

**NORDIC CENTRE FOR INTERNET AND SOCIETY**  
ANNUAL REPORT 2016



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## MISSION STATEMENT

**PROFS. DRS. CHRISTIAN FIESELER & SUT I WONG**

**DIRECTORS**

Dear Reader,

It is with great pleasure that we present to you the first annual report of our newly established Centre for Internet and Society at BI Norwegian Business School. It has been a fascinating journey and we are tremendously grateful for the trust placed in us by the university, by the advisory board, and by our colleagues who have been with us and supported us from the very first idea up until the centre's opening in September.

As a new centre, we aspire to create a hub for all things digital. In the upcoming years, we hope to span the boundaries of communication, culture, organizational psychology, business, innovation, and other disciplines. Digitization has been at the forefront of our institution's agenda for several years now - the Internet has changed our businesses, our society, and our culture more than we could have ever imagined. In the words of our president, Inge Jan Henjesand, "a business school is about more than conducting business, it is also about understanding business. And to understand the changes and the implications brought to business contexts by the Internet, we need to understand people – their behaviours, their desires, and how they are embedded in organisations and in culture." Here, as a centre, we see it as our mission to research the Internet, not just from a critical management perspective, but also as embedded in society.

Digitization nowadays is traditionally understood as pertaining to computers, social media, smartphones, electronic data, collaboration, or new business models. At some point, however, 'digital' turned into the substrate of a cultural and economic shift, and became a reality of how we live our lives, how we interact with each other, how we divide our attention, how we discuss matters dear to us, how we are pulled apart, and how we are brought together again. In essence, the digital sphere is no longer a niche phenomenon. What used to be the interests of a narrow set of "geeks

and misfits”, is now an integral part of mainstream culture, shaping fashion trends and intellectual discourse, as much as it influences new paradigms of work and play.

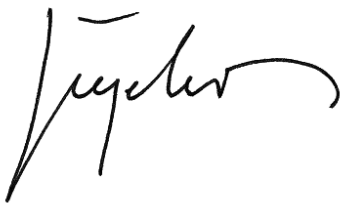
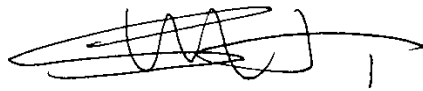
As a society and as researchers, it is in this environment that we are often venturing into the unknown, constantly renegotiating what it means to consume, to work, to play, and to be a citizen. Therefore, we are especially lucky to be not on this road alone, but to be collaborating with a great network of colleagues and friends, both nationally and internationally, continuously striving for a better understanding of this shift. We aspire to bring our unique take to this ongoing global conversation, in that we see it as our particular mission to study the impact of the Internet, and related digital technologies, on people in the contexts of work and work-like settings.

We believe that the study of work and occupations is most fruitful when situated in the context of the human experience, rather than solely in the context of the macro- or micro- mechanics of economic productivity and efficiencies, business models and innovation management. It is thus our ambition to bring contexts into the usual study of digitization, enriching traditional Internet and Society studies with our organizational and economic perspectives.

Challenges such as privacy, fairness, transparency, network neutrality, polyphony, virtuality, participation, new forms of interactions, and online (counter-)cultures are important for society and future business. We see it as our mission to create a gravitational center within our university to consider these topics, among others, with the care that they deserve.

We believe that by thoroughly understanding new, digital mediated forms of interaction, new forms of cooperation, and novel forms of organizing, we can create unique value to the business community and beyond. We would be very happy if you decided to join us on this journey, and look forward to the years to come.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. J. J. J. J.' with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. J. J. J. J.' with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

## FOREWORD

Dear friends of the centre,

It has been an exciting year for us. Early 2016 saw Sut I and I lobbying within our university to establish a dedicated research initiative for the study of digitization, something that we felt was missing at the business school. As luck would have it, we received great help in this endeavor from the Norwegian Research Council, who provided the primary funding for our research, from the European Union's Horizon 2020 programme, from all the valuable discussions with friends and colleagues, and, of course, from our leadership team.

And here we are now, one year later, having started BI's newest research centre, and, somewhat ambitiously, calling it the Nordic Centre for Internet and Society. We are dedicated to the study of economic, social, and cultural shifts brought by the Internet and digital technologies in the Nordics... although we are admittedly still working on becoming truly Scandinavian. We were quickly joined by a great team of talented individuals, namely Dominique Kost, Christoph Lutz, Kateryna Maltseva, and Eliane Bucher, who are researching virtual teams, participation, quantified selves, and digital health within our centre respectively.

The last year saw us starting our outreach activities, with two particular highlights for us being the establishment of our advisory board in June and the official inauguration of our centre in September. We have been busy building a portfolio of projects, starting from the original grant provided by the Norwegian Research Council, through which we looked at flow experiences, creativity, and meaning within the confines of digital working. As part of this grant, we are blessed to collaborate with a number of international partners, with whom we intensively worked on projects and publications this year. We asked them to contribute essays to this annual report and to present their takes on our joint endeavor, both of which you can enjoy in the following pages.

We developed several new interests this year. One of these, driven by Eliane, has been in the sharing economy, looking at aspects such as privacy and power in this new collaborative paradigm. This new focus eventually evolved into our new research project with the European Union. This year, Christoph was busy developing

new promising avenues of research. His research on online participation, for instance, quickly became a cornerstone for all our research projects here at the centre. Dominique established our research in digital leadership and collaboration, where, in co-operation with Cisco, we looked at the phenomena of co-presence at virtual work. Kateryna worked hard in launching our research into the quantified self, and its effects on consumption and identity. Throughout, we were supported in our endeavors by Thy, Caroline, Anastasia, and Gemma.

