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Dear Reader,

It is with great pleasure that we present to you the second annual report of the Nordic Centre for Internet and Society. This report showcases the many ways in which we grew as a Centre of dedicated researchers, extending our national and international impact. It was truly an eventful year!

This year, we served as the project coordinator for the European Union Horizon 2020 research project Ps2Share. This project enabled us to work closely with some amazing academic and industry partners across Europe. We conducted cutting-edge scientific research on issues of power relations, privacy concerns, and participation in the sharing economy, which we channeled into key findings for the European Commission.

2017 provided many opportunities for us to extend our global outreach, with our members now engaged in cross-country research bodies such as COST Actions, HubIT, and the Global Network of Centres. We presented our research at many leading international conferences and developed new collaboration opportunities with friends and colleagues across 4 continents. For instance, in addition to our core focus on the future of work, we have extended our research agenda to include social robotics, AI, and youth and media.

Our most exciting news came at the close of the year, when it was announced that our Toppforsk project on future ways of working in the digital economy was granted full funding from the Research Council of Norway. This grant will support us for four additional years and enable the Nordic Centre to continue to thrive as a source of excellent research.

Sincerely Yours,
BI in a festive mood

Photo courtesy of Gemma Newlands
RESEARCH PROJECTS
In 2017, the Nordic Centre for Internet and Society continued to develop our research initiatives on digital labor, supported by the ongoing ‘Fair Labor in the Digitized Economy’ research grant from the Research Council of Norway. Within the topic of digital labor, the team has fostered new international collaborations, as well as strengthening established partnerships.

Our research efforts are concentrated in six areas of inquiry, each interrelated and at the intersection of Internet and society research. Our cross-disciplinary research helps in forming a cohesive picture of the wider fair labor debates, enabling a clearer understanding of the complex and developing phenomena.

Pathways to Participation: The creation and sharing of user-generated content is the key lifeline of the digital economy. In our ongoing research efforts, we investigate user behavior and participation divides, with a particular focus on the social and psychological drivers.

Fair Work in the On-Demand Economy: The on-demand economy is enabling new forms of flexible employment. In some aspects this can be empowering, but workers face unknown risks and disadvantages. We conduct rigorous research into sharing and internet-mediated micro-entrepreneurship.

New Forms of Digital Leadership: As virtual teamwork becomes more frequent, team exclusion, reduced feelings of ‘belonging’, and knowledge sharing are all challenges which need to be faced. Our research focuses on giving leaders hands-on advice on how to lead a fair virtual team.

The Future of Work – Robotics and AI: New technologies increasingly allow for the automation of cognitive tasks previously reserved for human workers. We investigate how this may improve workers’ performance and well-being, reconfigure education systems, and alter social interactions.

Thresholds: Young people are exploring what it means to be producers, consumers, and products in the digital economy. We research the blurred boundaries between work, play, and hobbies, focusing on the exploitative potential of social activity online.
In this article in the Journal of Business Ethics, we look at the fairness perceptions of workers on digital platforms. In recent years, digital labour, a practice of working remotely on for instance translation, design or research tasks, has seen a steady rise. At the same time, voices are emerging that these new labour setups come with a number of labour abuses and less favourable work conditions.

Against this background, we were interested in the perceptions of workers on these platforms. We interviewed two hundred of them, asking them for what they perceive as good interactions with both their platforms and their clients. Set against a frame of organizational justice research, we then proceeded to map their answers into distinct categories of fairness. The main concerns voiced related to matters of distributional, procedural, and interactional fairness.

Moving beyond mapping these (un)fairness perceptions we then discuss these in relation to the affordances of the platform, and how these differing power relations shift responsibilities to the designers of digital platforms to find more equitable design and feedback processes to make platforms a better place to work for.

Mapping out future research projects, with our colleagues at CBS Copenhagen

Photo courtesy of Christian Fieseler
In 2017, the Nordic Centre for Internet and Society had the privilege to coordinate and participate in the European Union Horizon 2020 Research Project ‘Ps2Share: Participation, Privacy, and Power in the Sharing Economy’. This was the first EU research project with BI Norwegian Business School as the consortium leader, with Dr. Christian Fieseler as project coordinator.

The key objective of the Ps2Share project was to identify key challenges of the sharing economy in Europe and improve Europe’s digital services through providing data-driven recommendations to the broad range of stakeholders involved. Our driving objective was therefore to conduct a thorough investigation into how issues of participation, privacy, and power interacted with the European sharing economy.

This one-year research project enabled new collaborations for the team, including partners from the University of Leipzig, VU Amsterdam, University of Milan, Copenhagen Business School, University of St. Gallen, and Jovoto. In August 2017, the Nordic Centre hosted the whole consortium in Oslo for a two-day meeting.

