

*Reclaiming Expertise: Facing Challenges to Knowledge, Authenticity, Expertise and Trust: The 5th Annual Research and Inquiry Conference, May 3, 2018*

**Panel Title:** Leaky Knowledge: Manning, Snowden, Assange and the [Identity] Politics of Disclosure

**Panel Organizers:**

- Yvonne Eadon is a second year PhD student in the Department of Information Studies at UCLA.
- Carlin Soos is a second year PhD student in the Department of Information Studies at UCLA.
- Daniel Williford is a first year MLIS student in the Department of Information Studies at UCLA.

Our panel was organized as a “fireside chat” and included a handout with a table of basic background information on the key figures as well as a series of discussion questions. There were about 8 participants in total, one of whom was the keynote speaker of the conference, Dr. Veronica Barassi. A number of people who RSVPed did not show.

Together, we had a conversation centered on the effect of knowledge that has come about through leaks, with a focus on the leaking of classified military documents via WikiLeaks in the case of Edward Snowden, Chelsea Manning, and Julian Assange. We began with a short presentation by each of the panel organizers to give background information on each principle figure. Following that, we had a discussion about the impact of leaked knowledge around political issues such as the use of private-sector data for NSA monitoring or the use of stolen emails in the 2016 presidential campaign. We had some disagreements on the use of governmental regulations to intervene on the issues that leaked data brought up, since there is ongoing debate in the U.S. about the value federal regulations.

We asked participants to consider the ways that some leakers, such as Assange and Snowden, are seen as heroes who expose the predatory and corrupt nature of the police state, whereas others, like Manning, are seen as undermining authority, national

security, and hierarchy. We discussed at length some of the problematic personal details related to each of these principle actors, and how we might think of their personal identities in relation to the leaked data that they promoted. Key examples that came up included Assange's accusations of sexual abuse as well as his personal hostility to Hillary Clinton; Snowden's construction of his "every man" image; and the way that people criticised Manning's transgender identity and what we should make of her recent problematic association with white supremacists.