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SPRAWOZDANIE / REPORT

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Sprawozdanie/Report: Argumentation in the Digital Society: The Fifth European Conference on Argumentation, 23-26 September 2025, Warsaw

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Sprawozdanie/Report: Argumentation in the Digital Society: The Fifth European Conference on Argumentation, 23-26 September 2025, Warsaw

The fifth European Conference on Argumentation (ECA 2025, ecargument.org) took place in Warsaw, Poland, from 23-26 September 2025, hosted by the two faculties of Warsaw University of Technology: the Faculty of Administration and Social Sciences and the Faculty of Electronics and Information Technology. Following previous editions in Lisbon (2015), Fribourg (2017), Groningen (2019), and Rome (2022), the Warsaw meeting confirmed the ECA's position as the leading European forum for argumentation scholars, bringing together researchers from diverse theoretical and disciplinary backgrounds. Under the general theme "Argumentation in the Digital Society," the conference addressed how argumentation changes under digital conditions, how social media reshape argumentative practices, and how emerging technologies – from algorithmic discourse moderation to generative artificial intelligence – affect the quality of public reasoning and deliberation. The event was organised by Marcin Koszowy (chair), Katarzyna Budzyńska, Jarosław Chudziak, Martin Hinton, and Jakub Pruś, with the scientific programme coordinated by Fabrizio Macagno (chair of the programme committee). The event was patronised by the Center for Innovation and Technology Transfer (Warsaw University of Technology), *Filozofuj!* magazine, and The Academicon Press.

Keynote Lectures

The conference's keynote lectures reflected the thematic focus on digitality, credibility, and audience construction in contemporary public discourse. Miriam Metzger (University of California, US) opened the meeting with her lecture *Credibility at a Crossroads: Lessons from the Past and a Look to the Future*,

addressing how research in the social sciences explains persistent belief in misinformation and exploring how credibility will evolve as digital information ecosystems become increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence. Dawn Archer (Manchester Metropolitan University, UK) examined manipulation and deception in digital political discourse in her lecture *Exploring Deception/Manipulation (Online) Using Trump as a Case Study*, analysing the rhetorical and linguistic mechanisms through which Donald Trump's online communication constructs "reality paradigms" for his supporters. Finally, Jean Goodwin (North Carolina State University, US) concluded the conference with her talk entitled *Constructing the Contemporary Audience for Argument*, emphasising how arguers construct audiences and how misperceptions of others' extremism – amplified by social media dynamics – contribute to polarisation and failures of mutual understanding. Together these keynotes set a reflective frame for the conference's central concern with the relationship between digital technologies and the ethical, epistemic, and social dimensions of argumentation.

Long Papers

A typical feature of ECA 2025 was the inclusion of long papers, which offered extended theoretical or empirical contributions. Mark Aakhus discussed early instances of arguing with AI-infused systems, analysing the *Botto Bistro vs. Yelp* case to reveal how digital platforms embed argumentation norms into communicative infrastructures. Siddharth Bhargava, Sara Tonelli, and Patricia Martín-Rodilla proposed a systematic framework for comparing argument mining pipelines, advancing methodological consistency in computational argumentation. José Ángel Gascón revisited the long-standing distinction between argument and explanation, suggesting a practical criterion based on assessment standards and charity. Amalia Haro Marchal introduced the notion of "argumentative resistance" from feminist theory, analysing how power asymmetries and exclusionary norms shape argumentation in non-ideal contexts. Jens Kjeldsen offered a rhetorical analysis of persuasion in online scams, while Marcin Lewiński examined the dilemmas of applying the Principle of Charity in strategic digital communication. Other long papers included contributions by Jean Wagemans on argument classification through the Periodic Table of Arguments, Henri Mütschele on framing and argumentation in climate activism, and Simon Wells on visual dialogue cartography. Collectively, the long papers combined philosophical, computational, and empirical perspectives, reflecting the conference's interdisciplinarity.

Thematic Panels

The thematic panels provided coherent explorations of major issues at the intersection of argumentation, digital media, and social life. The *The Role of Argumentation in Modelling Social Media Polarisation* panel (Maria Vanina Martinez, Katarzyna Budzyńska, and Carles Sierra) investigated how argumentative exchanges contribute to belief polarisation and proposed computational and experimental models to capture emotional and rhetorical dynamics. Contributions by Nataly Pineda and colleagues analysed causal reasoning in Reddit debates about climate change, while Stephanie Malvicini and co-authors used multi-agent simulations to study polarisation and rhetorical contagion. Fabrizio Macagno's paper illustrated how argumentation schemes and fallacies can serve as analytical tools for discourse manipulation, and Edoardo Lombardi Vallauri demonstrated experimentally how implicit contradictions function as manipulative devices in polarised media. Virginie Van Ingelgom extended this discussion to affective polarisation beyond partisan boundaries.