The research team at BI conducted three intensive literature reviews to situate the topic within the broader academic and policy framework, followed by a series of focus groups across Europe. The focus groups were followed by a cross-European survey and a series of multi-stakeholder recommendations. Based on this initial work, the research team at the Nordic Centre has produced cutting-edge research on the sharing economy, including a large number of conference and journal papers.
Publication Feature

In our new article in Academy of Management Discoveries, we were interested in the notion of authenticity in the sharing economy. The sharing economy is witnessing an interesting balance, where on the one side, platforms and providers like to brand authentic experiences, and clients claim to actively seek such experiences. However, at the same time, the sharing economy is increasingly becoming professionalized, witnessing an outgrowth of third-party service provider and less acceptance for service failures.

Against this background, based on a qualitative interview-study as well as on a quantitative survey among users of the room sharing platform Airbnb, we show how the degree of perceived authenticity may impact review behavior and customer loyalty. Our results point to the integral nature of both authenticity and the invocation of notions of authenticity for sharing business models who are reliant, by their very nature, on alleviating the imperfections of amateur production.

PARTICIPATION AND PRACTICES

The Nordic Centre for Internet and Society continued its research into online participation and social media related practices throughout 2017. As part of the ongoing ‘Fair Labor in the Digitized Economy’ research project and in close collaboration with partnering universities in Europe (e.g., Oxford, Leipzig, VU Amsterdam), several studies were conducted and published. The topics of privacy and digital inequalities guided these efforts as underlying themes.

As an example, a study in collaboration with Grant Blank from the Oxford Internet Institute looked at the stratification of social media platform use in Great Britain, comparing the user base of Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+, and Instagram. Age, socio-economic status and self-efficacy emerged as important explaining factors of social media platform use. The study also cautions against generalizing from social media data.

Two studies in collaboration with Giulia Ranzini (VU Amsterdam) focused on the phenomenon of mobile dating. The first of these studies assessed Tinder users’ self-presentation and motives, finding that entertainment and relationship seeking are more pronounced than casual sex, contrasting the often negative media coverage about Tinder. The second study looked at privacy concerns in the context of Tinder. Giulia Ranzini and Christoph Lutz found that privacy concerns on Tinder are only moderately pronounced but institutional concerns (worries about Tinder using the data in unwanted ways and about government surveillance) are more prevalent than social concerns (worries about other users).

Finally, together with Christian Hoffmann (University of Leipzig), the Nordic Centre’s team developed a more holistic and up-to-date understanding of online participation and content creation and engaged in investigations on online political participation, for example looking at self-censorship on social media and accidental political engagement.
The study uses qualitative data from focus groups in Germany (almost 100 participants) to develop a new typology of online participation. As part of the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) special issue on ‘platform values’, Christoph and Christian Hoffmann’s article discusses previous understandings of online participation and detects several problems. Particularly, previous research has understood online participation rather positively, neglecting the dark sides of online participation, and rather actively, neglecting low-threshold and passive forms of online participation such as being tagged on social media. To overcome biases in previous studies, a new typology with eight forms of online participation along three axes (activity, agency, and valence) is presented. Each form is discussed and illustrated with quotes from the focus groups. Passive participation, where users ‘are participated against their will or without their knowledge and explicit consent’ appear as particularly important form in an age of big data and connected devices.

Soaking up the local culture during conference season

Photo courtesy of Christoph Lutz
Online Participation in an Economic and Business Domain

A guest essay by Christian Hoffmann

Social media are frequently described as “participatory”. In other words, they tend to facilitate participation (Boulianne, 2015). Of course, this general observation raises the question of what we actually mean when talking about “participation”. Most research in the domain of online participation focuses on a political context: citizens participating in the decision-making processes of political institutions (Litterat, 2016). However, recent studies point out that users of digital media participate in a variety of domains, such as health, education or business (Lutz et al., 2014).

The participatory effect of social media largely rests on three pillars: (1) Access to information: Information and knowledge are key antecedents of participation, in a political context as well as beyond. If individuals do not receive information on current issues, challenges or opportunities, they will not become engaged. Digital media allow for access to an unprecedented wealth of information, thereby increasing the likelihood of users becoming engaged in some topic or area that they feel a connection to and are interested in. (2) Ease of content production and sharing: Social media, especially, focus on making the production and dissemination of media content as easy as possible. From text to pictures or videos – thanks to social media, it has never been easier for a layperson to create content and share it, potentially with a global audience. Thereby, once engaged, it is easier than ever before for a user to make him- or herself heard, to take a stance or support a position. (3) Reaching out: Participation usually means that a person becomes engaged in a larger social phenomenon. Participation is inherently social, it requires interaction with others. Whatever the goal pursued through participation, it cannot be reached without the consent or cooperation of others. Social media tend to rely on networking dynamics with individuals connecting with communities and building audiences based on shared interests.

