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# Deception as a Social Strategy

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**Keywords:** deception; lying; social interaction; interpersonal relationships; decision making; goals; computational modeling; risk taking; incentives; motivation; message design

## Abstract

Deception can be advantageous to a deceiver when the truth conflicts with his or her goals - be they personal or social, selfless or selfish. Thus it is that people regularly use deception to avoid conflict with others, to avoid punishment or embarrassment, to fit into a group, to harm, protect or help others, and for material or non-material benefit to themselves. While there are many ways in which people can deceive, for example, by choosing to fabricate rather than to tell a half-truth, there are always cost-benefit trade-offs, regardless of the strategy a person chooses. Understanding why people deceive in everyday life situations, how they do it, why they choose one strategy over another, and why sometimes they might choose not to deceive at all, even in the absence of any serious anticipated cost, will enable us to build richer models of socially intelligent behavior--models that could be employed in computational systems designed to facilitate enterprises such as elder care, tutoring, and professional training. In this workshop, we aim to address three basic questions: (1) what factors lead people to deceive? (2) what makes them decide to deceive one way rather than another? and (3) how can we model these factors computationally?

## What we aim to achieve

We aim to highlight research on how people use deception as a social strategy, and provide an overview of how issues related to the questions raised above have been addressed by various disciplines. Even though there has been research in several fields including communication studies, philosophy, linguistics, psychology, economics, and neuroscience, on the question of why and how people deceive one another, there is no comprehensive integration of the different views and observations found in the literature. The confirmed speakers represent many of these disciplines, and this workshop would be a good opportunity to explore together similar research questions from different disciplinary perspectives.

## Why is it important

Most of the research on deception has focused on deception detection, rather than generation. We believe there is a need to move in the direction of rectifying this imbalance, for the reasons mentioned in the abstract above. This workshop will provide an opportunity for people interested in deception to focus more on the generation aspect, and will help in making a stronger case of more research in this area.

## Relevance to CogSci 2013

The goals of this workshop, which focuses on an emerging and a cross-disciplinary research topic, are directly linked to the theme of CogSci 2013, which is "Cooperative Minds: Social Interaction and Group Dynamics." We treat deception as a social strategy, which often is used to enhance social interactions and cooperation within groups.

## The Organizers

We are an interdisciplinary team of scientists, with a background in interdisciplinary science, cognitive science, computational linguistics, and psychology. For the past two years, we have been working on a project on this topic, in which we have brought together literature from diverse fields, and have investigated issues related to verbal deception. We proposed a theory of verbal deception which demonstrated the interaction between a taxonomy of verbal deception types, and the communicative goals of deception. Focusing on the decision making aspect of deception, we also analyzed factors that determine whether a person would deceive or not, and found that these factors differ depending on whether the person is facing potential losses or gains. Following are our most relevant publications.

Gupta, S., Sakamoto, K., & Ortony, A. (2012). [Telling it like it isn't: a comprehensive approach to analyzing verbal deception](#). In F. Paglieri, L. Tummolini, R. Falcone & M. Miceli (Eds.), *The goals of cognition: Festschrift for Cristiano Castelfranchi*. London, College Publications.

Sakamoto, K., Laine, T., and Farber, I. (in press). [Deciding whether to deceive: Determinants of the choice between deceptive and honest communication](#). *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*.

## Expected audience

This is a topic of general interest. We expect it to attract audience from a variety of disciplines like psychology, linguistics, philosophy, as well as artificial intelligence, economics, and neuroscience. People working in interpersonal / strategic communication, decision making, unethical behavior, morality, truth, and business ethics, would find it particularly relevant. It would also be of interest to people working on real world domains like law, insurance, tutoring, professional training, and elder care.

Our estimate for the number of people in the audience is approximately 40.

## Confirmed Speakers

We are currently awaiting responses from a few more people, and plan to have around 9-10 speaker slots. Below is the list of confirmed speakers.

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## Publicity

Some of the relevant mailing lists that we plan to advertise on are [JDM](#), [SPSP](#), [IU's cogsci list](#), and [Cognitive Science Student Society](#). We will utilize the social networking platform to publicize on the Facebook pages of relevant organizations like the Cognitive Science Society, International Communication Association, Association For Business Communication, and AAI, to name a few. We also plan to advertise at the [Joint Action Meeting](#), which is collocated with CogSci.

We would also like to document the workshop outcomes in the form of an article or a special issue in the journal of a related discipline.