

Dangerous Speech: Countering Online Hatred while Protecting Freedom of Expression

When you see something hateful online, do you respond? If so, why? And how, exactly? Everyone says “don’t feed the trolls.” But blocking, ignoring, and deleting can only go so far – and often serve to further polarize and isolate us. People around the world are choosing instead to actively resist hatred online by engaging with the trolls, alone and in groups, in different innovative ways. This talk will draw on 18 months of research conducted by Cathy Buerger, Director of Research at the Dangerous Speech Project. The talk will discuss the challenges of responding to hatred online as well as best practices gleaned from this research.



CATHY BUERGER is the Director of Research at the Dangerous Speech Project (DSP), a Washington, DC-based NGO that studies the relationship between speech and violence. She holds a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Connecticut, where her research examined how civil society activists in Ghana work together to support positive norms and to uphold human rights. Her current research at the DSP focuses on civil society responses to dangerous and hateful speech online. She is a Research Affiliate of UConn’s Economic and Social Rights Research Group, Managing Editor of the Journal of Human Rights, and an Editor for the Teaching Human Rights Database.



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