

Call for Papers

The Conference

The Weizenbaum Institute is organizing its seventh annual Conference on the subject of “Empowering People in Online Spaces: Democracy and Well-being in Digital Societies”. We invite interested scholars to submit papers for presentations. The conference will take place at bUm – Raum für soziales Miteinander in Berlin, Germany from 4 to 5 June 2025.

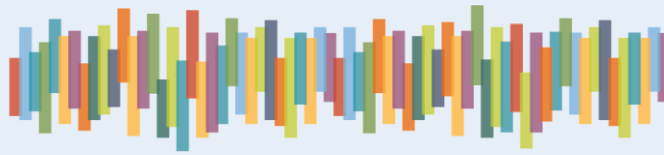
As digital technologies become increasingly embedded in the social fabric, their architectures and affordances co-shape individual and collective experiences across various dimensions. Interdisciplinary research highlights how people use different tools to nurture personal and professional relationships, enhance education, develop new skills, and foster healthier habits. Digital platforms, often powered by artificial intelligence systems, also serve as mediators for community connections, citizen-state interaction, and different forms of political participation, exerting growing influence on individual and collective well-being. This impact, however, is framed by imbalances in economic and political power related, for instance, to the global dominance of technology corporations and the capacity of nation-states to regulate and exert influence over the rapidly evolving digital markets.

Topics of Interest

The conference aims to examine these issues from a citizens and user perspective. It seeks to highlight theoretical and empirical research approaches focused on empowering people’s agency within online environments at both personal and collective levels. Ultimately, we would like to connect research that engages with the interface of digital technologies, democratic participation and individual well-being.

Possible topics for submission should combine science and technology studies approached with, for example, the following topics:

- Impacts of (anti)democratic news consumption
- The interplay of algorithmic and individual activity in online spaces
- Community organization and fringe digital spaces
- Online political participation and social cohesion in- and outside times of crisis
- Digital Elections, data-driven electoral campaigning and propaganda
- Illiberal communications, reactionary speech and democratic transformations
- Public values and political representation in an evolving public sphere
- Digital state and platformized public services
- Digital identity, collective and individual contestations of digital technologies
- Accessibility, inequalities, and vulnerable populations in online spaces
- Loneliness and kinship in the digital era
- Digital interventions for deliberation and well-being online



Democracy and Well-being in Digital Societies

- Media and digital literacy
- Regulatory approaches, ethical guidelines and values for digital governance
- Democratic regulatory approaches to digital platforms and artificial intelligence
- Emerging digital methods for policy analysis and social sciences research

Submissions

We welcome abstracts of up to 800 words, to be submitted through **EASYCHAIR** until 23:59 of February 15th 2025. The conference is open to different methodological approaches, including theoretical and conceptual work, qualitative and ethnographic methods, quantitative studies work and research applying computational methods.

Please use our **Word template**. Preferably, submissions should be original work not yet published elsewhere. Submissions based on already published papers should indicate the publication's source in a comment section in the submission system.

As the paper will be reviewed in a double-blind process, please anonymize any information which could point to your authorship. Accepted papers will be published in an anthology. Authors are expected to hold a 20-minute presentation of their accepted conference papers.

Important Dates

Submission Deadline: 15 February 2025
Notification of Decision: 15 March 2025
Conference: 4 and 5 June 2025

Contact

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