

PRESS RELEASE

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Professor Gina Neff appointed to lead the Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy, University of Cambridge

The Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy at the University of Cambridge has today [23/09/2021] announced that Gina Neff, Professor of Technology and Society at the Oxford Internet Institute and the Department of Sociology at the University of Oxford, has been appointed as the Executive Director of the Centre.

Professor Neff will lead the team at the Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy, which is researching the impact of digital technologies on work, the environment and trust.

Professor Neff holds a Ph.D. in sociology from Columbia University and is an expert on data and the future of work, advising international organisations including UNESCO, the OECD and the Women's Forum for the Economy and Society. Her academic research has won awards in the fields of engineering, communication and sociology. This year, she and her team won a Webby award for the best educational website on the Internet, for the A to Z of AI.

The Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy is a team of academic researchers at the University of Cambridge radically rethinking the power relationship between digital technology, society and our planet.

The Centre is the first in a global network funded in part by Minderoo Foundation, a major Australian purpose-led philanthropy committed to challenging unfairness and building opportunity to better the world. The Centre is housed at CRASSH, The Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities.

Announcing Professor Neff's appointment, CRASSH Director Steven Connor said:

"We are very excited to welcome Professor Neff to Cambridge and delighted to have secured a research leader of such dynamism and distinction for our team.

"Her arrival as Executive Director will help expand the capabilities of the Centre, both in terms of the research produced and its impact on the world."

John Naughton, Chair of the Centre's Advisory Board, said:

"Professor Neff has a rare combination of intellectual heft, vision and the ability to inspire young researchers. The Centre is lucky to have her."

Dr Andrew Forrest AO, Chairman of Minderoo Foundation, said:

“The Tech Impact Network brings together leading academics from some of the world’s best universities to tackle some of the world’s greatest challenges.

“There has never been a more important time to critically examine the harmful and abusive impact that technology is having on people and communities.

“As the inaugural node of the Tech Impact Network, the Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy is at the heart of this work – work that will go from strength to strength under the leadership of Professor Neff.”

Speaking about her appointment, Professor Neff said:

“I am thrilled to be joining the Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy at this crucial time.

“In the last twenty years, big tech businesses have accumulated power at an unprecedented speed, and now pose a major threat to both our democracies and our planet.

“Our growing team at the University of Cambridge is radically rethinking the power relationship between technology, society and our planet, as we work to reclaim the Internet for civil society, develop alternatives that assert democratic control over our everyday technologies and reduce tech’s harm to the environment.

“We want to reset the relationship between technology and democracy, asserting the primacy of democratic values over corporate interests. We cannot wait to share our research with you as we campaign for fundamental change globally.”

Further information can be found [here](#).

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About the Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy:

A research centre at the University of Cambridge, the Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy seek policies aimed at reclaiming the Internet for civil society, asserting democratic control over tech monopolies and protecting the environment.

We have four key goals:

- **Enhancing** public understanding of digital technologies and their societal effects.
- **Exposing** the global environmental consequences of digital technology
- **Proposing** solutions for the harmful impact of digital technologies on workers' rights
- **Resetting** the relationship between technology and democracy asserting the primacy of democratic values over corporate interests.

Read more about our work here: www.mctd.ac.uk

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