



EXCLUSIVE



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Georgia Institute of Technology scholar Amy S. Bruckman: **We need publicly funded information infrastructure to complement commercial**

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But I remember that Sherry Turkle in her book 'Alone Together' argued that anonymity and just being on the Internet make us act and behave more extremely than in offline settings due to the lack of physical presence. So, in her view, just being on the Internet makes us more susceptible to extremism. When you add anonymity to it, it will be even worse. There are good and bad uses

of anonymity, and the details matter. It's not the case that everyone behaves badly when they're anonymous or more nearly anonymous. It's just literally not true.

What about "trolls"? How should we understand them?

Well, I think trolls are a complex phenomenon. Whether you allow trolls or not depends on the purpose of a particular site. You can

imagine there are humor sites where allowing a little bit of trolling is perfectly appropriate and possibly hilarious. There are more serious sites where it's absolutely not a good idea. If you're sharing pictures of cats, can you allow someone to be a little rude? Of course. If you're providing cancer support, maybe that wouldn't be good. So, how much behavior outside the expected norm you allow

depends on the specific application in a specific group. There are definitely all kinds of places where people who have too little accountability make life miserable for other people. There's no question about that.

A senior colleague of mine found out I'm going to talk to you. He told me to ask you this question: What is it about the Internet that, according to his experi-

ence, brings out the worst in us?

Well, I would that the focus of my work is the opposite: How can we redesign aspects of the Internet to bring out the best in us all? The details matter. I believe there are things we can change that will help bring out the best in people.

I'll give you an example from a friend of mine's research. Eshwar Chandrasekharan from the University of Illi-

nois at Urbana-Champaign wrote a paper about what happens when some hate speech Reddit subs were closed. One of them was a racist subreddit called r/CoonTown, and the other was called r/fatpeoplehate. What Eshwar and his co-author Eric Gilbert found was that when you ban these hate subs, the amount of hate speech on the entire site went down. He looked at the people who had been