



Citizen Scientists Investigating Cookies and App GDPR Compliance



Newsletter #7: August 2022



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Project Purpose

CSI-COP project at its core aims to engage citizen scientists across Europe, and the world, to explore their own digital journeys recording the number, and type, of third-party tracking cookies they find across the web and in apps on their mobile devices. Frequently asked questions ([FAQs](#)) about [CSI-COP](#) have been translated into Greek, Hebrew and Hungarian and can be found here: <https://csi-cop.eu/faq/>

For further information please do contact CSI-COP's Co-Investigator and Director of Science:

Dr. Huma Shah on ab7778@coventry.ac.uk

Free Informal education

CSI-COP's free informal education course (MOOC) '**Your Right to Privacy Online**', which you can complete in your own time, is now available to download as a document in **English** and twelve translations (**Catalan, Czech, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hungarian, Italian, Polish, Romanian** and **Spanish**) from the project website here: <https://csi-cop.eu/informal-education-mooc/>

In five easy-to-follow steps, the course on '**Your Right to Privacy Online**' can be completed in under half-a-day. The course covers:

Step 1 - The concept of 'privacy'.

Step 2 - *What is 'personal data'?*

Step 3 - How are we tracked online?

Step 4 - What rights do we have to online data protection and privacy?

Step 5 - Free online tools to protect our data-privacy.

This MOOC is also available in English from the [EU-Citizen.Science](#) platform, from here:

<https://moodle.eu-citizen.science/>





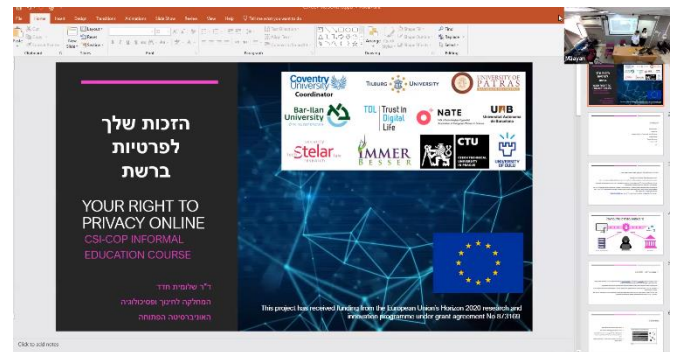
Partner updates

Partner workshops continued delivering 'Your Right to Privacy Online' to the end of June 2022.



University of Patras's Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Applied Electronics Laboratory, delivered another in their series of workshops in Greek. People were very keen on learning about their human right on privacy, how it was established and what one can do to protect it.

Bar Ilan University, Tel Aviv, held a hybrid workshop on April 27th organised by **Dr. Maayan Zhitomirsky-Geffet**. Forty-two attendees participated, about half of them in person. During the workshop they were highly engaged, asked many questions and gave excellent feedback on the workshop.



Immer Besser delivered a blended workshop in **Cluj-Napoca, Romania** in June with 50 attendees, 20 attendees were in-person. Additionally, **Dr. Tiberius Ignat** of Immer Besser was invited to be part of a discussion panel, attended by around 70 people, mostly in-person. Tiberius presented the idea that living in a world of trackers and persuasion technologies is not sustainable and that the situation is comparable with the environmental sustainability challenges. CSI-COP received good visibility during that panel, being many times mentioned as an example of work that needs to be done. The attendees included people from Europe but also participants from other regions like South Africa and Colombia.

