

Maria Balinska

Maria Balinska is co-CEO and Editor of The Conversation US, the nonprofit digital source of analysis and commentary authored by academics and edited by journalists for the general public. As such she is responsible for the strategic direction of the organization as well as the daily output and operations and for crafting the publication's distinctive editorial profile. Under her leadership the organization has grown from a start up of seven in 2014 to an established newsroom of 20 with staff in Atlanta, Boston, New York, Seattle and Washington, DC. To date The Conversation US has worked with over 5000 scholars from more than 600 American colleges and universities. The original content they and Conversation editors produce now has a monthly reach of eight million and is being republished in national titles such as The Washington Post, Scientific American and Salon as well as regional and ethnic media across the U.S.

Previous to The Conversation, Maria launched and ran her own startup, Latitude News, off the back of a year at Harvard on a Nieman fellowship. Pioneering a experimental approach to covering international affairs for American audiences, Latitude News received a Women Entrepreneurs in the Global Digital News Frontier grant from the International Women's Media Fund in 2011 and successfully completed a round of crowdsourced Kickstarter funding in 2013.

The bulk of Maria's career was spent in the UK, at the BBC where she moved from researcher to producer and then into BBC News management as Editor, World Radio Current Affairs. It was in the latter role that she and her team created and launched BBC Radio 4's international reportage series Crossing Continents, that has been recognized by the Financial Times as a "BBC crown jewel."

In her spare time, Maria has been a parental advocate of language immersion teaching in Massachusetts and is the author of *The Bagel: The Surprising History of a Modest Bread* (Yale University Press, November 2008) which was described by *The New York Times* as 'thought provoking'; by *Slate* as 'a lively and well-researched book' and by the *Forward* as 'a charming history.'

Maria was educated in both French and British secondary schools. She graduated from Princeton University and has a master's degree from the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy.