7th Workshop on Online Abuse and Harms (WOAH 2023)

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Proceedings of the Workshop

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Introduction

Digital technologies have brought many benefits for society, transforming how people connect, communicate and interact with each other. However, they have also enabled abusive and harmful content such as hate speech and harassment to reach large audiences, and for their negative effects to be amplified. The sheer amount of content shared online means that abuse and harm can only be tackled at scale with the help of computational tools. However, detecting and moderating online abuse and harms is a difficult task, with many technical, social, legal and ethical challenges. The Workshop on Online Harms and Abuse (WOAH) is the leading workshop dedicated to research addressing these challenges.

WOAH invites paper submissions from a wide range of fields, including natural language processing, machine learning, computational social sciences, law, politics, psychology, sociology and cultural studies. We explicitly encourage interdisciplinary submissions, technical as well as non-technical submissions, and submissions that focus on under-resourced languages. We also invite non-archival submissions for in progress work and reports from civil society to facilitate a meeting space between academic researchers and civil society.

This year marks the seventh edition of WOAH, which will be co-located with ACL 2023 in Toronto, Canada. The special theme for this year's edition is "subjectivity and disagreement in abusive language data". Hate speech and other forms of abuse are highly subjective, in that there are diverse valid beliefs about what is or is not hateful or abusive. Different beliefs are informed by different social, cultural and legal norms. Through annotation, these beliefs are encoded in labelled datasets, which are then used to train and evaluate detection models. Therefore, subjectivity and disagreement are an essential aspect of research into online abuse and hate. By choosing this theme, we want to encourage submissions that examine, address or make use of this inherent subjectivity.

We received 55 submissions, of which 25 were accepted for presentation at the workshop. These papers will be presented at an in-person, where possible, poster session on the day of the workshop. Authors who are unable to attend in person will be able to give a virtual lightning talk describing their work. The workshop day will also include keynote talks from: Dirk Hovy, Milagros Miceli, Maarten Sap, Su Lin Blodgett, Vinodkumar Prabhakaran and Lauren Klein. Finally, we will close the day by inviting the keynote speakers to participate in a panel on the topic of subjectivity and disagreement.

We thank all our participants and reviewers for their work, and our sponsors for their support. We hope you enjoy this year's WOAH and the research published in these proceedings.

Paul, Yi-Ling, Debora, Aida, and Zeerak

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