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'Towards a New Sociology of the Text: The Concept of the Author in the Digital Age' Questionnaire and Results

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Loughborough
University

Towards a New Sociology of the Text: The Concept of the Author in the Digital Age

The Preamble

Thank you for your interest in participating in an online questionnaire related to the research project entitled 'Towards a New Sociology of the Text: The Concept of the Author in the Digital Age'.

Please read the participant information below, and then click 'Next'.

Main Investigator

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Section A:

What is the purpose of the study?

The primary aim of this study is to investigate the social (and, in specific instances, literary) implications of natural language generation and computer-generated texts. A secondary aim is to develop a historical overview of the development of natural language generation and to determine its place within modern social and literary climates.

Who is doing this research and why?

Ms Leah Henrickson is a PhD student at Loughborough University and is responsible for running the study. The study is supervised by Dr Wim Van Mierlo and Dr Clare Hutton, both lecturers within Loughborough University's School of the Arts, English and Drama. The study is part of a doctoral research project supported by Loughborough University.

Are there any exclusion criteria?

All participants must be aged 18 or over.

What will I be asked to do?

You will be asked to read a long-form text and then, through an online questionnaire, assign authorship to this text based on the information you have been given. As the questionnaire progresses, you will gradually be given more information about the text's production. Each time you are given more information, you will be asked to re-assign authorship to the text. You will also be asked to explain why you have assigned authorship the way you have.

There are no correct or incorrect answers to any of the questions in the questionnaire.

Once I take part, can I change my mind?

Yes. After you have read the information in this Participant Information section, you will be asked to provide informed consent prior to your participation in the study (on the next page of the questionnaire). However, if at any time during the questionnaire you wish to withdraw

from the study, you may close the questionnaire's browser window and none of the answers you have provided will be included in the data analysis. You may withdraw at any time, and for any reason, and you will not be asked to explain your reasons for withdrawing. However, once you have submitted a completed questionnaire it will not be possible to withdraw your individual data from the research, as data is immediately anonymised.

Please do not complete the questionnaire more than once.

Will I be required to attend any sessions and where will these be?

No. This study is via an online questionnaire only. The questionnaire may be completed anywhere with steady Internet access.

How long will it take?

The online questionnaire should take no more than fifteen minutes to complete. You must complete the questionnaire in one attempt – the questionnaire cannot be saved midsession to be continued later. Answers may be lost if the screen is refreshed.

The questionnaire may take a participant less or more time to complete. Varying completion times may depend on a participant's reading ability, Internet speed, or surroundings.

What personal information will be required from me?

At the beginning of the online questionnaire, you will be asked demographic questions (gender, age, education level, etc.) that will allow the researcher (Leah Henrickson) to discern any patterns in the data corresponding to particular social groups. You will not be asked for your name or email address.

All demographic profiles will be strictly confidential and your details will not be used for any other purpose than for this research. Each demographic profile will be assigned a unique identification number that will be used when data is stored; no name or IP address will be assigned to any demographic profile.

Are there any risks in participating?

Risks of data dissemination through accidental means have been adequately controlled. Personal information such as names and email addresses will not be collected at any point during the online questionnaire. IP addresses will not be recorded. Participants will not be able to view the answers of other participants. Collected data will be stored and backed up

securely.

The investigators are not aware of any additional risks in participating in this study. All study procedures shall be carried out in line with Loughborough University's standards for conducting interviews and the UK Research Integrity Office's Code of Practice for Research (<http://ukrio.org/publications/code-of-practice-for-research>).

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

You will not be asked to provide your name or email address to participate in this study. Your demographic profile will be assigned a unique identification number that will be used when data is stored, and no name or IP address will be attached to the information you provide.

All data and storage will be handled in line with the Data Protection Act (1998). All data will be stored in a locked cupboard or on a password-protected computer system. Only researchers directly involved in the study will have access to any of this information. The data will be kept until the study outcomes have been disseminated via conferences, academic/popular publications and/or Leah Henrickson's PhD thesis.

I have some more questions; who should I contact?

