Scio ergo sum. Linguistically enacting expertise online.

This panel is devoted to critically exploring how (various types of) expert identities are discursively construed and negotiated in digital discourse (Thurlow & Mroczek 2011, Bou-Franch & Blitvich 2019). Argumentative discussions on social media are marked by the relative absence of contextual cues that would allow interactants to evaluate the credibility of information presented; in collapsed online contexts (Marwick & boyd 2014), the only epistemic indices to which they have access are semiosis and the frames for interpretation it activates (Gumperz 1967).

Users' perception of, and experience with, the complex configuration of contextual variables that are represented by the interactional context they jointly construe and reflexively respond to (Tagg, Seargeant & Brown 2017) defines what identities, claims and behaviours are deemed authentic and credible (Bucholz & Hall 2005, Leppänen et al. 2015), and how language is strategically used to take and negotiate epistemic stance (Ochs 1996) in online text and talk (Heritage 2012, van Dijk 2013, Meredith 2019). Since local linguistic choices serving credibility management are informed by underlying notions about what counts as valid information, is appropriate to say and communicatively effective in a particular discourse context, the negotiation and enactment of expertise (Carr 2010) can also be critically studied to learn about ideologies of communication (Spitzmüller 2015), that is, more permanent conceptualizations structuring meaning-making in online interaction (Fairclough 2010, van Dijk 2017, KhosraviNik 2022).

In light of a wider conceptual struggle around epistemic authority and authenticity in increasingly computer-mediated social life (Coupland 2003), this panel seeks to advance knowledge and spark debate about the role of language in the production and negotiation of (lay) expert identities in contemporary online interaction (Sosnowy 2014, Sprain & Reinig 2018, Antony, Steets & Pfadenhauer 2022). Among the confirmed contributions are Spitzmüller's anthropologically informed meta-pragmatic study of claims of expertise in the context of an Open Source project (Silverstein 1993, Gal 2019), Marko's corpus-based study of challenges to expertise in online conversations (Potter & te Molder 2005) and Triebl's discourse-pragmatic study of disclaimers of expertise in web forums (Aijmer 2013). Submissions are invited that vary regarding theoretical frameworks and methods, genres, topics represented and claims raised about them.

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