{Image above left-forefront: Professor Felix Arion (University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Cluj-Napoca, Romania), and right-forefront: Dr. Tiberius Ignat with attendees in Cluj-Napoca courtesy of Felix Arion}





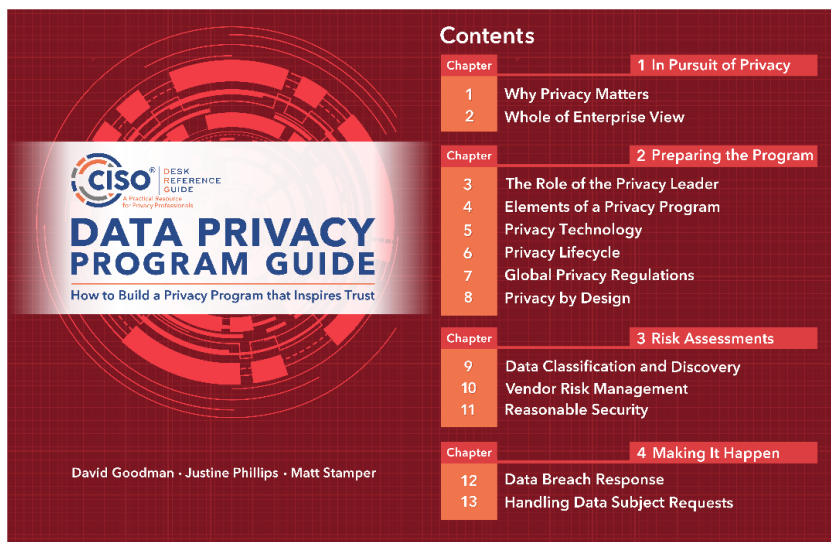
Other updates include from CSI-COP's legal partner, **STELAR**. Matthias Pocs and Dimitrios Tsolovos of STELAR informed about the publication of EN 17529:2022 Data protection and privacy by design and by default:

- The EN 17529:2022 Data protection and privacy by design and by default is a European standard prepared by WG 5 "Data Protection Privacy and Identity Management" of the CEN/CENELEC JTC 13 "Cybersecurity and Data Protection". It is aimed towards manufacturers and/or service providers to implement Data protection and Privacy by Design and by Default early in the development of their products and services to make sure that they are "privacy ready" as early as possible. The document is applicable to all business sectors including the security industry.
- For the purposes of this standard, data protection by design is defined as the technical and organizational measures designed to implement data protection principles, while data protection by default is defined as the technical and organizational measures for ensuring that only personal data which are necessary for each specific purpose of the processing are processed. These terms are also defined in GDPR article 25. The standard's definitive text has been made available on 18/05/2022

More information on this new standard can be found at these two links:

CEN/ELEC blog post: <https://bit.ly/3vgET1l>

Link to CEN/CLJ/JTC 13 Cybersecurity and Data Protection standard: <https://bit.ly/3PB3jLJ>

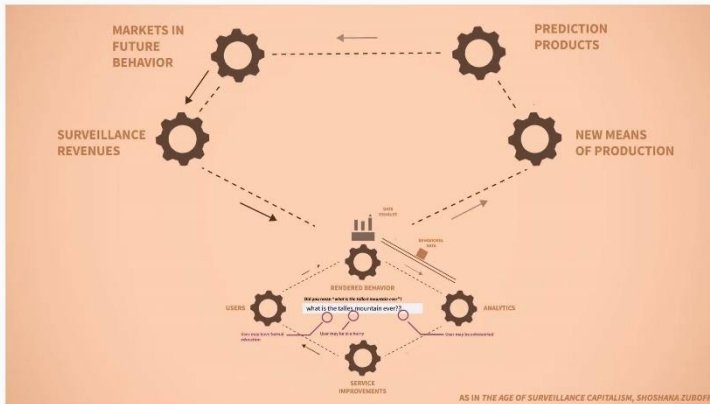


Dr David Goodman of partner **TDL** co-authored a new book 'Data Privacy Program Guide: How to Build a Privacy Program that inspires Trust'. The book is available from [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/Data-Privacy-Program-Guide-How-to-Build-a-Privacy-Program-that-Inspires-Trust/dp/1731911111).





The example of Google III



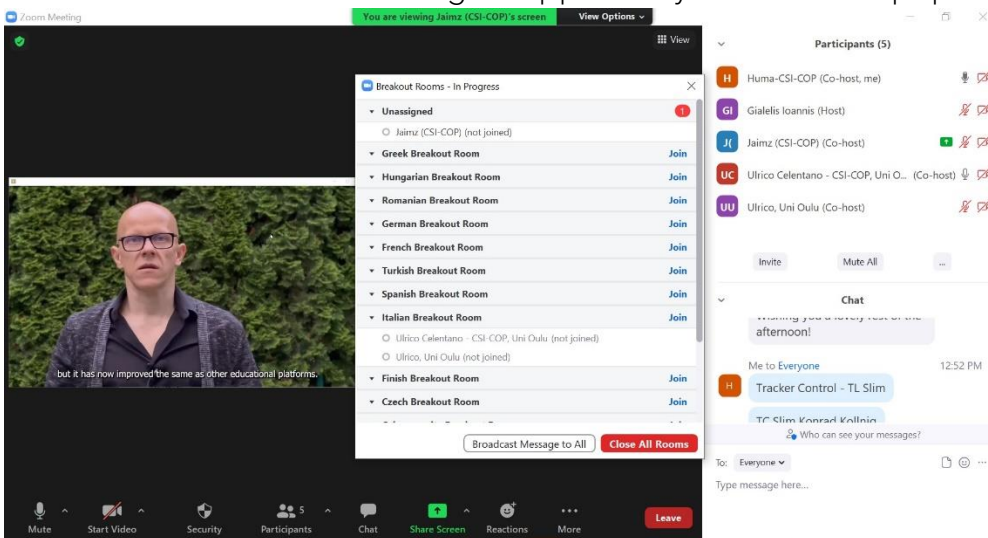
Dimitrios Tsolovos, from Partner **STELAR** (experts in security technology law research) delivered a talk, 'Is Data Privacy a Losing Battle?' at the Transylvanian Clusters International Week in Romania on 23 June. (Left: slide from Dimitrios' talk also delivered during CSI-COP Period 2 meeting in University of Oulu, Finland).

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As part of CSI-COP's **stakeholder engagement** activities, on 3 and 4 **August**, coordinating partner Coventry University will host a CSI-COP table in the [Ideas Fest](#) 2022 in **Wickham**, Hampshire-UK. The [Ideas Fest](#) is a great opportunity for CSI-COP to engage with the business community and a variety of stakeholders to raise awareness of data protection online. More information on the Ideas Fest is here: <https://www.ideasfest.co.uk/>. Report on CSI-COP's presence in the Ideas Fest will feature in the project's next newsletter.

Project updates: Big Cookie Count

In May CSI-COP partners combined to organise an online event 'The Big Cookie Count' based on CSI-COP's MOOC 'Your Right to Privacy Online'. This activity adapted [Greenpeace's Big Plastic Count](#). CSI-COP delivered a multi-lingual opportunity for visitors to pop in across two days, 30 and 31 May and chat to CSI-COP researchers to find out about digital cookies.



The Big Cookie Count was arranged in Zoom with language specific rooms allowing interested individuals to pop-in and speak to a CSI-COP researcher in one of the available languages. Two special rooms 'cybersecurity' and 'data protection' were also offered to interested parties.





Project updates: Period 2 meeting

In June CSI-COP held a hybrid consortium meeting at partner University of Oulu's campus in Oulu Finland. The meeting was attended in person by two members of CSI-COP Advisory Board: Dr. Luigi Ceccaroni (Earthwatch), and Amardeo Sarma (NEC).



Dimitrios Tsolovos-STELAR (left); Huma Shah-Coventry University (right).



CSI-COP project partners and Advisory Board members attending Period 2 meeting in person in Oulu, Finland waiting for mini-train for short city trip.

