

Steve Rathje

Curriculum Vitae

Contact

Carnegie Mellon University
Human-Computer Interaction Institute
School of Computer Science
5000 Forbes Avenue
Newell-Simon Hall, Room 3611
Pittsburgh, PA 15213
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Appointments

2026- **Assistant Professor**
 Human Computer Interaction Institute
 Social and Decision Sciences (by Courtesy)
 Carnegie Mellon University, School of Computer Science

2022-2026 **Postdoctoral Researcher**
 New York University
 Advisor: Jay Van Bavel

Education

2018-2022 **University of Cambridge (Trinity College)**
 PhD in Psychology
 Advisor: Sander van der Linden
 Gates Cambridge Scholar

2014-2018 **Stanford University**
 BA in Psychology (with Honors and Distinction)
 Minor in Symbolic Systems
 Junior Phi Beta Kappa

Research

Selected Publications

Rathje, S., Van Bavel, J.J. & van der Linden, S. (2021) Out-group animosity drives engagement on social media. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.
<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2024292118>

Rathje, S., Roozenbeek, J., Van Bavel, J.J. & van der Linden, S. Accuracy and social motivations shape belief in (mis)information (2023). *Nature Human Behaviour*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-023-01540-w>

Rathje, S.*, Mirea, D. M.*, Sucholutsky, I., Marjeh, R., Robertson, C., & Van Bavel, J. J. (2024). GPT is an effective tool for multilingual psychological text analysis. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2308950121>
*co-first authors

Rathje, S., Van Bavel, J.J. The Psychology of Virality. *Trends In Cognitive Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2025.06.014>

Rathje, S.*, Asimovic, N.*, Ventura, T.*, Mughal, S., Robertson, C. E., Barrie, C, The Global Social Media Experiment Team., Tucker, J. A., & Van Bavel, J. J. (Stage 1 In Principle Acceptance of Registered Report). Testing the causal impact of social media around the globe. *Nature*. https://osf.io/preprints/psyarxiv/ujtxa_v1
*co-first authors

All Publications

H_{index} = 33; i10_{index} = 46; Citations = 7,509; see [Google Scholar](#)

43. Feuerriegel, S., Barrie, C., Crockett, M. J., Globig, L. K., McLoughlin, K. L., Mirea, D.-M., Spirling, A., Yang, D., ..., **Rathje, S.,** & Ribeiro, M. H. (2026). A reporting checklist for LLMs in behavioural science. *Nature Human Behaviour*.

42. Aczel, B., Szaszi, B., Clelland, H.T., ... **Rathje, S.,** ... Nosek, B (2026). Investigating the analytical robustness of the social and behavioural sciences. *Nature*.

41. Castillo-Gualda, R., **Rathje, S.,** Ramos-Cejudo, J. Social comparison and maladaptive emotion regulation are associated with poorer mental health in social media users (2026). *Nature Scientific Reports*.

40. Pillai, R.M., Globig, L.K., **Rathje, S.,** Sternisko, A., Thériault, R. Van Bavel, J.J. (2026). An Identity-based Approach to Polarization and Public Health. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*.

39. Goldwert, D., Constantino, S., Patel, Y., ... **Rathje, S.,** ... Vlasceanu, M. (2026). A Megastudy of Behavioral Interventions to Catalyze Public, Political, and Financial Climate Advocacy. *PNAS Nexus*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgaf400>.

38. **Rathje, S.*,** Asimovic, N.*, Ventura, T.*, Mughal, S., Karsting, H., Robertson, C. E., Barrie, C, The Global Social Media Experiment Team., Tucker, J. A., & Van Bavel, J. J. (Stage 1 In Principle Acceptance of Registered Report). Testing the causal impact of social media usage around the globe. *Nature*. https://osf.io/preprints/psyarxiv/ujtxa_v1
*co-first authors

