

The Computer Science Program of CSU Channel Islands presents:

# Information or Affirmation: Political Elites and the Diffusion of Misinformation

a talk by

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*Abstract:* Digital forensics work has disclosed that the 2016 campaign was rife with misinformation or “fake news.” In fact in some critical swing states during the closing days of the campaign, factually incorrect and misleading statements outnumbered actual news on social media platforms like Facebook. The consensus of the US intelligence community indicates that agents acting on behalf of Russia played a notable role in the production and promotion of these stories. This form of information warfare known as “active measures,” a type of influence campaign waged by a foreign adversary, is a particularly potent weapon in an age of digital media as active measures can be executed without setting foot in the target country. Although social media trolls and bots amplified these messages, some analysts suggest that the fact that Donald Trump himself used these claims against opponents was a decisive factor in their effectiveness.

Dr Michael J Jensen is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Governance and Policy Analysis. He has a background in political communication and has published books with Cambridge University Press and Palgrave concerning online political behaviour. His work concerns the use of digital communication technologies in the development of new forms of political organization within political campaigning and protest movements. He is the current Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Information Technology and Politics.

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