A broad conceptualization of online participation, that is applicable to various domains, therefore defines it as “the creation and sharing of content on the Internet addressed at a specific audience and driven by a social purpose” (Lutz et al., 2014).
Since social media create access to information, facilitate the creation and sharing of content, and provide access to communities and audiences, they tend to exert a participatory effect. This effect is sometimes framed as a form of “empowerment”.

The focus of the joint research project “Fair labor in the digitized economy”, of course, is user participation in an economic or a business context. A previous systematic review has shown that the online participation literature rarely addresses this particular domain (Hoffmann & Lutz, 2015). Of those few studies in the business domain, most focus on corporate perspectives and are characterized by analyzing asymmetric relationships between companies and stakeholders. For example, analyzing improvements to customer service or potentials for customization facilitated by online media. Some studies, however, explore forms of online participation that imply a sharing of power. Terms such as ‘co-creation’ or ‘prosumer’ indicate that, in an online environment, individuals may evolve beyond a passive consumer role to adopt a degree of responsibility and ownership for the good being exchanged.

Focusing on online participation in an economic or business domain raises a conceptual question: What are forms or participation that can be subsumed under this conceptual umbrella? How can they be distinguished of defined? Figure 1 provides an initial differentiation of forms of online participation in the economic and business domain. It is based on a qualitative study conducted in Germany, with Internet users of various socioeconomic backgrounds discussing their online behavior in focus groups. Six forms of online participation in the economic and business domain could be differentiated and can be ordered according to the level of engagement required from users.

**Figure 1: Level of online participation in the economic and business domain**
(1) Information: Information is frequently understood as the first step in online participation. Users widely use the Internet to collect information on commercial offerings (business and services), on earnings opportunities, or on economic and business issues. In a way, collecting information is a gateway to more active forms of participation.

(2) Consumption: Today, it is rare to find an internet user that isn’t engaged in some form of e-commerce. As the shift of retail revenues to the digital domain illustrates, the Internet has become a key distribution channel of commercial goods, with more and more companies reducing their “brick and mortar” presences, instead investing in ever more refined web stores and targeting, recommendation and sales processes. Consumption in the business domain also encompasses P2P-consumption, for example in the context of the sharing economy.

(3) Consultation: A slightly higher level of engagement than in the case of “mere” consumption is required for consultative online activities, such as rating products and services or publishing reviews. As discussed before, the rising consultative power of users is a key element of the participatory affordances of digital media. Not only has it become very easy to publish a review or criticism, users increasingly feel a right to have their voices heard in the digital public sphere (“participatory habitus”).

(4) Work: Somewhat less widespread, but still a very common phenomenon is online participation during work. Of course, this only occurs among the segment of the population actually still engaged in the workforce. Yet, in a work context, digital media provide ample opportunity to reach out to others, organize interactions, pitch ideas and trigger projects. This level of online participation goes beyond consumption or providing feedback as users collaborate on something new, i.e. begin to co-create.

(5) Income: Online participation in the context of income is closely related to the work context, but somewhat less common. It occurs in the context of self-employment, side-jobs or freelancing work. Here, too, the purpose is to reach out to others, organize, pitch or kick-off projects to earn a living, yet participants shoulder a larger burden of responsibility. They do not just make use of digital participatory affordances in their line of work, as an employee fulfilling a task. Rather, they initiate their own projects and carry the risk of failure, but potentially also the fruits of success. A low-key from of online participation for income listed by relatively many interview partners is the selling or auctioning of personal goods online, but it includes marketing goods and services as an entrepreneur or offering goods and services in the context of the sharing economy.

(6) Critique: Finally, a relatively rare form of online participation in the business and economic domain can be conceptualized as critique, meaning the critical engagement of commercial entities for a social purpose. This form of online participation tends to overlap with participation in the political domain. Examples are organizing boycotts or rallies to protest the behavior of enterprises, publicly criticizing or attacking economic or business decisions and becoming engaged in business or economic issues to pursue a greater
good. Just as such active forms of political participation are quite rare, commonly pursued by only up to 10% of the population, this form of participation in the business and economic domain also is a relatively small minority phenomenon. A current example discussed in the literature is the apparent difficulty in getting gig workers to organize to demand better working conditions.