37. Brady, W.J., **Rathje, S.**, Globig, L., Van Bavel, J.J. (2025). Estimating the effect size of moral contagion in online networks: A pre-registered replication and meta-analysis. *PNAS Nexus*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgaf327>
36. **Rathje, S.**, Van Bavel, J.J. (2025). The Psychology of Virality. *Trends In Cognitive Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2025.06.014>
*On the “most downloaded” list in 2025
35. He, J., Wallis, F., Andres, G., & **Rathje, S.** (2024). Artificial intelligence chatbots mimic human collective behaviour. *British Journal of Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjop.12764>
34. Feuerriegel, S., Maarouf, A., Bär, D., ... **Rathje, S.**, ... Van Bavel, J.J. (2024). Using natural language processing to analyze text data in behavioral science. *Nature Reviews Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s44159-024-00392-z>
33. Hu, T., Kyrychenko, Y., **Rathje, S.**, Collier, N., van der Linden, S., & Roozenbeek, J. (2025). Generative language models exhibit social identity biases. *Nature Computational Science*. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2310.15819>
32. Yang, X., Schulz, J., Schmidt, K., ... **Rathje, S.**, ... Dunham, Y. (2024). Large-scale cross-societal examination of real-and minimal-group biases. Stage One Registered Report at *Nature Human Behaviour*. <https://osf.io/preprints/psyarxiv/5gpr4>
31. Voelkel, J., Stagnaro, M., Chu, J., Pink, S., Mernyk, J., Redekopp, C.... **Rathje, S.** ... & Willer, R. (2024). Megastudy testing 25 treatments to reduce antidemocratic attitudes and partisan animosity. *Science*. DOI: [10.1126/science.adh4764](https://doi.org/10.1126/science.adh4764)
30. Doell, K., Todorova, B., Vlasceanu, M., ... **Rathje, S.** ... Van Bavel, J.J. (2024). The International Climate Psychology Collaboration: Climate change-related data collected from 63 countries. *Nature Scientific Data*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41597-024-03865-1>
29. **Rathje, S.** To tackle social-media harms, mandate data access for researchers (2024). *Nature*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-024-02853-0>
28. **Rathje, S.***, Mirea, D. M.*, Sucholutsky, I., Marjeh, R., Robertson, C., & Van Bavel, J. J. (2024). GPT is an effective tool for multilingual psychological text analysis. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2308950121>
*co-first authors
27. Robertson, C.E., del Rosario, K., **Rathje S.**, Van Bavel, J.J. (2024). Changing the incentive structure of social media may reduce online proxy failure and proliferation of negativity. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X23002935>

26. Kozyreva, A., Lorenz-Spreen, P., Herzog, S., Ecker, U., Lewandowsky, S., & Hertwig, R... **Rathje, S.**, Wineburg. (2024). Toolbox of Interventions Against Online Misinformation and Manipulation. *Nature Human Behaviour*. <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-024-01881-0>
25. Martel, C., **Rathje, S.**, Pennycook, G., Clark, C., Roozenbeek, J., Van Bavel, J.J., Rand, D., van der Linden, S. (2024). Do Accuracy Nudges Improve Sharing Discernment Across the Political Spectrum? An Adversarial Multiverse Collaboration. *Psychological Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09567976241232905>
24. Vlasceanu, M.*, Doell, K.*... **Rathje, S.**, Van Bavel, J.J. et al (2024). Addressing Climate Change with Behavioral Science: A Global Intervention Tournament in 63 Countries. *Science Advances*. [DOI: 10.1126/sciadv.adj5778](https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.adj5778).
23. Van Bavel J., Pretus C., **Rathje S.**, Pärnamets P., Vlasceanu M., Knowles, E. The Costs of Polarizing a Pandemic: Antecedents, Consequences, and Lessons (2023). *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. <https://psyarxiv.com/qdb97/>
22. Van Bavel, J.J., **Rathje, S.**, Vlasceanu, M., Pretus, C. (2023). Updating the Identity-based Model of Belief: From False Belief to the Spread of Misinformation. *Current Opinion in Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2023.101787>.
21. Koppel, L., Robertson, C.E., Doell, K., Javeed, A., Rasmussen, J., **Rathje, S.**, Vlasceanu, M., & Van Bavel, J.J. (2023). Individual-level solutions may support system-level change if they are internalized as part of one's social identity. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0140525X2300105X>
20. Altay, S., Berriche, M., Heuer, H., Farkas, J., **Rathje, S.** A Survey of Expert Views on Misinformation: Definitions, Determinants, Solutions, and Future of the Field (2023). *Harvard Kennedy Misinformation Review*. <https://doi.org/10.37016/mr-2020-119>
19. **Rathje, S.**, Robertson, C., Brady, W., Van Bavel, J.J. (2023). People think social media does (and should not) amplify harmful content. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17456916231190392>
18. **Rathje, S.** & van der Linden, S. (2023). Shifting online incentive structures to reduce polarization and the spread of misinformation. *Research Handbook on Nudges and Society*.
17. Van Bavel, J.J., Robertson, C. del Rosario, K., Rasmussen, J., **Rathje, S.** Social Media and Morality (2023). *Annual Review of Psychology*. <https://psyarxiv.com/ywevq>.
16. **Rathje, S.**, Roozenbeek, J., Van Bavel, J.J. & van der Linden, S. Accuracy and social motivations shape belief in (mis)information (2023). *Nature Human Behaviour*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-023-01540-w>.

