

13.00–14.00, Tuesday 14 June 2016
Centre for Digital Scholarship
Weston Library



Yin Yin Lu

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

#Brexit or #StrongerIn? The Rhetoric of EU Referendum Hashtags

Drawing upon sociology of culture and digital rhetoric literature, this talk will illuminate the persuasive function of hashtags in the context of the UK EU membership referendum. What makes a hashtag more influential, or more successful?

The hashtag is not just a category or community marker—it has also become a vehicle through which rhetorical strategies are being used to influence thoughts and feelings. Many scholars have explored hashtag success by examining popularity and longevity. This talk presents an expanded definition of success that takes hashtag hijacking into account. The data that will be presented are being gathered live from the Twitter Streaming API; over two hundred hashtags and usernames relating to the EU referendum are being tracked. The talk will also highlight the challenges and opportunities afforded by big ‘linguistic’ data on social media.

Yin Yin Lu is a DPhil Candidate at the Oxford Internet Institute (OII) and Balliol College, as well as a Clarendon Scholar. She is fascinated by the intersection between language and technology, and her research focuses on the hashtag, one of the most notable sociotechnical phenomena of the 21st century. Prior to joining the OII, Yin obtained a Masters in English Language from the University of Oxford (Lincoln College) and a Bachelor of Arts from Columbia University. Between these degrees, she worked at Pearson Education and 10 Speed Labs, a digital media agency in Manhattan. She is the founder and co-convenor of the #SocialHumanities network at TORCH, and her ultimate objective is to reinvent the novel—along with the very acts of reading and writing—through new media technologies.

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