

Digital Shadows

DISINFORMATION, DEMOCRACY, AND CYBER THREATS

 **A. G. Leventis Gallery**

 **30 Oct, 2025, 10:30**

OPENING SESSION | 10:30 - 10:40



Dionysos Alexiou | Executive Director, Foundation for Parliamentarism and Participatory Democracy, House of Representatives



Haris Georgiades | President of the Standing Committee of Foreign and European Affairs, Chairman, Institute of Glafkos Clerides

GUEST SPEAKER | 10:40 - 10:55



Chrysostomos L. (Max) Nikias | President Emeritus and Life Trustee Malcolm R Currie Chair for Technology and the Humanities, University of Southern California

Safeguarding Elections Against Cyber Threats in Democracies

This talk examines cybersecurity challenges facing democratic elections, including threats from foreign actors, through hacking, disinformation, and AI-driven manipulations. It outlines protective measures such as vulnerability assessments, international cooperation, and AI safeguards, with examples from U.S., European, and global incidents. Concluding with actionable strategies, it emphasizes optimism in preserving electoral integrity through collaborative efforts.



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ΚΑΙ ΤΕΧΝΩΝ

Γραφείο Έρευνας
Πολιτειακών Μελετών



USC ITEHE

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FIRST SESSION | 10:55 - 11:25



Adam Clayton Powell III | Executive Director, USC Election Cybersecurity Initiative, Director, Annenberg Center Washington Programs, USC Annenberg Center on Communication Leadership and Policy, Co-Host, "White House Chronicle" weekly on PBS, SiriusXM and VOA

Misinformation, Disinformation and Elections: How the U.S. Differs from Most Democracies

U.S. national, state and local governments have deployed defences against foreign political misinformation since 2018. But some government efforts were criticized as politically partisan, and Google, among others, cited Biden administration pressure to have critics "censored" and "de-platformed," in possible violation of U.S. free speech laws. This year, the U.S. dismantled most of the tools and resources directed at countering foreign political misinformation; as a result, for the 2026 U.S. election, among the world's multi-party democracies, the U.S. may have one of the smallest efforts to counter foreign influence.



Sofia Iordanidou | Associate Professor of Communication and New Journalism, Open University of Cyprus

Democracy in the era of disinformation: could truth be rescued?

The Challenge of Disinformation through technology (social media, AI-generated content, and fragmented news ecosystems) allow falsehoods to spread faster than facts. Eventually, this leads to a loss of trust for institutions, journalists, and politics. Democracy without truth is not Democracy. If people do not have access to real facts, they cannot make correct decisions for their lives through vote. Strengthening institutions for truth to be saved and trust to be rebuilt in a one-way path for Democracy.

COFFEE BREAK | ZEST AT PINAKOTHIKI | 11.25 - 11:50

INTERSESSION SPEECH | 11:50 - 12:05



Jeffrey Cole | Professor Emeritus, Director of the Center for the Digital Future USC Annenberg

Do facts matter anymore: how misinformation has shaken the foundation of education, journalism, politics and AI will make things worse?

The Internet started with so much promise that everyone would be connected, anyone could be a journalist and we would all have access to the world's best information. That all happened but it didn't turn out the way that was expected. The misinformation flowing from social media drowned out the journalism from trained professionals. It became difficult and then impossible to discern what was true. Not being able to assess the veracity of information has led to distrusting everything we read or see. Even seeing is no longer believing. This talk will look at how all this happened and whether there are strategies to restore reliable information that all can use to frame policy and common understanding.

SECOND SESSION | 12:05-12:50



Yiannis Mastrogeorgiou | Special Secretary of strategic foresight,
Presidency of the Greek government

Governing Truth in the AI Era

In an era where artificial intelligence blurs the boundaries between reality and fabrication, the proliferation of deepfakes and AI-driven disinformation poses an urgent scientific and societal challenge. Empirical studies reveal that human detection capacities are limited, often falling below chance when confronted with sophisticated manipulations. As AI technologies increasingly serve both the creation and the detection of deceptive content, the balance between innovation and integrity becomes critical. Addressing this requires a dual strategy: technical transparency and institutional accountability. Responsible governance, research investment, and digital literacy can foster societal “immunity” to manipulation, ensuring that truth and freedom remain resilient. While eradicating disinformation is impossible, empowering citizens to critically discern and question is essential to safeguarding democracy in the age of algorithmic deception.



Savas Chatzichristofis | Vice-Rector of Research and Innovation,
Professor of Artificial Intelligence, Neapolis University Pafos

AI and Democracy: Transformation or Threat?

Artificial Intelligence is reshaping democracy, redefining how citizens are informed, engaged, and make decisions. On one hand, it fosters transparency, participation, and evidence-based policymaking. On the other hand, it introduces serious risks such as the spread of fake news, targeted propaganda, algorithmic bias, and large-scale manipulation of public opinion. This presentation examines real-world cases where AI enhances democratic processes, as well as instances where it undermines them, ultimately raising a critical question: who controls the algorithms that shape our democracies?



Bruno Dias Pinheiro | Representative of the Portuguese Parliament
to the European Union Institutions

Narratives Matter: Building a Democratic Immune System Against Disinformation

The fight against disinformation cannot be won by technical fixes alone. It is a battle of narratives, values, and collective imagination. This contribution will explore how cultural literacy, education, and civic engagement can act as a “democratic immune system” against manipulation and falsehoods. Drawing on experiences at the intersection of parliamentary communication and cultural dialogue, it will argue that defending democracy in the digital age requires not just resilience, but also a proactive investment in narratives that inspire trust, inclusion, and European identity. By bridging politics, culture, and digital regulation, this approach seeks to empower citizens as co-authors of Europe’s democratic story, while affirming the key role that Parliaments can play in that context.

TRANSANTLANTIC ECHOES (ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION)

COORDINATOR



Achilles C. Emilianides | President, Cyprus Academy of Sciences, Letters, and Arts, Dean of the School of Law of the University of Nicosia



**Adam Clayton
Powell III**



**Chrysostomos L. (Max)
Nikias**



Jeffrey Cole



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