15. Azevedo, F., Pavlović, T., Rêgo, G.G., ... **Rathje, S.**, ... Waldir, S. Social and moral psychology of COVID-19 across 69 countries (2023). *Nature Scientific Data*.
14. Harris, E.*, **Rathje, S.***, Robertson, C., Van Bavel, J.J. (2023). The SPIR Model of Social Media and Polarization: Exploring the Role of Selection, Platform Design, Incentives, and Real-World Context. *International Journal of Communication*.
*co-first authors
13. **Rathje, S.**, He, J., Roozenbeek, Van Bavel, J.J., & van der Linden, S. (2022). Social media behavior is associated with vaccine hesitancy. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences – Nexus*.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgac207>
12. Roozenbeek, J., van der Linden, S., Goldberg, B., **Rathje, S.**, Lewandowsky, S. Psychological inoculation improves resilience against misinformation on social media (2022). *Science Advances*.
[10.1126/sciadv.abo6254](https://doi.org/10.1126/sciadv.abo6254)
*Altmetric score: 2936
11. Robertson, C. Pretus, C. **Rathje, S.**, Harris, E., Van Bavel, J.J. (2022). How social identity shapes conspiracy beliefs. *Current Opinion in Psychology*.
[10.1016/j.copsyc.2022.101423](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2022.101423)
10. Pavlović, T., Cichocka, A., Capraro, V., Sjøstad, H., Nezlek, J. B., Alfano, M.,... **Rathje, S.**, ... Hudecek, M. F. C. (2022). Predicting attitudinal and behavioral responses to COVID-19 pandemic using machine learning. *PNAS Nexus*.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgac093>
9. **Rathje, S.**, Shariff, A., & Schnall, S. (2022). Ideology Trumps Self-Interest: Continued Support for a Political Leader Despite Disappointing Tax Returns. *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion, and Parties*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/17457289.2022.2051148>
8. Van Bavel, J. J., **Rathje, S.**, Harris, E., Robertson, C., & Sternisko, A. (2021). How social media shapes polarization. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tics.2021.07.013>
7. **Rathje, S.**, Roozenbeek, J., Steenbuch Traberg, C., Van Bavel, J.J., & van der Linden, S. (2021) Meta-analysis reveals that accuracy nudges have little to no effect for US conservatives: Regarding Pennycook et al. (2020). *Psychological Science*.
<https://journals.sagepub.com/page/pss/letters-to-the-eds>
6. **Rathje, S.**, Van Bavel, J.J. & van der Linden, S. (2021) Out-group animosity drives engagement on social media. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.
<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2024292118>
*Altmetric score: 2660

5. Van Bavel, J. J., Cichocka, A., Capraro, V., Sjøstad, H., Nezlek, J. B., Alfano, M.,... **Rathje, S.**, ... Hudecek, M. F. C. (2021). National identity predicts public health support during a global pandemic: Results from 67 nations. *Nature Communications*.
<https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-021-27668-9>

4. **Rathje, S.**, Hackel, L., Zaki, J. (2021). Attending live theatre improves empathy, changes attitudes, and leads to pro-social behavior. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2021.104138>

3. Van Bavel, J. J., Harris, E. A., Pärnamets, P., **Rathje, S.**, Doell, K., & Tucker, J. A. (2021). Political psychology in the digital (mis)information age. *Social Issues and Policy Review*.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/sipr.12077>

2. Van der Linden, S., Roozenbeek, J., Basol, M., Kacha, O., Martins, R., **Rathje, S.**, Traberg, C. (2021). How can psychological science help counter the spread of fake news. *Spanish Journal of Social Psychology*.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/SJP.2021.23>

1. Fong, A., Roozenbeek, J., Goldwert, D., **Rathje, S.**, & van der Linden, S (2021). The language of conspiracy: A psychological analysis of speech used by conspiracy theorists and their followers on Twitter. *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations*.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1368430220987596>

Manuscripts in preparation

Rathje, S., Ye, M., Globig, L., Pillai, R., Oldemburgo de Mello, V., Chen, J., Van Bavel, J.J. (Invited revision at *Nature*). The Impact of Sycophantic AI on Attitudes and Decisions.
https://osf.io/preprints/psyarxiv/vmyek_v1

Rathje, S., He, J., Harjani, T., Roozenbeek, J., Pretus, C., Gray, K., van der Linden, S, & Van Bavel, J.J. (Invited Revision at *Nature Communications*). Unfollowing partisan accounts reduces out-party animosity and increases social media satisfaction.
<https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/acbwg>.