The *Emotion in Argumentation* panel (Barbara Konat and Cristian Manuel Santibáñez Yañez) explored affective and pragmatic dimensions of argumentative practice across languages and media. Sara Cigada analysed emotional appeals in French financial discourse on YouTube, Barbara Konat proposed a pragmatic model of pathos in digital argumentation, and Menno Reijven examined the discursive construction of emotion in Dutch political debates. Cristian Santibáñez reconsidered Hamblin's account of emotion in dialectical commitment, and Marta Trutalli, Anders Olof Larsson, and Sara Greco investigated the interplay of reason and emotion in digital activism surrounding the Rana Plaza disaster.

Visual and multimodal forms of argumentation, a recurring theme in recent ECA meetings, were addressed in several panels. *Visual Argumentation in a Digital Society*, convened by Leo Groarke, examined the epistemic and rhetorical force of images. Groarke argued for recognising visual propositions in epistemic argument, Andreea Mihali traced visual instances of slippery-slope reasoning, Ian Dove challenged "visual argument denialism," and David Godden called for parity charity in evaluating visual arguments. *Multimodal Argumentation and Critique* (Dimitris Serafis and Jan Albert van Laar) focused on how visual and multimodal communication contribute to ideological persuasion and critique. Aleksandra Majdzińska-Koczorowicz and Martin Hinton analysed memes through cognitive and rhetorical lenses; Marta Marcora, Janina Wildfeuer, and Dimitris Serafis examined visual inferences in online hate speech; Lotte van Poppel and Jan Albert van Laar explored multimodal activism; and Steve Oswald with Ramy Younis discussed the procedural meaning of visuals in argumentative inference.

Experimental approaches to argumentation formed another strong stream. Jennifer Schumann and Steve Oswald surveyed developments in experimental methodology. Francesca Ervas and Oriana Mosca examined the role of metaphor in *ad populum* reasoning, Jos Hornikx and Jean Wagemans investigated the effect of argument quality on claim acceptance, and Jennifer Schumann, together with Daniel de Oliveira Fernandes, used self-paced reading tasks to measure cognitive effort in processing rephrased arguments. Additionally, Szymon Makuła and Jakub Pruś presented an exploratory study examining how argumentation theorists themselves evaluate arguments and whether they are resistant to political bias. Such experimental studies exemplified the empirical turn in argumentation research, integrating cognitive science with classical theory.

Regular Papers

The breadth of the regular papers confirmed the vitality and diversity of the field. One cluster of contributions engaged with *argumentation and artificial intelligence*, including Sharon Bailin and Mark Battersby on challenges to critical thinking education posed by generative AI, Henrike Beyer and Chris Reed on reasoning in large language models, and Jarosław Chudziak and Yaroslav Harbar on AI-based multi-agent debates. Other papers explored argumentation in digital environments: Corina Andone on cookie-banner consent, Ron Von Burg and Marcus Paroske on deepfakes as rhetorical arguments, and Claudia Coppola with Andrea Rocci on counterargument and concession in large-scale online polylogues.

A second cluster focused on *multimodality and visual reasoning*. Rose Marie Barrientos Galindo conceptualised art as argument, while Hédi Virág Csordás and Alexandra Karakas proposed extending visual argumentation theory to "material arguments" embodied in scientific instruments. These contributions showed how argumentation increasingly transcends the verbal mode.

A further group addressed *emotion, rhetoric, and ethos* in digital communication. Katarzyna Budzyńska and Marcin Koszowy analysed the scalability of ethotic arguments in online discourse, emphasising how ethos disperses across networked communicative environments. Papers by Petar Bodlović and Marcin Lewiński revisited the Principle of Charity and intellectual tolerance, while Amalia Haro Marchal's long paper on argumentative resistance complemented this line of inquiry.

Several papers advanced *methods and theory of argumentation*. Jean Wagemans' long paper on argument types exemplified systematic classification; José Ángel Gascón's contribution refined distinctions between argument and explanation; and contributions by Michel Dufour and Michael Hoppmann examined the relation

between arguers, arguments, and monologic discourse. Jonas Raab offered a critical assessment of Bayesian argumentation, while Fabio Perin Shecaira and Luís Duarte D'Almeida questioned appeals to scholarly authority in legal argument.