Project updates: Achievements

CSI-COP submitted a series of project outcomes to the EU concluding the second period of the project in June 2022. The reports are available to download from the open-access platform [Zenodo](https://zenodo.org), including:

-Societal Impact 1: <https://zenodo.org/record/6641596#.YuAsxYTMl2w>

-Data Management Plan 2: <https://zenodo.org/record/6783598#.YuAskotMI2w>

Additionally, a dataset, with a list of organisations CSI-COP identified to recruit diverse volunteers from their membership, is also uploaded to Zenodo and accessible here: <https://zenodo.org/record/6780048#.YuZ9QBzMI2w>





Forthcoming Activities

CSI-COP are busy organising new activities: **parent-teacher roundtables**, and **stakeholder engagement** events. Updates on these future activities will be in the next newsletter. We invite parents and teachers to find out how to go beyond due diligence to protect online privacy.

In the next section CSI-COP are delighted to feature a guest interview from Dr. Emma L. Briant, a professor, journalist and expert on the 'influence industry' that leverages misinformation, propaganda, data, surveillance. Emma consults on what can be done to protect democracy.



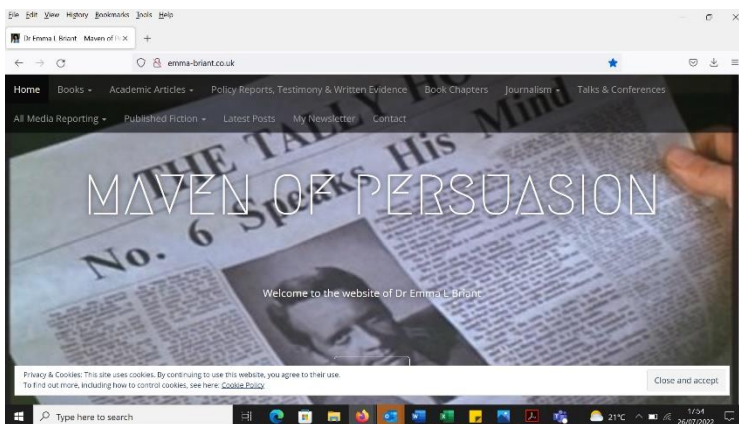


Interview with Dr. Emma L. Briant.

Dr. Emma L. Briant was “one of the key researchers” who uncovered the **Cambridge Analytica /Facebook scandal** in 2018. She was a consultant researcher on the Netflix documentary, ‘The Great Hack’. CSI-COP are honoured Emma gave up some of her very busy time to answer questions for this Newsletter. Her interview follows below.

1. Tell us about yourself

I am a scholar in political communication who specialises in researching contemporary propaganda and information warfare, particularly its governance in an age of mass-surveillance and its implications for democracy, security, inequality and human rights. My work often focuses on the actors behind influence operations and I analysed the coordination, changing strategy and increasing impacts of the digitalization of defense propaganda for my last book [*Propaganda and Counter-Terrorism: Strategies for Global Change*](#) (Manchester University Press, 2015).



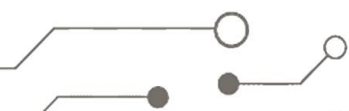
I am an Associate at University of Cambridge Centre for Financial Reporting & Accountability. My testimony was central in exposing Cambridge Analytica and its parent company SCL and continues to inform international inquiries and policymaking, this has included the US Congress, UK Parliament, Canadian Parliament and European Parliament. My first book was [*Bad*](#)

[*News for Refugees*](#), (Pluto Press, 2013, co-authored with Greg Philo and Pauline Donald), which examined UK political and media discourse on migration prior to ‘Brexit’. I have also served as advisor for a film for ‘People You May Know’, a recent documentary on Amazon Prime and previously, was Senior Researcher for Oscar-shortlisted Netflix film ‘The Great Hack’. I frequently contribute journalism and op-eds to major outlets and am owner of Maven of Persuasion LLC a Virginia based consultancy that advises and trains on disinformation threats and ethics in influence.

2. What are:

a. Misinformation? b. Disinformation? c. Malinformation?

This is a trio of terms that has unhelpfully framed the recent debates around falsehood in traditional and social media. The repetition of these terms together, including by experts trying to distinguish them and explain how differently they should be seen, constantly reinforces the public and scholarly impression that they are related activities. This has a result of confusing **misinformation** as a related activity to disinformation.