Capraro, V., Globig, L., Rausch, Z., **Rathje, S.**, Wormley, A. S., Olson, J., ... Van Bavel, J. J. (Under Review *Nature Human Behaviour*). A consensus statement on potential negative impacts of smartphone and social media use on adolescent mental health.

Reinero, D.*, Harris, E.*, **Rathje, S.**, Duke, A., Van Bavel, J.J. Partisans are more likely to entrench their beliefs in misinformation when political outgroup members provide fact checks (Invited revision at *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*).
<https://osf.io/preprints/psyarxiv/z4df3>.

Grants (Total: \$3,566,324):

- 2026 **Block Public Engagement Fellowship (\$10,000)**
Fellowship for CMU faculty to pursue science writing and public communication.
- 2026 **National Science Foundation (\$748,573)**
Contribution: PI. “The Psychology of AI Sycophancy.” Co-Is: Robert Kraut and Jay J. Van Bavel.
- 2026 **Pangram API Credits (\$5,000)**
API credits granted for project on AI-generated social media text.
- 2026 **Commissioned Chapter on the Impact of AI on Social Behavior (\$25,000)**
Psychology of Progress Grant from the CATO Institute.
- 2025 **Cosmos Institute x Fire AI for Truth-Seeking Grant (\$6,000)**
Small grant to study AI that promotes truth-seeking.
- 2025 **Digital Media Accelerator (\$20,000)**
Funding to make a series of TikToks about AI safety.
- 2024 **NSF SBE Postdoctoral Research Fellowship (\$160,000)**
Contribution: lead author and PI. “Understanding the causal impact of social media reduction around the globe.”
- 2024 **AXA Postdoctoral Fellowship (140,000€/~\$146,000)**
Contribution: lead author and PI. “Understanding the causal impact of social media reduction around the globe.”
- 2024 **Open AI Research Access Program (\$10,000 in API Credits)**
Contribution: lead author and PI. “Using GPT to detect misinformation and polarizing social media content across languages and countries.”
- 2024 **Cyber NYC/Google (\$160,000)**
Contribution: Project co-lead author (with Laura Globig). Leveraging AI and design to detect and mitigate cyber threats around the globe. (2023-2024).
- 2023 **National Science Foundation (\$1,199,751)**
Contribution: Project lead author. “Secure and Trustworthy Cyberspace: CORE: Medium: Testing the causal influence of social media on well-being and animosity.” Co-PI: Joshua Tucker. PI: Jay Van Bavel
- 2023 **Collaborator, Google Jigsaw (\$200,000)**
Contribution: Collaborator. “Trust in generative AI.” PI: Jay Van Bavel.
- 2023 **Templeton World Charity Foundation (\$250,000)**
Contribution: Project lead author. “Testing the causal impact of social media on polarization around the globe.” PI: Jay Van Bavel. <https://doi.org/10.54224/31570>

- 2023 **Alliance for Public Interest Technology Seed Grant (\$25,000)**
Contribution: Project lead author. “Testing the causal impact of social media on polarization around the globe.” PI: Jay Van Bavel.
- 2022 **Russell Sage Foundation Grant (\$175,000)**
Contribution: Project lead author. “Reducing and understanding polarization online: a computational social science approach.” PI: Jay Van Bavel.
- 2021 **Alliance for Decision Education Grant (\$180,000)**
Contribution: Collaborator. “Exploratory research on the mechanisms of the backfire effect.” PI: Jay Van Bavel.
- 2021 **Collaborator, Google Trust & Safety Team (\$160,000)**
Contribution: Collaborator. “Measuring and fighting misinformation, extremism, and polarization online.” PIs: Sander van der Linden & Jon Roozenbeek
- 2021 **Synergy Scholar, Center for the Science of Moral Understanding (\$50,000)**
Contribution: Project lead author and PI. Proposal Title: “Improving Moral Understanding Online.”
- 2021 **Increasing Open Inquiry on College Campuses (\$30,000)**
Contribution: Project lead author. “Can changing one’s online social network increase open-minded cognition?” PI: Jay Van Bavel.
- 2019 **Psychology Department Field Work Funding (\$6,000)**

Selected Awards

- 2026 **Sage Emerging Scholars Award**
Awarded by the Society for Personality and Social Psychology.
- 2025 **Best Flash Talk (Runner Up) – Society of Affective Science**
Selected out of 70 total talks.
- 2025 **Forbes 30 Under 30**
- 2024 **APS Rising Star Award**
Awarded by the **Association for Psychological Science**.
- 2024 **NSF Postdoctoral Fellowship**
- 2024 **AXA Postdoctoral Fellowship**
- 2024 **Falling Walls Award in the Social Sciences and Humanities**
Awarded to members of the Cambridge Social Decision-Making Lab.

