

"Evolutionary social cognition: How the mind warps."

*Dr. Doug Kenrick
Department of Psychology
Arizona State University*

Cognitive processing is famously selective and shockingly biased. But who and what do we select for attention, encoding, and retrieval, and how, why, and when do we distort certain kinds of information in certain ways and not others? My colleagues and I have been studying how basic cognitive processes are influenced by activating fundamental human motivations such as self-protection or mating goals. We've found several domain-specific cognitive enhancements, decrements, and distortions: we stare at, but fail to remember, certain people in certain circumstances, we look away from, yet remember, other people in other conditions, and sometimes we differentiate members of out-groups who are normally blurred together in our memories. These biases are anything but random and senseless. Instead they make functional sense when considered in light of broader theoretical developments at the interface of evolutionary biology, comparative anthropology, and cognitive science.

Please email: webpsych@uwo.ca if you require information in an alternate format, or if any other arrangements can make this event accessible to you; website: <http://www.psychology.uwo.ca/>