Misinformation is the innocent sharing of falsehood by the genuinely misinformed and it is rather important to be able to make mistakes - people getting things wrong without ill-intent. This discussion of the activities together has now resulted them being categorised together as 'MDM' and treated as related threats by the US government, in a way that has implications for our ability to share mistaken views.

Furthermore, this trio of terms focused scholarly attention on **disinformation**, which is '**black propaganda**', even though much propaganda is gray or white and these are usually used in coordination. The 'MDM' typology focused all attention on policing falsehoods. It doesn't help our understanding of deliberate activities and those behind them or acknowledge that harm in propaganda and influence operations results from more than just falsehoods. This has led many experts and therefore policy debates around disinformation to fail in recognizing propaganda's complexity.

Malinformation is usually used to talk about **publication of private information with intent to harm** and includes things like **phishing**, catfishing, and **revenge porn**. While it can be used in propaganda campaigns, it is not really closely associated with propaganda, it is **more often used in fraud or personal attacks**.

3. How and why were you involved as a Researcher for the 'The Great Hack' Netflix documentary - what happened between Cambridge Analytica and Facebook?



I was honored to have been involved in **The Great Hack** from the beginning advising and briefing the filmmakers as a Senior Researcher for the film. Facebook is still fighting Cambridge Analytica-related cases in court and my book isn't yet published so this story is far from over! I've also been contributing to new films... Watch this space!

{Image from IMDB: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4736550/>}





4. Despite purported efforts by social media platform owners do you think the spreading of propaganda and fake news on social media can ever be prevented or at least truly moderated?

Social media platforms will always be used for propaganda, some of the worst impacts of this can be mitigated by social media companies if they are willing to commit to doing this transparently and consistently. But this will not stop, particularly while we fail to recognize this is not just a problem for social media companies to solve. We need to consider the actors behind influence operations including governments and private industry if we want to truly tackle the problem. We will also see little progress as long as social media companies remain privately owned by big monopolies and not subject to any equivalent of 'FOIA' for documents relating to their decision-making and research.

5. What do you think about websites collecting data from users under "Legitimate Interests"?

My understanding is that they are often doing this too extensively.

6. Do you think the GDPR is strong enough for new tracking methods, or do you feel it is a case for better compliance?

There is definitely a need to have more resources put towards compliance. There also need to develop more extensive protections and support for researchers and scholars doing research on the powerful in the public interest. At present journalists have more protection in law and from their institutions.

7. In the digital world, the amount of data a person, or organisation, generates will only increase. Do you consider the misuse of data a global crisis?

Absolutely, and one not evenly experienced. There needs to be greater role for international law in this area and greater restrictions on Western companies' unethical use of data in parts of the world where this might be subject to weaker legal frameworks,

8. Do you think a global framework is needed in order to fully prevented (or at least tackle) psychometric election advertising?

Definitely.

9. Who would ensure compliance of such a global framework?

This is not an easy challenge... an initiative was launched by the UN. But the UN isn't





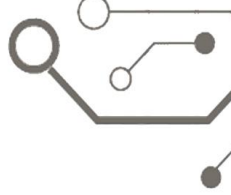
exactly known for its ability to achieve compliance. <https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/digital-geneva-convention-mean-future-humanitarian-action/>

10. What is your next project?

I am researching threats posed by the opaque digital influence industry and other actors in contemporary influence operations. This includes finalizing my third book *Propaganda Machine: Inside Cambridge Analytica and the 'Bad Influence' Industry* and working on a fourth book, the co-edited *Routledge Handbook on the Influence Industry* with Vian Bakir, Bangor University, UK.

CSI-COP thanks Dr. Emma L. Briant for this fascinating interview. Interested readers can find out more from Emma's website here: <http://www.emma-briant.co.uk/>, support her continuing work on patreon here: <https://www.patreon.com/emmalbriant>, and sign-up for Emma's newsletter here: <http://emma-briant.co.uk/sign-up-for-important-updates/>





CSI-COP Partners



Coordinator



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