2024	Prosocial Ranking Challenge Finalist
2023	SESP Dissertation Award Finalist
2023	Postdoctoral Travel Award (NYU)
2022	Strengthening Democracy Challenge Co-developed 3 rd most successful intervention (out of 252 submissions) in a mega-study evaluating the best interventions for reducing partisan animosity.
2021	Psychology of Technology Institute Dissertation Award (\$1,000)
2021	Top 10 Insights from the “Science of A Meaningful Life”
2019	1st Place, Trinity College Hooper Declamation Public Speaking Prize (£450)
2018	Gates Cambridge Scholarship (Full PhD Funding)
2018	Louis and Valerie Freedman Studentship (Full PhD Funding)
2018	Finalist, Rhodes Scholarship
2018	J.E. Wallace Sterling Award for Scholastic Achievement Awarded to top 25 graduating seniors at Stanford University.
2017	Phi Beta Kappa (Elected as a Junior) Awarded to top 2% of Stanford students.
2015	President’s Award for Academic Excellence Awarded to top 5% of Stanford’s freshman class.
2018	People’s Choice Award, California Cognitive Science Conference
2017	Oregon New Play Prize (\$10,000 Playwriting Award)
2017	Ozy Genius Award (\$10,000 Grant)
2017	Undergraduate Advising and Research Grant (\$7,000 Research Grant)
2016	Strauss Public Service Scholarship (\$10,000 Grant)
2016	Chappell-Lougee Scholarship (\$6,400 Research Grant)
2016	Finalist, Eugene O’Neill Playwriting Competition

2014 **Winner, Psychology One Scholar Award**

Teaching

2024 **Guest Lecturer – Psychology and Society (NYU)**
Lecture on the psychology of social media

2023 **Tutorial on using GPT for text analysis**
NYU Artificial Intelligence working group

2023 **Tutorial on analyzing social media data**
For regression course taught by Professor Madalina Vlasceanu

2022 **Supervisor/Teaching Assistant, Applied Behavioral Insights (Winter Term)**
Taught by Sander van der Linden at the University of Cambridge

2021 **Supervisor/Teaching Assistant, Applied Behavioral Insights (Fall Term)**
Taught by Lee De-Wit at the University of Cambridge

2020 **Supervisor/Teaching Assistant, Applied Behavioral Insights (Winter Term)**
Taught by Lee De-Wit at the University of Cambridge

2017-2018 **Stanford Psychology One Teaching Fellow**
Taught by James Gross (Fall Semester) and Jamil Zaki (Spring Semester)

2015-2017 **Stanford Oral Communication Tutor**
Public speaking tutor for Stanford undergraduate students

Mentorship

Meryl Ye, *Carnegie Mellon University*, PhD Student (2025-)
Kevin Hernandez, *Carnegie Mellon University*, PhD Student (2026-)
Hannah Karsting, *New York University*, Half-Time Research Assistant (2025-)
Sarah Mughal, *New York University*, Half-Time Research Assistant (2023-2025)
Jingzhu Chen, *New York University*, Research Assistant (2024-2025)
Shaye Ann-Hopkins, *Duke University*, Research Assistant (2024)
James K. He, *University of Cambridge*, Research Assistant (2022-2024)

Invited Talks

2026 **Ohio State Social Psychology Colloquium**
“The Psychology of Engagement-Maximizing Technologies.”

2026 **Cornell Tech**
“Sycophantic AI increases attitude extremity and overconfidence.”

- 2026 **Mind and Machine Alignment Summit**
“Sycophantic AI increases attitude extremity and overconfidence.”
- 2026 **Kabiller Research Conference on AI and Empathy**
“Sycophantic AI increases attitude extremity and overconfidence.”
- 2026 **Rutgers Social Psychology Colloquium**
“The Psychology of Virality”
- 2025 **University of Pittsburgh Social Psychology Colloquium**
“The Psychology of Virality: Why Information Spreads Online and Offline”
- 2025 **Austin Riggs Center Fall Conference**
Invited panelist on a discussion on rebuilding trust in institutions.
- 2025 **Aspen Ideas: Health**
Invited panelist on a panel about influencers, social media, and health.
- 2025 **VivaTech 2025**
Invited panelist on panel called “The New Information Gods: From Fact-Checking to Reality Checking.”
- 2025 **University of Chicago (Computational Social Science Seminar)**
“The Psychology of Virality: Why Information Spreads Online and Offline”
- 2025 **Brown (Social Psychology)**
“The Psychology of Virality: Why Information Spreads Online and Offline”
- 2024 **Rutgers-Newark (Psychology)**
“The Psychology of Virality: Why Information Spreads Online and Offline”
- 2024 **Carnegie Mellon (Human Computer Interaction)**
“The Psychology of Virality: Why Information Spreads Online and Offline”
- 2024 **MIT (Comparative Media Studies and Writing)**
“The Psychology of Virality: Why Information Spreads Online and Offline”
- 2024 **Harvard Business School (NOM)**
“The Psychology of Virality: Why Information Spreads Online and Offline”
- 2024 **NYU Research Coordination Network (Center for Social Media and Politics)**
Invited participant in discussion about technology and democracy
- 2024 **Trending Up – Creating for a Cause (Washington, D.C.)**
Invited participant in conference about social media creators and politics