Conceptualizing online participation in an economic and business domain is a necessary initial step to better grasp the participatory effect of digital media in business matters. It helps gain a differentiated understanding of the “empowerment” effect digital media may exert in the context of the economy. However, a next necessary step is to measure the prevalence of these various forms of participation, their interrelations, antecedents and outcomes. Research efforts are currently underway to achieve just this goal. In 2017, the research team conducted an initial survey among German Internet users (N=917) to measure the prevalence of 60 distinct online activities in the business and economic domain. An initial analysis confirms: Among the top 20 most frequent forms of online activity in a business and economic domain, information and consumption dominate the field (see Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Using commercial information services (e.g., weather services, traffic jam warnings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Online banking transactions (e.g., bank wires)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ordering goods and products online (e.g., on amazon.com)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Looking up the opening hours of a store online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Using online navigation services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Searching for product information online (e.g., instruction manuals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Looking through classifieds online (e.g., on eBay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Participating in a bonus program or administering bonus points online (e.g., Payback)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Rating and reviewing goods and products online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Comparing prices and rates online (e.g., electricity, mobile contract)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Exchanging e-mails with business contacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Reading business news online (e.g., handelsblatt.com, wiwo.de)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Consulting a restaurant menu online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Following a corporation in social media (e.g., becoming a Facebook-fan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Purchasing something by auction online (e.g., on eBay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Reading an e-mail newsletter on business news</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Booking a trip or flight online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Arranging a travel itinerary online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Participating in a competition, raffle or lottery online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Selling something by auction online (e.g., on eBay)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Most frequent online activities in the economic and business domain*
Eight of the twenty most prevalent activities relate to information: looking up product or service information, comparing prices, reading business news etc. Seven activities are associated with consumptive behaviors, such as ordering or auctioning products, booking or organizing trips etc. However, a consultative activity ranks as the 9th most frequent activity: rating and reviewing goods and products. Of course, this activity is still relatively close to the consumptive context. We find that from the work-context, exchanging business emails is the only activity among the top 20, and auctioning off goods is the only activity from the income-category in this list. No activity that could be categorized as a form of critical engagement made its way into the top 20.

In summary, even though this research effort is still in its infancy, we can generally confirm the conceptual pyramid of online participation in the economic and business domain. When continuing to research fairness of digital labor, it is important to remain aware that digital media exert a very broad participatory effect on the business and economic domain, as always beginning with information activities. Also, consumption and consultation tend to dominate user perceptions of online participation in a business or economic context. Digital participation in a work context is far less prevalent, as is the empowerment effect of digital media on self-employment, gig work, or freelancing. Importantly, we find that critical engagement appears to be as rare in an economic or business context as it is in a political context. This leads to interesting challenges in terms of the implications of our joint research: Even if we increasingly grasp the changing conditions of fair working conditions in the digitized economy, we still know quite little about how individuals can be moved to become engaged in these issues and affect change. Future research will have to focus more on the “participation ladder” in an economic and business context, i.e. explore under which conditions individuals choose to step from one form of participation to another requiring higher levels of engagement and activity.

References:
QUANTIFIED SELF

The popularity of self-tracking devices such as activity bracelets (e.g. Fitbit, Garmin), home scales (e.g. Nokia Body Cardio) and even headbands (e.g. Muse) and various self-tracking mobile applications (e.g. MyFitnessPal, Endomondo, MoodPand) is growing rapidly. Some researchers compare the diffusion rate of wearable devices with the one of tablets at a time of their market entry.

Naturally, the interest of academic community toward the phenomenon of self-tracking is increasing. Because people are using self-tracking apps and devices to navigate through various areas of life, for instance, fitness, work, interpersonal relationship, emotional health, the interest to the phenomenon is multi-disciplinary. The Nordic Centre for Internet and Society is primarily concerned with quality of user experience, privacy concerns resulting from interaction with online digital systems of personal informatics and, the last, but not the least, societal implications of self-quantification.

Two studied have been conducted by the NCIS in a recent year in the domain of quantified self. In one project we focused on motivations, user experience and learning as a result of self-quantification. We have discovered that people either view self-tracking technology either as “means to an end” and use it more instrumentally, or as a “end in itself” and use it as a motivational tool to engage in certain activities (for instance, to improve fitness levels). As a result of different perspectives on technology use, people demonstrate different learning outcomes and behavioral changes.

In another project we investigated psychological antecedents to self-quantification, the role of privacy concerns for users of self-tracking devices and applications, and the implications of self-quantification on self-disclosure. The paper was presented at the conference “Metric Culture: The Quantified Self and Beyond” at Aarhus University in Denmark and was later published at the Journal “Computers in Human Behavior”.

Finally, in December 2017, NCIS launched an experimental study on the effects of self-quantification on consumer welfare.
When using self-tracking mobile applications and wearables devices, users voluntarily disclose massive amount of personal, at times, sensitive data. Information that used to be kept in the databases of medical professionals or bankers is now stored in our smartphones. And if you think you are not doing any kind of self-tracking, you are most probably wrong – most of the recent models of smartwatches track your fitness activity in form of steps automatically, by default. It is a part of the service.

