

Digitalisation Research Seminar.

DigiSem
2024

Bochum, 14–15 Oct

Digital Freedom –
Autonomy, Wellbeing
and Participation

Call for Participation

Digitalisation Research Seminar (DigiSem 2024)
Digital Freedom - Autonomy, Wellbeing and Participation

The Bavarian Research Institute for Digital Transformation (bidt), the Center for Advanced Internet Studies (CAIS), the Leibniz Institute for Media Research – Hans Bredow Institute (HBI) and the Weizenbaum Institute (WI) invite doctoral and postdoctoral researchers to present their work at the joint Digitalisation Research Seminar – DigiSem.

DigiSem will take place on **14–15 October 2024** at [CAIS](#) in Bochum. This year's overarching theme is "**Digital Freedom – Autonomy, Wellbeing and Participation**".

DigiSem is a bi-annual workshop for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers, organised by bidt, CAIS, HBI and WI. The second edition of DigiSem focuses on a pressing subject that has also been selected as topic of the [Science Year 2024](#): Freedom. DigiSem takes into focus what *digital* freedom means and what impact this may have on our lives with respect to more or less autonomy, wellbeing and possibilities to participate in public life.

DigiSem is a perfect place to meet other young researchers related to your topics and provides a place to discuss results, ideas and problems relating to the special theme in a smaller group. The workshop will include a keynote by an expert on the field of ethics in digitalisation. Further, there will be focus sessions on specific aspects of the workshop's overarching theme, including the discussion of the statements postulated below. A Podcast-Team will accompany the event.

Keynote

The keynote at DigiSem 2024 will reflect on the topic of 'Freedom and digitalisation'. It will be delivered by [Prof. Dr. Sebastian Weydner-Volkman](#) who is Junior Professor for Ethics of Digital Methods and Technologies at the Institute for Philosophy I, Ruhr University Bochum. He is a Principal Investigator in the graduate academy [SecHuman](#) on cyber security and – among others – has worked on the ethical implications of passenger controls and data-based profiling.

Topics

We invite submissions addressing one of the three main topic-areas. In your abstracts, please also share your thoughts on one of the postulated statements, as we are encouraging an open discussion including participants' own experiences and opinions.

Topic 1: Autonomy

How autonomous are we, or do we want to be, in dealing with data and technologies? What choices do individuals, companies and institutions have in the face of BigTech players? Is more security in the digital world bound to trade-off with individual freedom? Regarding freedom of research in particular – will artificial intelligence increase our freedom to use and leverage data, tools and networks? Or will their costs and access restrictions have an inhibiting effect on research or benefit only a small subset of researchers?

Statement 1: The more autonomy the better.

Statement 2: Digital autonomy fosters freedom of research.

Topic 2: Wellbeing

Do we have more freedom (e.g. for other activities, leisure time, empowerment) through digital solutions/AI in the world of work and private life – or less? How do we measure digital freedom in terms of wellbeing or happiness? Do we still have the choice to live an analogue/digital autonomous life?

Statement 1: Digital freedom enhances our personal well-being.

Statement 2: Digitalisation saves time.

Topic 3: Participation

Which means do we have to shape digital infrastructures through active participation? How can civil society's role as active, self-determined power be supported in different political systems and market contexts? What impact does (a) restricted access to media and technologies have on democratic processes and opinion forming/building, either on a local or on an international scale? Is free access to digital space for everyone a goal that can and should be achieved?

Statement 1: Digitalisation promotes democratisation.

Statement 2: Participation should not require digital access.

Format

Accepted submissions will be presented orally (approx. 20 min slots including Q&A) within a session. Presentations will be followed by a joint discussion of the session participants focusing on the statements postulated above.

Important Dates

CfP opens: 13 May 2024

Deadline for abstract submission: 10 July 2024

Notification of acceptance: 15 August 2024

Deadline for final abstract: 08 October 2024

Registration opens: 20 August 2024

Deadline for registration: 08 October 2024

Workshop Date: 14–15 October 2024

How to apply

Submissions should present research that relates to one of the main topics and reflects on one of the postulated statements. Inter- and transdisciplinary work is particularly encouraged. Please submit an abstract of max. 500 words via [EasyChair](#) by 10 July 2024. You will be notified regarding participation by 15 August 2024. A link for registration will follow.

If you have any questions, please contact the responsible organiser from your institute/one of the institutes as indicated below or have a look at the respective websites.

Kind regards,
the Organising Team

[Maria Staudte, bidt](#)

[Nina Hahne, CAIS](#)

[Katharina Mosene, HBI](#)

[Stephanie Bouré, WI](#)

About the convening institutions:

bidt: The Bavarian Research Institute for Digital Transformation (bidt), an Institute within the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities, contributes to a better understanding of digital transformation's developments and challenges. Thereby, we provide the foundations which will shape society's digital future responsibly, for the common good.

CAIS: The Center for Advanced Internet Studies (CAIS) in North Rhine-Westphalia promotes the active shaping of the social, political, economic, and cultural changes that digitalization brings about. The Center sees itself as a place for innovative interdisciplinary research and as a source of inspiration for a critical public that wants to find agreement on models for a self-determined life in the digital society.

HBI: The research perspective of the Leibniz-Institute for Media Research | Hans-Bredow-Institut (HBI) focuses on media transformation and related structural changes of public communication. With its cross-medial, interdisciplinary and independent research, it combines basic research and transfer research, and thus, generates knowledge on issues relevant for politics, commerce and civil society.

WI: The Weizenbaum Institute for Networked Society (WI) is the German Internet Institute, a place of excellent research on the transformation and design processes of digital change. In the spirit of Joseph Weizenbaum, we research the necessary framework conditions, means and processes for individual and social self-determination in a networked society. We understand self-determination as a design principle that is central to the preservation of human dignity and democracy.