



Communication challenges in the era of misinformation, disinformation and so-called 'fake news'

Deadline 10 February 2020

July 2-4, Rikli Balance Hotel, Lake Bled, Slovenia

Today's political discourse is consumed by the plethora of misinformation and disinformation that is created and distributed by state and non-state actors with an aim to deceive, confuse and even harm. Such attempts are potent and made possible especially by Information and Communication Technologies and social media. Perception often becomes reality and so spreading false perceptions has been used as an effective tool in influencing public discourse. After taking a lot of heat, Facebook announced on January 7, 2020 that it would take down Deepfakes. Other technological and social media giants have also committed themselves publicly to expose and take down fake content. Governments around the world have begun discussing possible legislation against the use of disinformation and grass-root initiatives – such as Bellingcat – help to expose and debunk disinformation. This new information-space environment creates opportunities and challenges for communicators.

At its inaugural day-long workshop on July 2, 2020, BledCom Youth Academy invites students and young communication professionals to discuss this new, and unwelcome, phenomenon and how they can prepare to work in such an environment. Selected applicants will dive deep into three days of practice-based training, provocative discussions, and networking.

BledCom Youth Academy is for aspiring students, emerging scholars and young practitioners of PR and communication. Created to foster the new generation of communicators, it's the newly-announced arm of BledCom, the premier international symposium for research in public relations and related fields.

Among other things, attendees will review the definitions of misinformation, disinformation, fake news, deep-fakes etc and their various manifestations. **Ms. Barbora Maronkova, Director, Information and Documentation Centre, Kyiv, Ukraine**, will lead a session where attendees will discuss the 'creation of a new reality' or a major disinformation campaign by the Russian Federation against Ukraine since 2014, slicing down Russia's key narrative and key messages used against Ukraine since 2014 in order to provide a wrong image of the country and events inside the country. Additionally, she will share her experience from working over a decade with NATO in the area of

public diplomacy and strategic communications and what approach NATO adopted in light of these new communication challenges.

Prof. Dejan Verčič and Prof. Krishnamurthy Sriramesh will also be on hand to share their perspectives on this phenomenon and all three will be available to discuss the practical and scholarly orientations to this topic and issues that are helpful to young professionals. The format will be one of interactive dialogue where each participant is required to participate actively throughout the day-long workshop. Some preparatory reading materials will be given to each participant before July 2, 2020.

Days following the BledCom Youth Academy will be intended for the participants to attend the **27th Annual BledCom Symposium** – two days of meeting and greeting with leading academics and practitioners and attendance of the many signature BledCom news making sessions.

Eligibility and Obligations

- **Must be a student or young professional, aged 18-28**, active in the field of Public Relations or related disciplines (Communication, Marketing, International Relations, Media Studies).
- Applicants welcome from around the world.
- Selected applicants shall be responsible for:
 - obtaining travel visas,
 - assumption of the basic fee and estimated expenses (more info [here](#)).

Application Process

- Send us a letter (max 2 pages in PDF format) outlining your interest in attending BledCom Youth Academy. List your full name, nationality, age, address and relevant educational and/or professional background.
- Describe in 300-500 words your interest in communication/PR theory or practice and the issues or subfields you intend to pursue and why.
- Email us your PDF letter to bledcomacademy@fdv.uni-lj.si
- Submissions will be reviewed by the BledCom Youth Academy Committee and BledCom-affiliated academics and practitioners
- **Deadline is 10 February 2020, 11.59 PM CET**
- Notifications will be made by 4 March 2020
- Acceptances will be required 14 days thereafter

For more information on questions on the programme, application procedure, expenses, deadlines and more, visit our [website](#) or write to bledcomacademy@fdv.uni-lj.si.

See you in Slovenia!

Eva Lep, Pia Kraševac, Tilen Erjavec and Nina Piskar
BledCom Youth Academy Committee