Contributions on *education, deliberation, and application* extended argumentation studies beyond theory. Parichehr Afzali, Narjes Sheikh Asadi, and Mohammad Amini Farsani compared argumentative writing among L2 learners; Álvaro Domínguez Armas examined representing absent participants in deliberation; and Sara Greco and collaborators, through their poster project *Argumentation as an Alternative to Conflict Escalation*, illustrated how argumentation training can reduce conflict in professional education.

Posters

In addition to these structured sessions, the poster presentations offered insights into emerging topics, especially at the intersection of argumentation and artificial intelligence. Bhrunali Gokhe discussed generative AI as a new kind of "artificial arguer," while Zuzana Rybaříková analysed disinformation in the age of large language models. Bruna Paz Schmid's corpus-based study linked linguistic features to the straw man fallacy on social media, and Michael Mueller provided a philosophical account of attack, support, and defence in computational argumentation. Other posters presented practical applications of argumentation to education and conflict prevention, as in the contribution by Sara Greco and collaborators.

Prizes

The **Frans van Eemeren Prize for Outstanding Student Paper** is awarded at each edition of the European Conference on Argumentation to recognise an exceptional student essay selected through a dedicated competition. The prize – supported by Springer – is adjudicated by an independent international jury of six leading argumentation scholars, chaired on a rotating basis and appointed by the ECA Steering Committee. At ECA Warsaw 2025, the prize was awarded to Costanza Maria Lucchini for her essay *Extending the Notion of Argumentative Patterns*. Lucchini, a doctoral student at the Institute of Argumentation, Linguistics and Semiotics at Università della Svizzera italiana, reconceptualises argumentative patterns beyond the pragma-dialectical framework by addressing its definitional and methodological limitations. She introduces the notion of *argumentative configurations*, understood as empirically recurring and contextually relevant forms of argumentation, and proposes an empirically grounded methodology

illustrated with examples from the financial domain. The essay was commended for its conceptual innovation and methodological refinement, exemplifying the scholarly quality that the *Frans van Eemeren Prize* is intended to recognise.

The **ArgDiaP Argumentation Paper of the Year Prize** was also presented at the closing session of the conference. Established by ArgDiaP – a scholarly association founded in 2008 to support argumentation research in Poland – this inaugural award recognises outstanding research published in the preceding year. The 2024 prize was awarded to Marcin Będkowski and Kinga Rogowska (University of Warsaw) for their article *Systemic Means of Persuasion and Argument Evaluation: Insights From the Corpus of Competitive Debates* (*Informal Logic*, 2024, 44[2], 166–207). Their study introduced the concept of "systemic means of persuasion," particularly regress stoppers, and investigated how these mechanisms function as independent strategies within argumentative discourse. Drawing on a corpus of competitive debates, the authors demonstrated how systemic persuasive cues operate alongside explicit argumentation, offering a novel empirical and theoretical contribution to the study of persuasion and argument evaluation.

Across sessions, several cross-cutting trends emerged. The conference demonstrated a consolidation of research at the intersection of argumentation theory, artificial intelligence, and computational linguistics, with many contributions engaging in argument mining, modelling, and large language models, but also exploring developments in informal logic, rhetoric, and debating. Digital media remained a central site of inquiry, both as an empirical field – covering social networks, memes, and online activism – and as a laboratory for testing theoretical tools. The prominence of multimodal and visual approaches reflected a broader movement to adapt argumentation theory to contemporary communicative forms. The integration of experimental and corpus methods signalled the continuing methodological diversification of the field. Selected papers and commentaries will appear in the *Proceedings of the 5th European Conference on Argumentation* (College Publications).

ECA Warsaw 2025 confirmed the European Conference on Argumentation as an intellectually vibrant and methodologically pluralistic community. The event's focus on argumentation in the digital society captured both the opportunities and challenges facing argumentative practice in an age of algorithmic mediation, synthetic communication, and global interconnectivity. The combination of theoretical reflection, empirical rigour, and technological awareness suggested that argumentation studies are increasingly positioned to engage critically with transformations in communication and public reason. The Warsaw meeting thus made a significant contribution to the ongoing effort to understand how

argumentation evolves – and how it can continue to sustain reasoned dialogue – within a rapidly digitising world.

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Two short video clips, produced in both English and Polish, featured randomly selected researchers who were asked to explain their work in 60 seconds as if speaking to a teenager. The videos are available on YouTube on the *Logika codzienna* ("Everyday Logic") channel.

English version: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_5R5d1dHlg

Polish version: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zEalqcRM9UI

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The sixth edition of the European Conference on Argumentation will take place on the Côte d'Azur in 2027, and we are already looking forward to it. We wish the organizers every success in putting together what is sure to be an outstanding event.