2024	Stanford University - Polarization and Social Change Lab “The causal impact of unfollowing polarizing social media accounts”
2024	Institute for Humane Studies “The causal impact of unfollowing polarizing social media accounts”
2024	Harvard University (Social Psychology) “The paradox of virality”
2024	University of Cambridge (Social Psychology) “The paradox of virality”
2023	Columbia University (Psychology) “Identity-based motivations for sharing (mis)information”
2023	University of Southern California, Marshall School of Business “The paradox of social media virality”
2023	New York University (Social Psychology) “The paradox of social media virality”
2023	Stanford University, Graduate School of Business “The paradox of social media virality”
2023	Deepest Beliefs Lab, UNC Chapel Hill “People think (but do not want) divisive content to go viral”
2023	UK Government Presentation about polarization and misinformation for the UK MOD
2023	Media and Democracy Conference, SRCC Discussion on building trust online.
2023	Social Learning and Cognition Lab Meeting, USC “People think (but do not want) divisive content to go viral”
2023	American Physical Society Annual Leadership Meeting Panel discussion on leadership and science communication
2022	Work and Play Lab, University of Toronto “Out-group animosity drives engagement on social media”
2022	Collective Cognition Lab, New York University “Accuracy and Social Incentives Shape Judgements of (Mis)Information”
2022	Mental Sciences Club, University of Cambridge

- “Understanding and reducing polarization on social media”
- 2021 **Politics and Evolution Lab Meeting, Aarhus University**
“Understanding and reducing polarization on social media”
- 2021 **Designing for Empathy Summit**
“Attending live theatre changes attitudes, increases empathy, and leads to pro-social behavior”
- 2021 **Human Cooperation Lab Meeting, MIT**
“Accuracy and social motivations shape perceptions of (mis)information”
- 2021 **How Theatre Teaches Empathy**
Conversation with Hamilton star Phillipa Soo and Professor Jamil Zaki about research on theatre and empathy.
- 2019 **Arts and Pro-Social Research Group, University of Kent**
“Attending live theatre changes attitudes, increases empathy, and leads to pro-social behavior”
- 2019 **Gates Day of Research, University of Cambridge**
“Attending live theatre changes attitudes, increases empathy, and leads to pro-social behavior”

Conference Presentations

- 2026 **Association for Psychological Science (APS)**
Invited workshop on using large-language models in research.
- 2026 **Society for Personality and Social Psychology**
Invited talk at Misinformation and Belief Science pre-conference. “Sycophantic AI increases attitude extremity and overconfidence.”
- 2025 **Society of Experimental Social Psychology**
Research Spotlight Talk: “Unfollowing hyper-partisan social media influencers durably reduces out-party animosity.”
- 2025 **Psychology of Technology Conference**
Lightning talk: “The consequences of AI sycophancy.”
- 2025 **Human-AI Complementarity for Decision Making (Carnegie Mellon)**
Poster presentation: “The consequences of AI sycophancy.”
- 2025 **NYU Research Coordination Network (Center for Social Media and Politics)**
Lightning talk: “Testing the causal impact of social media around the globe.”

