

# The amplification of risk in experimental diffusion chains

This document presents the 6 articles that were presented to the first participants of each of the 15 communication chains.

Each of these experimental subjects was sitting in front of a computer screen alone in the experimental room and instructed to read all 6 articles. The articles were presented in a random order across groups, and the subject had 3 minutes to read each of them. After 3 minutes, the computer automatically displayed the next article, until the last one. The duration of the complete reading phase was, therefore, 18 minutes.

The articles present different views and factual information on the use and the suspected side effects of a controversial cleaning agent called *Triclosan*. They were selected from the first page of results returned by Google with the search keyword '*Triclosan*' (accessed early 2013), and are thus representative of the environment in which people navigate when searching for information on this topic.

Because the experiment took place in Germany (specifically at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, in Berlin), all articles are in German. The 6 documents are the following:

- (1) Media article from the popular newspaper '*Focus*'.
- (2) The German Wikipedia page of '*Triclosan*'.
- (3) A Greenpeace report which expresses a rather negative opinion on *Triclosan*
- (4) A report from the CTPA (Cosmetics, Toiletry, and Perfumery Association) which expresses a rather positive opinion on *Triclosan*
- (5) A collection of two personal statements from laypeople who were interviewed about *Triclosan*, as extracted from a report of the Environmental Defence
- (6) An official report from the German Ministry of the Environment presenting a technical fact sheet about *Triclosan*

The pdf files of the 6 articles can be downloaded at the following data repository:

<http://thedata.harvard.edu/dvn/dv/riskcommunication>