This phenomenon of constant and instant disclosure that is required to be able to utilize all the benefits of self-tracking led us to two research questions: what are the antecedents to self-quantification and what are the implications with regards to disclosure related behaviors?

Based on the literature on self-quantification, privacy and self-disclosure, we empirically tested the relationship among personality traits, privacy, self-quantification and self-disclosure. The findings suggested that conscientiousness and emotional stability were associated with self-quantification. In addition, we found a significant effect of self-quantification on self-disclosure in the survey context, indicating that individuals who habitually used self-tracking applications and wearable devices were also more likely to disclose personal data in other contexts.

Milan – Site of several meetings in 2017

Photo courtesy of Christoph Lutz.
Conference on Human-Robot Interaction, Vienna

6th - 9th March

Christoph Lutz gave a talk in the context of the 2017 ACM/IEEE Human-Robot-Interaction (HRI) conference in Vienna. The talk took place in the Privacy-Sensitive Robotics workshop, which gathered leading robotics experts from academia, industry and NGOs. Christoph’s presentation addressed the privacy implications of social robots, presenting first findings from a survey on privacy concerns about social robots. Christoph also discussed the privacy-related conclusions from two workshops held in November 2016 at robotics and AI conferences in Spain and Japan (in collaboration with Eduard Fosch Villaronga from the University of Twente and Aurelia Tamò from the University of Zurich). The workshop participants in Vienna brainstormed on pressing issues and possible collaborations, showing both the business case and social necessity for considering privacy as an important issue in developing ever-smarter robots.


European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology, Dublin

17th - 20th May

Our centre members together had a total of four papers accepted for presentation at the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology 2017.

Overall, these papers look at how different organizational factors that may influence how individuals working in virtual teams view their work and their subsequent behavioral and psychological responses.
One paper investigates how crowdworkers respond to feedback when doing creative work. The study shows that individuals with high creative self-efficacy appear to withdraw their creativity when their avoidance performance orientation is high. The study points to performance anxiety could be the cause for such withdrawal.

Another paper looks at the congruence effect between leaders’ and followers’ pessimism personalities on subsequent job satisfaction and performance. The study indicates that, for individuals who work remotely such as virtual teams, the more they are different from their leaders in term of pessimism personality, the less satisfied they are with poorer performance. The authors argue that the lack of shared mental model between the leaders and the followers may explain these relationships.

The third study look at how individuals may interpret job descriptions when it comes to flexibility in work practices. The study demonstrates that individuals tend to identify organizations which offer flexible work practices as future looking and associate positively to those organizations. This study provides important implications for human resource management policy for organizations.

The last study proposes that the role of leadership may differ between traditional teams and virtual teams, such that in virtual teams the need for relationship focused leadership is stronger than in traditional teams where team members may rely on other social stimuli to function.


Community Work and Family Conference, Milan

25th - 27th May

Dominique Kost attended this year’s CWF conference in Milan, hosted by the Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, and presented the center’s current research findings on Life crafting. The title of the presentation was: “Micro-entrepreneurs: the art of Life crafting” and addresses careers of digital microworkers. Dominique discussed how digital microworkers craft their careers and choose their jobs to cope with their current life demands, and that digital microwork can have a meaningful impact on people’s lives.


International Communication Association Conference, San Diego

25th - 29th May

Christian Fieseler and Christoph Lutz presented at this year’s Annual Conference of the International Communication Association (ICA) in San Diego, USA. The conference took place from May 25 to May 29 and gathered over 3000 communication scholars from around the world. It is the largest and most prestigious conference in this area.

Christian Fieseler presented a paper on alienation in digital labor, co-authored with Eliane Bucher and Christoph Lutz. The presentation was well received and sparked vivid discussions among the audience and the other panelists.

Christoph Lutz presented a poster on privacy in the context of the dating app Tinder, together with Giulia Ranzini from VU Amsterdam. The paper this poster is based on is freely available in the journal Social Media + Society under the following link.

Moreover, Christoph had two talks at two different pre-conferences: one at the Human-Machine Communication pre-conference on privacy and social robots (co-authored with Aurelia Tamò from the University of Zurich) and one at the Partnership for Progress on the Digital Divide conference on digital footprints (co-authored with Moritz Büchi and Marina Micheli from the University of Zurich).

Kateryna Maltseva and Christoph Lutz recently presented their paper “A Quantum of Self: A Study on Self-Quantification and Self-Disclosure” in the session on self-tracking, surveillance, and privacy at the Metric Culture conference in Aarhus (Denmark). The conference covered the topics of privacy, flow, optimization, gamification, and healthism in the context of self-quantification. Renowned scholars Deborah Lupton and Rosalind Gill were invited as keynote speakers at the conference.