- 2025 **NYU Center for Conflict and Cooperation Florence**
Talk: “Testing the causal impact of social media around the globe.”
- 2025 **Polarization Research Lab Annual Meeting**
Talk: “Unfollowing hyperpartisan social media influencers durably reduces out-party animosity.”
- 2025 **Templeton World Charity Foundation LLPW Cohort Gathering**
Talk: “Testing the causal impact of social media around the globe.”
- 2025 **Society for Affective Science (SAS) Innovation Forum**
Hoemann, K., Boyd, R., V, V., Rathje, S. “What can affective science learn from natural language?”
- 2025 **Society for Affective Science (SAS) Flash Talk**
Rathje, S., He, J., Harjani, T., Roozenbeek, J., Pretus, C., Gray, K., van der Linden, S, & Van Bavel, J.J. Unfollowing hyperpartisan social media influencers durably reduces out-party animosity.
- 2025 **AI and Disinformation Summit (Carnegie Mellon)**
Invited participant.
- 2025 **Society for Personality and Social Psychology**
Rathje, S., He, J., Harjani, T., Roozenbeek, J., Pretus, C., Gray, K., van der Linden, S, & Van Bavel, J.J. Unfollowing hyperpartisan social media influencers durably reduces out-party animosity.
- 2024 **European Association of Personality**
Symposium co-presentation (with Dan Mircea-Mirea): GPT is an effective tool for multilingual psychological text analysis.
- 2024 **Polarization Research Lab Annual Meeting**
Discussant on four papers.
- 2024 **Society for Personality and Social Psychology**
“Large Language Models and the Future of Social Psychology” Co-Chaired Symposium. Rathje, S., Ashokumar, A., Dillon, D., Brisbee, J.
- 2023 **Society for Experimental Social Psychology**
Symposium Presentation: Rathje, S., He, J., Harjani, T., Roozenbeek, J., Pretus, C., Van Bavel, J.J. & van der Linden, S. The causal effect of social media (unfollowing) behavior on affective polarization: results from a digital field experiment.
- 2023 **European Association for Social Psychology**

Symposium Presentation: Rathje, S., He, J., Harjani, T., Roozenbeek, J., Pretus, C., Van Bavel, J.J. & van der Linden, S. The causal effect of social media (unfollowing) behavior on affective polarization: results from a digital field experiment.

- 2023 **Society for Personality and Social Psychology**
Symposium Presentation: Rathje, S., He, J., Harjani, T., Roozenbeek, J., Pretus, C., Van Bavel, J.J. & van der Linden, S. The causal effect of social media (unfollowing) behavior on affective polarization: results from a digital field experiment.
- 2022 **Center for the Science of Moral Understanding**
“Social Media and Moral Understanding.”
- 2022 **SPSP Psychology of Technology Pre-Conference**
Flash Talk: Rathje, S, Van Bavel, J & van der Linden, S. Outgroup animosity drives engagement on social media.
- 2021 **Association for Psychological Science**
Flash Talk: Rathje, S, Van Bavel, J & van der Linden, S. Accuracy and Social Motivations Shape Perceptions of (Mis)Information.
- 2021 **Society for Personality and Social Psychology**
Single Presenter Panel: Rathje, S, Van Bavel, J & van der Linden, S. Outgroup animosity drives engagement on social media.
- 2020 **Association for Psychological Science (APS) Annual Convention**
Poster Presentation: Rathje, S, Hackel, L, Zaki, J. Seeing theatre improves empathy, changes attitudes, and leads to pro-social behavior.
- 2018 **Association for Psychological Science (APS) Annual Convention**
Poster Rathje, S, Santoro, E, Dweck, C, Crum, A. How the subtle use of metaphorical language shapes our mindsets.
- 2018 **California Cognitive Science Conference**
Rathje, S, Santoro, E, Dweck, C, Crum, A. How the subtle use of metaphorical language shapes our mindsets.
*Winner of the “Best Poster” People’s Choice Award

Grants and Awards from Mentees

- 2025 **Meryl Ye – Carnegie Mellon Samson Graduate Fellowship (\$85,000)**
- 2025 **Meryl Ye – Carnegie Mellon Graduate Student Assembly Funding (\$750)**

Ad-Hoc Reviewer

Nature
PNAS
Nature Human Behaviour
Nature Communications (3x)
Science Advances
Nature Scientific Reports
Trends in Cognitive Sciences
Psychological Science (2x)
Journal of Personality and Social Psychology
Journal of Experimental Psychology: General (2x)
Social Psychological and Personality Science
PNAS Nexus (4x)
Neuroscience
Cognition
Journal of Politics
Political Psychology
Cortex
Journal of Personality
Applied Developmental Science
Palgrave Macmillan
Applied Cognitive Psychology
Media Psychology
Social Science Research Council
Templeton World Charity Foundation
Russell Sage Foundation

Professional Memberships

Member, Society for Personality and Social Psychology (SPSP)
Member, Association for Psychological Science (APS)

Service

Panel on Applying to Academic Jobs, NYU (2025)
Member of Knight-Georgetown Institute (KGI) Recommender Systems Optimization Working Group (2024)
Scientific Advisor, Artificial Societies (Y Combinator Startup with 5 million in funding) (2024-)
Member of NSF Study Group providing feedback on the new Technology, Innovation and Partnerships directorate (2023)
NYU Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Steering Committee (2023-2024)
Postdoc Representative, NYU (2022-2023)
Created online tutorial about using GPT for text analysis (2023)
Board Member, Clarity Foundation (2023-)
Created “meet the post-docs” event at NYU (2022-)
Post-doc representative for social psychology post-docs, NYU (2022)