Leah Henrickson	l.r.henrickson@lboro.ac.uk	
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Dr Clare Hutton	c.l.hutton@lboro.ac.uk	+44 (0)1509 222925

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results will be submitted to Loughborough University as part of a PhD thesis and disseminated via relevant academic/popular publications and/or conferences. The data will be kept until the study outcomes have been disseminated.

What if I am not happy with how the research was conducted?

If you are not happy with how the research was conducted, please contact Ms Jackie Green, the Secretary for the University's Ethics Approvals (Human Participants) Sub-

Committee:

Ms Jackie Green

Research Office, Hazlerigg Building, Loughborough University

Epinal Way, Loughborough

LE11 3TU

J.A.Green@lboro.ac.uk

Telephone: +44 (0)1509 222423

The University also has a policy relating to Research Misconduct and Whistle Blowing, which is available online at <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/committees/ethics-approvals-human-participants/additionalinformation/codesofpractice>.

Section B:

Is there anything I need to do before I start the questionnaire?

Please ensure that you have a steady Internet connection, to avoid interruption mid-questionnaire. If questionnaire completion is interrupted due to Internet connection, you may need to start the questionnaire again, from the beginning.

You may wish to minimise disruptions in your immediate surroundings (e.g. closing other browser tabs) to ensure that you complete the study in a timely manner.

What do I get for participating?

Participation in this study is voluntary, and there will be no reimbursement for participation.

Informed Consent

Please read all of the stipulations below, and then click 'I consent to all of the above stipulations.'
If you do not consent to any of these stipulations, please close this window, as you will not qualify for questionnaire participation.

Taking Part

- The purpose and details of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed to further scientific knowledge and that all procedures have been approved by the Loughborough University Ethics Approvals (Human Participants) Sub-Committee.
- I have read and understood the information sheet and this consent form.
- I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.
- I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in the study, have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage for any reason, and will not be required to explain my reasons for withdrawing.
- I am aged 18 or over.
- I agree to take part in this study. Taking part in the project will include completing an online questionnaire anonymously.

Use of Information

- I understand that all the personal information I provide will be treated in strict confidence and will be kept anonymous and confidential to all except the researchers unless (under the statutory obligations of the agencies which the researchers are working with), it is judged that confidentiality will have to be breached for the safety of the participant or others or for audit by regulatory authorities.
- I understand that anonymised quotes may be used in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs.
- I agree for the data I provide to be securely archived at the end of the project.

Do you consent to all of the above stipulations? * *Required*

 [More info](#)

☐ I consent to all of the above stipulations.

Are you a robot?

What is $2 + 7$?

- ☐ 2
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 9

Who are you?

In this section, you'll be asked to tell us a bit about yourself. Your identity will remain anonymous - this information just helps us see if certain groups of people tend towards the same kinds of answers.

You must complete this entire section to proceed with the survey.

What is your gender? * *Required*

How old are you? * *Required*

Where do you currently live? * *Required*

Is English your native language? * *Required*

☐ Yes

☐ No

What is the highest level of education you have completed? * *Required*

What is your occupational status? If you fit into multiple categories, pick the option that you feel best represents you. * *Required*

What is your occupational field? Pick the option that you feel best represents you. If you are a full-time student, pick the option that best represents what you are studying. * *Required*

How comfortable do you feel using computers/the Internet/digital technologies? * *Required*

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.

Please select at least 1 answer(s).

	Not at all comfortable	Fairly comfortable	Comfortable	Very comfortable
Only one selection is permitted.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Before the Exercise Starts...

List three things that come to mind when you think of the word 'author'.

First * *Required*

Second * *Required*

Third * *Required*

What's Going to Happen

On the next page, you will be presented with a text. You will then be asked who you think the author of this text is.

On the succeeding pages, you will be gradually given more information about this text's production. Each time you are given more information, you will be asked who you think the author of this text is based on the new information you have been given.

You will not be asked any questions about the text's content.