Self-quantification is a process of recording, analyzing, and acting upon one’s personal data. Results of the paper by Kateryna and Christoph suggest that people who are conscientious are more likely to engage in self-quantification, whereas people who consider themselves emotionally stable are less prone to self-quantification. In addition, people who frequently and/or extensively use self-tracking devices and applications are more likely to disclose personal information in contexts beyond personal quantification, for instance, during interpersonal communications or interacting with businesses. The research findings have implications for self-tracking and privacy literature as well as policy makers.
19th June

Gemma Newlands and Christoph Lutz presented at this year’s Connected Life Conference in Oxford, UK. The conference took place on June 19 and was hosted by the Oxford Internet Institute, a department of the University of Oxford. Connected Life 2017 gathered Internet scholars from a broad range of backgrounds across the world.

At the conference, Gemma presented a joint paper with Christoph on Instagram influencers and digital inequalities. Their analysis combined a social network analysis of more than 14000 Instagram posts with a qualitative textual and visual analysis of 600 posts by 50 influencers. The analysis showed the widespread use of status symbols, indicating that influencers need a lot of offline capital - such as economic, cultural and social capital - to succeed. At the same time, Instagram influencers use language of authenticity and closeness to their audience to make themselves more relatable. The presentation was very well received, with ample coverage on social media, especially Twitter.

Annual Colloquium of the European Group for Organizational Studies, Copenhagen

3rd - 5th July

In connection with sub-theme 29 on “Justifying the Organization: Dealing with Conflicting Economies of Worth and Legitimacy Struggles” and with sub-theme 38 on “Innovations and New Forms of Organizing in Digitalized Public Space” we organized a ‘hands-on’ and open space to discuss the controversies and legitimation of the sharing economy.

The workshop was structured in two main parts. In the first part, senior scholars reflected on the phenomenon of the sharing economy and the controversies surrounding it. Itziar Castelló (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Spain), Jean-Pascal Gond (Cass Business School, United Kingdom), Vadim Grinevich (University of Southampton, United Kingdom), Achim Oberg (WU Vienna, Austria) and Robert Phillips (University of Richmond, USA) discussed theories, methods and empirical settings that are relevant for studying the controversies and legitimation of the sharing economy.

The workshop was in particular intended to help potential submitters to receive in-depth feedback on how they can further develop their papers for submission to the Special Issue (or other forms of publication). In the second part, participants had the possibility to discuss and develop their working papers in a workshop setting.


Christian Fieseler at EGOS.
Photo courtesy of Christoph Lutz
Christoph Lutz won the best paper award at the 8th International Conference on Social Media & Society (#SMSociety) for the full paper contribution "Spiral of Silence 2.0: Political Self-Censorship among Young Facebook Users". In addition, Christoph presented a work-in-progress paper on escapism and political participation on Facebook as well as a poster on participation divides on Airbnb. All contributions were well received. The full paper and the work-in-progress paper are available in the ACM conference proceedings under the respective links.

Now in its eight edition, the conference was organized by a team of researchers at Ryerson University. It convened leading experts in the field of social media studies and had several hundred attendants. The program included keynotes by renowned scholars Lee Rainie (director of the Pew Research Center on Internet & Technology) and Ron Deibert (director of the Citizen Lab), a range of practical workshops, panels, and paper discussion sessions on topics related to social media.


Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, Atlanta

4th-8th August

As part of the Academy, we were provided with the opportunity to host a caucus on our upcoming special issue in Human Resource Management Review, to meet with prospective authors, and explore potential submissions to the issue. With the great support of the Journal’s editorial board members, we spent an afternoon working on critical reflections on existing concepts, theories, or frameworks that may need a refining in the context of the digitized economy. We furthermore presented our own ongoing research on three occasions, in the Information Systems, Social Issues in Management, and Human Relations divisions respectively.

Our manuscript ‘The Oversharing Economy – Investigating Authenticity on Airbnb’ is about the role and manufacture of authenticity notions as part of the sharing economy. Based on qualitative and quantitative research, we show, by the example of Airbnb, that guests are remarkably resilient against notions of interpersonal closeness inherent in sharing services and they may, up to a certain point, even be seen as markers of authenticity that enrich the sharing experience.

In our manuscript ‘The Riddle of Social Media Dialogues – When Less Dialogue is More’ we experimentally explore the connection between cognitive CSR-communication outcomes and the conversational logic employed. We show that when talking about societal issues, organizations need to provide clear guidance
(moderation) when delivering necessary information. Otherwise, we conjecture that stakeholders might be overwhelmed by the complexity of the issue.

