

## Keynote Talk

# Understanding Credibility across Disciplinary Boundaries

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### Abstract

While credibility research is highly interdisciplinary, there is little interaction across researchers from various disciplines. This is unfortunate, as each disciplinary approach can inform the other, and together have potential to improve the corpus of credibility research. Researchers from fields as diverse as education, communication, psychology, library and information science, computer science, health informatics, and geography have tackled the issue of credibility of Web-based information—a topic that is growing in importance as more people rely on the Internet for information, and as more information is available online from more sources than ever before in human history.

This presentation overviews research on credibility from a social scientific perspective, pointing out areas of overlap and disjuncture with work from other disciplines. For example, while most disciplines agree on basic dimensions of credibility (i.e., expertise and trustworthiness), there is substantial diversity in the specific dimensions and targets of credibility that are studied or emphasized by researchers in each field. Similarly, theoretical development within each field has proceeded in parallel fashion, without much cross-fertilization. As such, there are opportunities for better integration of credibility research across the social, information, and computer sciences from both theoretical and methodological standpoints.

Toward that end, recent theories, models, and approaches to credibility research in the social sciences emphasizing the subjective and social elements of credibility evaluation may offer new insights to those studying credibility from more technical fields. User data from leading social scientific efforts to understand credibility, including the Credibility@UCSB project, will be presented as a way to promote interdisciplinary intellectual exchange and, ultimately, increase the credibility of credibility research.

**Categories & Subject Descriptors:** H.3.0 [Information Storage and Retrieval]: General

**General Terms:** Theory, Human Factors

### Bio

Dr. Miriam Metzger is Associate Professor in the Department of Communication at UC Santa Barbara. Her research focuses on trust in Web environments, specifically on issues of credibility and privacy. She has research grants from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation for her work on Web credibility, and has published extensively on this topic in referred journals in her field. She recently edited a volume on *Digital Media, Youth, and Credibility* published by MIT Press. Dr. Metzger has served as consultant to MacArthur Foundation, the New Media Consortium, and the National Library of Medicine based on her credibility research. The Credibility@UCSB website describes her current projects and may be found at <http://www.credibility.ucsb.edu/>.