Assigning Authorship (1)

The Finns Party drop most seats across Finland

Valtteri

The Finns Party dropped the most council seats throughout Finland and lost 425 seats. The Finns got 3.5 percentage points fewer votes than in the last municipal election and decreased their voter support by the greatest margin. The party dropped 80501 votes since the last municipal election and has 770 seats in the new council.

The Centre Party of Finland has the most council seats nationwide and lost 253 seats. The party dropped the second most council seats and has 2824 seats in the new council. The party won the most council seats nationwide in the previous election. 17.5% of the vote went to the party.

The National Coalition Party lost 245 seats in Finland and dropped the 3rd most council seats. National Coalition has 1490 seats in the new council and secured 3rd most council seats. 20.7% of the vote went to the party. The party received most votes.

The Green League secured 211 more seats and got 3.9 percentage points more votes than in the last municipal election. The party got 107135 more votes than in the last municipal election and secured 12.5% of the vote. The party took 320235 votes and received the 4th most votes.

The Social Democratic Party of Finland secured 2nd most council seats in Finland and has 1697 seats in the new council. 19.4% of the vote went to SDP. The party received the 2nd most votes and lost 32 seats. The party took 498252 votes.

Who is/are the author(s) of this text? * *Required*

- ☐ It is not possible to assign authorship
- ☐ Valtteri
- ☐ Other

If you selected Other, please specify:

Why have you selected this option? *Optional*

Assigning Authorship (2)

Valtteri is an online bot that automatically generates articles reviewing election results in Finland (<https://www.vaalibotti.fi>). Valtteri can generate articles in Finnish, Swedish, and English. The text under consideration was generated within seconds.

Once the article was generated, John Smith (real name changed for privacy) manually translated the Finnish political party names into English for ease of reading.

Who is/are the author(s) of this text? * *Required*

- ☐ It is not possible to assign authorship
- ☐ Valtteri
- ☐ John Smith
- ☐ Other

If you selected Other, please specify:

Why have you selected this option? *Optional*

Assigning Authorship (3)

Valtteri is an online bot that automatically generates articles reviewing election results in Finland (<https://www.vaalibotti.fi>). Valtteri can generate articles in Finnish, Swedish, and English. The text under consideration was generated within seconds.

Once the article was generated, John Smith (real name changed for privacy) manually translated the Finnish political party names into English for ease of reading.

Valtteri was developed by the Immersive Automation research team.

Who is/are the author(s) of this text? * *Required*

- ☐ It is not possible to assign authorship
- ☐ Valtteri
- ☐ John Smith
- ☐ Immersive Automation
- ☐ Other

If you selected Other, please specify: *Optional*

Why have you selected this option? *Optional*

Assigning Authorship (4)

Valtteri is an online bot that automatically generates articles reviewing election results in Finland (<https://www.vaalibotti.fi>). Valtteri can generate articles in Finnish, Swedish, and English. The text under consideration was generated within seconds.

Once the article was generated, John Smith (real name changed for privacy) manually translated the Finnish political party names into English for ease of reading.

Valtteri was developed by the Immersive Automation Research Team.

Immersive Automation is funded by The Finnish Funding Agency of Innovation Tekes, The Media Industry Research Foundation of Finland, The Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland, various media companies, and various research organisations.

Who is/are the author(s) of this text? * *Required*

- ☐ It is not possible to assign authorship
- ☐ Valtteri
- ☐ John Smith
- ☐ Immersive Automation
- ☐ Those who fund Immersive Automation
- ☐ Other

If you selected Other, please specify:

Why have you selected this option?

Other Genres

In this questionnaire, you were presented with just one genre of computer-generated text: data-driven news.

Do you think that your answers would have been different if you had been presented with a computer-generated piece of opinion-driven journalism? * *Required*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you think that your answers would have been different if you had been presented with a computer-generated short story? * *Required*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you think that your answers would have been different if you had been presented with a computer-generated poem? * *Required*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If you answered 'Yes' to any of the above, please explain why. *Optional*

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Questions/Comments?

Do you have any questions or comments related to the questions of authorship that have been posed in this questionnaire? If not, leave this box blank and click 'Finish'. *Optional*

Goodbye, Robot.