We also presented our ongoing research on ‘Collaborative Career Crafting in the Gig Economy’. In our research, we are interested how gig workers manage their career, reach out to coworkers, and to gather social support to further their career goals. As part of our research, we raised in discussed a number of related policy questions, such as whether there is a responsibility on the facilitating platform’s side to provide crafting opportunities, or whether the responsibility solely lies with the workers.


International CSR Communication Conference, Vienna

21st-23rd September

In September, we presented our work on gamified CSR communication in Vienna. In this research stream, we are interested in the effect of using gamification to engage audiences in social and ecological concerns. The paper we presented was a result of a number of experiments we have run in which participants either received gamified or classical communication stimuli, which we conducted together with our colleague Dr. Hannah Trittin of Leuphana University.

Somewhat counterintuitively, the study we presented demonstrated that gamification has no positive effect on the interest in a CSR-related topic, and does not trigger behavioral change. Instead, the effect is the opposite - gamified CSR communication is perceived as fun, interactive and engaging by audiences. Yet, simultaneously, individuals are less willing to learn about the topic of CSR, or to donate money for a prosocial cause. While our research on gamification is still ongoing, our presentation in Vienna was thus a cautious response to overly optimistic assessments of the positive effects of gamification in CSR communication.


EUPRERA Conference, London

12th-14th October

Together with our colleague Dr. Matthes Fleck, we presented our work on stakeholder engagement to an audience of public relations scholars in London. In our work, we were interested in the interplay of moderation and inclusion of voices on corporate social media outlets. Often, both too much polyphony and a too heavy handed moderation can limit both the outcomes and the acceptance of stakeholder engagement strategies. To elucidate the best balance, we run a number of experiments manipulating the corporate response to unfolding discussion. The results, presented at the conference, point to the fact that the inclusion of only a limited number of stakeholders into a conversation, while giving them freedom of expression, proved to be the most effective mode of engagement for the organization in terms of CSR outcomes evaluation. We further conjecture that the key to effective dialogue lies in the interplay between moderation and inclusiveness, rather than in favoring one over the other.

18th-21st October

The Nordic Centre for Internet and Society was well represented at this year’s Association for Internet Researchers Conference, with two papers presented on the business of Instagram’s sponsored posts and online political participation.

This year’s AOIR conference, held in Tartu, Estonia, welcomed over 350 leading Internet researchers from 29 countries. Researchers discussed their work on a range of topics, from critical data studies, to political communication online, to the future of AI and automation.

The first of the Nordic Centre’s two papers, presented by Gemma Newlands, looked at the emergence of ‘Influencer Marketing’ on Instagram, a leading platform for image-based sharing. Gemma presented the results of an empirical mixed-methods study reliant on user-generated data. The paper was well received, particularly with regard to her in depth discussion into ethical research practices.

The second of the Nordic Centre’s two papers, presented by Christoph Lutz, looked at the role of social media escapism in online political participation. This paper was also well received and its data-driven approach provided a welcome interlude to the numerous more conceptual papers on offer at AOIR this year.


Reshaping Work Conference, Amsterdam

19th-20th October

The Nordic Centre for Internet and Society had two papers presented at the first Reshaping Work Conference, held in Amsterdam. The Reshaping Work Conference is an international and multidisciplinary conference which offered a platform for academics, policy makers, business leaders, as well as workers in the platform economy to discuss the future of work.

Although the Nordic Centre was unable to be present in person, due to scheduling conflicts with AOIR 2017, two papers co-authored by members of the Nordic Centre (Gemma Newlands and Christoph Lutz) were presented by the co-authors. Both papers looked at aspects of the sharing economy, drawing on research undertaken as part of the EU Horizon2020 Research Project Ps2Share. The first paper explored the role of data capitalism and surveillance as a factor in the working experience of sharing economy providers. The second paper explored the concept of ‘users-by-proxy’ and how their absence as a data-set creates issues for data-driven work processes.

Artificial Intelligence and Inclusion Symposium, Rio de Janeiro

8th-10th November

In November, we participated in the Artificial Intelligence and Inclusion Symposium in Rio de Janeiro. The symposium was set to identify, explore, and address the opportunities and challenges of AI as we seek to build a better, more inclusive, and diverse world together, and is co-hosted on behalf of the Network of Centers by the Institute for Technology and Society of Rio de Janeiro (ITS Rio) and the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University.

During three days of discussion with participants from all over the world, Christian Fieseler presented on behalf of the center a position paper on the driving forces inherent in business models that might make the development more or less inclusive. The core of the argument, presented during the symposium, was that AI development at the moment is largely dependent on the investment of private enterprises who are led by the requirements of business logic. As such, we need to recognize AI, across contexts, as being driven by market forces and stakeholder demands, as opposed to philanthropic ideals. With such an understanding of the reality of AI development, our position paper proposed, we can better attend to finding resolutions for issues of inclusivity and inequality.
Enjoying this year’s top quality conference locations.

