



Hackers, Journalists and the Ethical Swamp

Geoff White

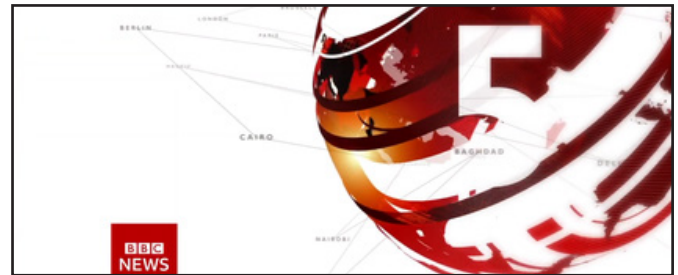
Investigative Journalist covering technology for BBC News, Channel 4 News, United Kingdom

Abstract:

As hacking stories have increasingly made news headlines, those behind the attacks have become ever more adept at co-opting the media into covering their leaks. From Ashley Madison and Sony to the 2016 US Presidential election, news coverage of cyber attacks has become increasingly weaponized by those behind them. Hacking groups have in some cases made direct contact with journalists to steer them towards a particular story, and in other cases have carefully triaged and strategically leaked the data for maximum impact. This has left journalists in a difficult position: exposing the source of the information could well be unethical, but keeping them anonymous could result in the journalist being manipulated to achieve the aims of a hidden and malign actor who escapes culpability. For hackers wishing to expose government or corporate malpractice, it raises practical issues about how to approach and work with news outlets and their staff; both in terms of security and anonymity, but also the ethics of the eventual news coverage that results. Handing information over to a journalist may mean handing over control of how it's used. In this talk, investigative journalist Geoff White (who has covered technology for, among others, BBC News, Channel 4 News and Forbes) takes five high-profile hacking incidents and analyses how they reflect key trends and tactics for working with (and some cases manipulating) the news media.

Biography:

An investigative journalist Geoff White has covered technology for BBC News, Channel 4 News, Audible, Forbes online and many others. His exclusives reveal tech's impact on our lives: the controversial police use of facial recognition; the failure of artificial intelligence therapy apps; hi-tech call centre scams that have cost victims their lives' savings; fraud in the internet dating industry. He is currently writing a book on cybercrime for Reaktion Books, due for publication in 2020. He has written and presented two major podcast series for Audible. *Artificial Intelligence: Friend or Foe?* reveals the origins of AI, and shows how the technology is seeping into everyday life. *The Dark Web* exposes the shadow internet created by the US military and now home to hackers, crooks and freedom fighters. Geoff's own podcast series *Cybercrime Investigations* takes you inside the world of an investigative journalist, detailing the twists and



turns as the story unfolds. An experienced public speaker, he has given keynote talks at some of the UK's largest tech events, in addition to hosting conferences and chairing panels at venues ranging from London's Chatham House think-tank to the Latitude music festival. He is also the co-creator of *The Secret Life of Your Mobile Phone*, a live, interactive phone hacking stage performance which shows how the global technology industry is harvesting the data leaking from your handset. The show was a sell-out hit at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2017, and has been performed at music festivals, political conferences and for corporate clients. For Channel 4 News he created the *Data Baby* project, a unique experiment which used a fictional online identity to expose how our personal data is being used – and abused – online

Publication of speakers:

1. Albaugh, Pamela & Marshall, Lu & Gregory, James & White, Geoff & Hutchison, Alan & Ross, Phil & Gallagher, Dorothy & Tallman, John & Crago, Matt & Casella, James. (2002). Synthesis and biological evaluation of 7,8,9,10-tetrahydroimidazo[1,2-c]pyrido[3,4-e]pyrimidin-5(6H)-ones as functionally selective ligands of the benzodiazepine receptor site on the GABA(A) receptor. *Journal of medicinal chemistry*. 45. 5043-51. 10.1021/jm020219.
2. Albaugh, Pamela & Marshall, Lu & Gregory, James & White, Geoff & Hutchison, Alan & Ross, Phil & Gallagher, Dorothy & Tallman, John & Crago, Matt & Casella, James. (2002). Synthesis and Biological Evaluation of 7,8,9,10-Tetrahydroimidazo[1,2-c]pyrido[3,4-e]pyrimidin-5(6H)-ones as Functionally Selective Ligands of the Benzodiazepine Receptor Site on the GABA A Receptor. *Journal of Medicinal Chemistry - J MED CHEM*. 45. 5043-5051. 10.1021/jm020219.

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