You did not select the correct answer, and therefore do not qualify to complete this questionnaire.

Thank you for your time.

Thank you!

Thank you for participating in this study.

To follow research developments, please follow www.twitter.com/leahhenrickson.

Key for selection options

3 - What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Non-Binary
- Other

4 - How old are you?

- 18-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- 70+

5 - Where do you currently live?

- Afghanistan
- Albania
- Algeria
- Andorra
- Angola
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Aruba
- Australia
- Austria
- Azerbaijan
- Bahamas, The
- Bahrain

Bangladesh
Barbados
Belarus
Belgium
Belize
Benin
Bhutan
Bolivia
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Botswana
Brazil
Brunei
Bulgaria
Burkina Faso
Burma
Burundi
Cambodia
Cameroon
Canada
Cabo Verde
Central African Republic
Chad
Chile
China
Colombia
Comoros
Congo, Democratic Republic of the
Congo, Republic of the
Costa Rica
Cote d'Ivoire
Croatia
Cuba
Curacao
Cyprus
Czech Republic
Denmark
Djibouti
Dominica
Dominican Republic
East Timor (see Timor-Leste)

Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
Equatorial Guinea
Eritrea
Estonia
Ethiopia
Fiji
Finland
France
Gabon
Gambia, The
Georgia
Germany
Ghana
Greece
Grenada
Guatemala
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Guyana
Haiti
Honduras
Hong Kong
Hungary
Iceland
India
Indonesia
Iran
Iraq
Ireland
Israel
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Jordan
Kazakhstan
Kenya
Kiribati
Korea, North

Korea, South
Kosovo
Kuwait
Kyrgyzstan
Laos
Latvia
Lebanon
Lesotho
Liberia
Libya
Liechtenstein
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Macau
Macedonia
Madagascar
Malawi
Malaysia
Maldives
Mali
Malta
Marshall Islands
Mauritania
Mauritius
Mexico
Micronesia
Moldova
Monaco
Mongolia
Montenegro
Morocco
Mozambique
Namibia
Nauru
Nepal
Netherlands
New Zealand
Nicaragua
Niger
Nigeria

North Korea
Norway
Oman
Pakistan
Palau
Palestinian Territories
Panama
Papua New Guinea
Paraguay
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Qatar
Romania
Russia
Rwanda
Saint Kitts and Nevis
Saint Lucia
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Samoa
San Marino
Sao Tome and Principe
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Serbia
Seychelles
Sierra Leone
Singapore
Sint Maarten
Slovakia
Slovenia
Solomon Islands
Somalia
South Africa
South Korea
South Sudan
Spain
Sri Lanka
Sudan

Suriname
Swaziland
Sweden
Switzerland
Syria
Taiwan
Tajikistan
Tanzania
Thailand
Timor-Leste
Togo
Tonga
Trinidad and Tobago
Tunisia
Turkey
Turkmenistan
Tuvalu
Uganda
Ukraine
United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom
United States of America
Uruguay
Uzbekistan
Vanuatu
Venezuela
Vietnam
Yemen
Zambia
Zimbabwe

7 - What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Secondary School
Trade/Technical/Vocational Training
Undergraduate Programme
Master's Programme
Doctoral Programme

8 - What is your occupational status? If you fit into multiple categories, pick the

option that you feel best represents you.

Student
Employed
Retired
Not Employed/Unpaid Worker

9 - What is your occupational field? Pick the option that you feel best represents you. If you are a full-time student, pick the option that best represents what you are studying.

Architecture
Arts, Design, and Entertainment
Building/Grounds Maintenance
Business and Financial Operations
Community/Social Services
Construction and Extraction
Education, Training, and Library
Engineering
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry
Healthcare
Hospitality
Information Technology
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair
Journalism
Legal
Life, Physical, and Social Science
Management
Media and Communications
Military
Office and Administrative Support
Personal Care and Service
Production
Public Sector
Retail and Sales
Security
Sport
Transportation and Material Moving
Not Employed