Photo courtesy of Christoph Lutz
12th October

The purpose of the visit was to establish a connection and to discuss collaboration opportunities within the area of future workplace demands. A two-day workshop was held where topics of common interest were discussed and a new potential research project was proposed. The workshop outlined several opportunities for collaboration and we look forward to continuing this dialogue.
24th-25th August

Over a period of three days, the Ps2Share consortium members held fruitful discussions regarding the ongoing research activities and planned ahead for the upcoming deliverables. Hosted throughout by BI Norwegian Business School in Oslo, Norway, the main meeting was preceded by a pre-meeting with Jovoto for the purposes of data sharing, idea generation, and platform-situated discussions.
Journal Articles


Books and Book Chapters


Research Reports


**Conference Presentations**


**Professor Christian Fieseler**

Director

Christian received his PhD in Management and Economics from the University of St. Gallen, Switzerland, in 2008. Before joining BI in 2014, Christian worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of St. Gallen and at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University. Christian’s research interests center on organizational identity, corporate social responsibility and computer-mediated-communication.

**Professor Sut I Wong**

Director

Sut I holds a PhD in Organizational Psychology and has been a visiting scholar at SCANCOR, Stanford University. Her research interests include micro- and macro- labor relations. Sut I investigates industrial democracy practices, characteristics of job design, leader-follower relationships, human resource practices for individual innovative, and proactive behaviors.

**Associate Professor Dominique Kost**

Dominique completed her PhD in 2016 within Organizational Psychology. Before starting her doctoral studies, Dominique worked as a consultant within the educational and human resources industries in both Amsterdam and Munich. Dominique’s research interests include communication in virtual teams, communication during crises and digital labor.
Assistant Professor Christoph Lutz

Christoph holds a PhD in management from the University of St. Gallen (completed in 2015, summa cum laude). Christoph’s research interests are broad and lie in the field of social media and Internet-mediated communication. More specifically, he investigates online participation, privacy, serendipity, scientists’ use of social media (altmetrics), the sharing economy, and robots.

Assistant Professor Eliane Bucher

Eliane completed her doctorate in management at the University of St. Gallen, where she is currently also a lecturer in Media- and Communications Management. Eliane has been a one-year visiting researcher at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University. Her current research interests centre on corporate communications, fairness in digital labor, platform capitalism, modes of collaborative/access-based consumption and sharing as well as digital media literacy, and participation.

Kateryna Maltseva

Kateryna is a PhD candidate in Marketing at BI Norwegian Business School. She has Bachelor of Science degree in Sociology and Master of Science degree in Strategic Marketing Management. Kateryna’s research is focused on gamification as an approach for consumer engagement and self-quantification, as a new trend in consumer behavior.
Gemma Newlands

Gemma is a research assistant at the Nordic Centre for Internet and Society, currently working on a SAMANSVAR project “Fair Labor in the Digitized Economy”, funded by the Research Council of Norway. She was a work package leader for the Horizon2020 project Ps2Share. Her current research interests centre on work quality and labour standards in the on-demand economy.

Marthe Nordengen Berntzen

Marthe is a research assistant at the Nordic Centre for Internet and Society. She received her MSc in Leadership and Organizational Psychology from BI Norwegian Business School in 2013. After graduating, Marthe worked as a HR and recruitment professional for four years, among others as a headhunter in the IT industry. She returned to BI in 2017, and her research interests center around social and organizational psychology in a digitized context.
The Nordic Centre is a member of the Global Network of Interdisciplinary Internet & Society Research Centres.

The Global Network is the umbrella organisation for research on the social implications of the Internet and currently includes, among others, The Alexander von Humboldt Institute, The Berkman Klein Centre, The MIT Media Lab, and The Oxford Internet Institute.

Various members of the NCIS have strong ties across the network. We are collaborating with The Berkman Klein Centre on our flagship project: Fair Labour and the Digitised Economy. For our upcoming toppforsk project, we will extend these partnerships within the network with, among others, the University of Oxford and the Digital Asia Hub.
Supporters

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Specifically, the Nordic Centre would like to draw attention to the following grants:

**Fair Labor in the Digitized Economy:**
This project received funding from the Research Council of Norway within the SAMANSVAR project "Fair Labor in the Digitized Economy" (247725/O70).

**Future Ways of Working in the Digital Economy:**
This project received funding from the Research Council of Norway within the TOPPFORSK project "Future Ways of Working in the Digital Economy" (275347).

**Participation, Privacy, and Power in the Sharing Economy:**
This project received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 732117.