Led tutorials on analyzing social media data and on science communication for the Social Identity and Morality Lab (2022; 2021)
Guest speaker for Santa Fe Community College about Science Communication (2022)
Panel discussion about PhD life at Stanford University (2021)
Gates Cambridge Scholarship Orientation Council (2019)

Science Communication

2020-Present **Verified Content Creator on TikTok (1 million+ followers).**
@stevepsychology on TikTok.

2018-Present **Contributor at Psychology Today**
Contributor for blog “Words Matter.”

To the Editor: Re “Why Schools Are Pushing Laws to Ban Smartphones” (2024). *New York Times*.
Op-Ed: Why we click on stuff we know we won’t like (2023). *Boston Globe*.
Op-Ed: Why Facebook really, really doesn’t want to prevent extremism (2021). *Washington Post*.
Op-Ed: Why theater makes us better people. Bring it back (2021). *Los Angeles Times*.
The Science of Live Theatre (2021). *Psychology Today*.
The Psychology of Live Theatre: Can Seeing Theatre Increase Empathy? (2021). *SPSP Blog*.
The power of framing: it’s not what you say, it’s how you say it (2017). *The Guardian*.
Metaphors can change our opinions in ways we don’t even realize (2018). *Quartz*.
Will the Coronavirus Bring Us Together or Pull Us Apart? (2020). *Psychology Today*.
Why People Ignore Facts (2018). *Psychology Today*.
You Know Less Than You Think (2019). *Psychology Today*.
How to Get More People to Vote (2018). *Psychology Today*.
Do We Need a Common Enemy? (2018). *Psychology Today*.
The Danger of Searching for One True Cause (2019). *Psychology Today*.
When Correcting a Lie, Don’t Repeat It. Do This Instead (2018). *Psychology Today*.
Can Art Change Minds? (2019). *Gates Scholars Magazine*.

Selected Podcasts & TV Appearances

Programmed By AI: Conspiracies and Coverups, Episode 7 (2026). *Discovery Channel*.
The Science Behind Why Social Media Makes Us Miserable (2025). *Andrew Yang Podcast*.
Discussion of “Influencers” and Health Information (2025). *CBS Mornings*.
The Hidden Forces Driving Our Online Behavior (2024). *Where We Go Next Podcast*.
Dr. Steve Rathje – The Global Social Media Experiment (2024). *The Nature & Nurture Podcast*.
#123 The Stanford Podcast Experiment (2023). *The Downside with Gianmarco Soresi*.
Guilty as charged: how we contribute to polarizing content on social media (2023). *APS’s Under the Cortex Podcast*.
A lot of angry reactions (2023). *Outrage Overload Podcast*.
Social Science on TikTok (2022). *Opinion Science Podcast*.
Why is the U.S. Media So Negative? (2021). *Freakonomics*.
How Animosity Drives Social Media Engagement with Steve Rathje (2021) *Break Thru Radio*.
Steve Rathje on Identity and Reason (2019). *Know Thyself History Podcast*.

Lab Lockdown #3: Steve Rathje (2020). *Cognitive Revolution Podcast*.

Selected Media Coverage

This detox may erase 10 years of social media brain damage, researchers say (2026). *Washington Post*.

The Sweatsuit Was Bound to Become a Meme (2025). *New York Times*.

The Politics of Delusion Have Taken Hold (2023). *New York Times*. The Sweatsuit Was Bound to Become a Meme (2025). (2025). *New York Times*. *New York Times*.

The Politics of Delusion Have Taken Hold (2023). *New York Times*.

Here's Hoping Elon Musk Destroys Twitter (2022). *New York Times*.

We're Staring at Our Phones, Full of Rage for 'the Other Side' (2022). *New York Times*.

Google Finds 'Inoculating' People Against Misinformation Helps Blunt Its Power (2022). *New York Times*.

The feedback loop of social media (2022). *Sixty Minutes*.

Political trolling twice as popular as positivity, study suggests (2021). *BBC*.

How to go viral on social media? Attack a political opponent, study says (2021). *NBC*.

A Surprising Reason Why You Should Attend Live Theater (2021). *Wall Street Journal*.

Why The Past 10 Years of American Life Have Been Uniquely Stupid (2022). *The Atlantic*.

From viral videos to Fox News: how rightwing media fueled the critical race theory panic (2021). *The Guardian*.

References

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