

Truth, Trust, and Democracy

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Threading the Needle: Resisting Misinformation without Fostering Epistemic Injustice

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Misinformation has become a pressing concern for contemporary society, but efforts to resist misinformation risk perpetuating epistemic injustice, in which non-specialists with legitimate forms of local knowledge are illegitimately dismissed by experts as being ignorant or misinformed. This talk explores how philosophers can potentially help to alleviate epistemic injustice by drawing from the literature on science and values, which highlights scientific choices that experts and community members can reasonably handle in different ways. The talk focuses on several specific kinds of scientific choices, and it illustrates these choices using examples from environmental and medical research. The talk concludes by arguing that philosophers should carefully consider whether particular forms of engaged scholarship with scientists and/or community members would enable them to draw on these insights from the science-and-values literature in the most effective and ethically responsible ways.

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Kevin C. Elliott is Red Cedar Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at Michigan State University, with joint appointments in Lyman Briggs College, the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, and the Department of Philosophy. His research lies at the intersection of the philosophy of science and practical ethics, with a particular focus on the roles that ethical and social values play in scientific research, especially in the environmental health sciences.

