advisory Committee for Fact-checking Organizations 2019-2020  
 Fact-checkers: Full Fact, Chequeado, Africa Check  
 Responsibilities: Providing recommendations and oversee the quality of research with regards to study design, methods, and analyses. Giving feedback on reports and publications.

Grant reviewer 2020  
 Agence Nationale de la Recherche (National Agency of Research: France)

Book proposal reviewer 2020  
 Cambridge University Press

*Ad Hoc* Journal Reviewer  
 Nature Human Behaviour; Science Advances; Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences; Journal of Experimental Psychology: General; Journal of Applied Research in Memory and Cognition; Cognitive Research: Principles and Implications; Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory and Cognition; American Journal of Public Health; Cognition; Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied; Political Communication; Political Psychology.

## **Media examples**

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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>

What is the internet doing to Boomers' brains? (2020). *Huffpost*. [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/internet-baby-boomers-misinformation-social-media\\_n\\_5f998039c5b6a4a2dc813d3d](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/internet-baby-boomers-misinformation-social-media_n_5f998039c5b6a4a2dc813d3d)

After experts criticized its approach, Facebook overhauls its Covid-19 misinformation policy. (2020). *STAT News*.  
<https://www.statnews.com/2020/12/16/facebook-misinformation-covid19-update/>

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*. <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*. <https://www.poynter.org/news/these-academics-are-frontlines-fake-news-research>

The power of perception. (2017). *MIT News*. <https://news.mit.edu/2017/information-sources-affect-voters-0228>

Why we lie: The science behind our deceptive ways (2017). *National Geographic*. <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*. <http://fivethirtyeight.com/features/theres-probably-nothing-that-will-change-clinton-or-trump-supporters-minds/>

If fake news wasn't on Facebook, people would find it somewhere else. (2016) *The Washington Post*. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/11/19/if-fake-news-wasnt-on-facebook-people-would-find-it-somewhere-else/>