We enjoyed the many collaborations we had this year we had with our colleagues at Harvard, St. Gallen, Rotterdam, Leipzig, CBS, Ljubljana, Oxford, and Stanford. We visited various conferences, in the United States, China, Japan, UK, Denmark, Germany, Canada, Spain, and Italy. We are particularly proud about having been inducted into the Network of Internet Centers, and of the outreach to Asia on Sut I's part, where we hope to collaborate more closely with the Digital Asia Hub in Hong Kong.

Next year, we hope to increase our outreach into the practitioner community, which we kicked off with the establishment of our advisory board this year. This board consists of representatives from Cisco, Telenor, Wikimedia, Innovation Norway, IKT-Norge, NHO, and Team Conclude. We have interesting research lined up in the realm of digital communication and online polyphony, youth and media, and Asia's digital transformation. We will be organizing conferences, chairing two journal special issues, and kick off a Delphi study on the future of work. So, things will remain interesting. For now, please enjoy our look back at 2016 on the following pages.



## DIGITAL LABOUR

In 2016, we developed several new research initiatives on digital labor, particularly focused around the practice of microwork and the leadership of virtual teams. For this research project, we have been working collaboratively with leading universities from across the globe.

Together with the University of Leipzig, we initiated and conducted a systematic review of digital labor literature in order to identify the prevalent terminology in the field and to differentiate distinct strands of research. This has allowed the overall project team to clearly structure and focus its research efforts while providing a contribution to the field by serving to structure and interrelate the academic discourse. We also worked towards uncovering fairness perceptions in the digital economy, particularly in platform-based microwork, based on both theoretical and empirical analyses. A further research focus was the role of privacy perceptions and concerns in users' willingness to participate in the digital economy, particularly on sharing platforms.

Together with the Copenhagen Business School, we investigated how communicative acts impact understandings around responsible behavior in organizations and how organizational communication constitutes fair labor. We particularly looked at how discourses form around ethical questions of work in the digital age.

Together with Erasmus University Rotterdam, we looked in two experimental studies at how new ways of working can have an impact on job applicants. The first study revealed that telework, as well as flexible work arrangements, increases the perception that organizations are innovative. In turn, organizations which indicate new work arrangements of this type in their job descriptions become more attractive to job applicants. A second study indicated that such new work arrangements have these advantages, in comparison to traditional work arrangements, only if the arrangements are implemented in a way which is aligned with other work systems (e.g., reward structure, training opportunities).

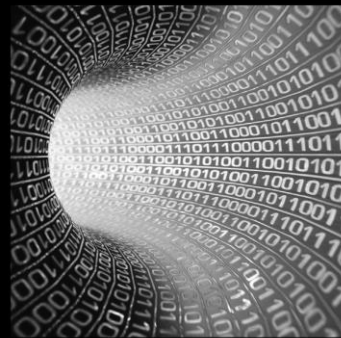
Together with the University of Ljubljana, we examined the changing nature of job design, focusing on the traditional 'job characteristics model' which lists various job characteristics and how they are manifested in the workplace. Our aim was to offer



propositions on how job characteristics (autonomy, task variety, task significance, task identity, feedback from job) are intended and perceived by employees who work on non-routine jobs or work remotely.

Together with Harvard University, we looked at the practices of youth and digital media, compiling and writing several research memos. Among these, one is concerned with the how young people encounter blurring lines between play and labor online. We place this phenomenon into theoretical contexts about online work, play, and hobbyism, and examine future challenges and opportunities associated with these blurring lines. Secondly, we formulated a description of the labor market currently faced by young people face. This data will help us place the shift of young people towards digital work into context, through quantifying the extent to which young people are entering jobs where digital skills and literacies are paramount.

## new media & society



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SAGE

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### Publication Feature

In their article “The flow of digital labor”, published in *New Media and Society*, Christian and Eliane discuss flow experiences as a driver for engaging in digital microwork, while also looking at factors which may lead to improved digital work experiences in general. Digital microwork platforms such as Amazon Mechanical Turk or Taskrabbit specialize in such human

micro-tasks like tagging images, transcribing snippets of text or correctly categorizing the sentiment expressed in a tweet. They broker micro work-packages to an anonymous digital workforce for micro-compensations. Microworkers typically work in their leisure time and they often work for a relatively small overall hourly wage. Based on a survey of 701 workers on Amazon Mechanical Turk, they show that intrinsic motivation, complete absorption into the task-stream at hand as well as enjoyment of working on tasks which are sometimes challenging, yet not impossible to solve, contribute to flow-like states of immersion during digital microwork. Furthermore, they show that reaching flow while in digital microwork depends on certain work characteristics, such the perceived degree of worker autonomy, the extent to which a worker’s skills are utilized or challenged, and the significance of feedback received for a job well done. The results both highlight the importance of flow-like immersion in explaining why individuals engage in digital labor projects and point to avenues that may lead to the design of optimal digital work experiences.

## Out of sight, out of your judgment: knowledge hiding in the digital setting

*A guest essay by Matej Černe*

Contemporary employees, especially in the rapidly-changing digitized context, face increased expectations to share their knowledge. Effective knowledge management presents several benefits to organizations, including higher employee and organizational performance, higher levels of innovation, and less duplication of efforts. Despite major investments in knowledge management, there is evidence that employees not only disengage from knowledge sharing behavior, but also actively and with intent hide knowledge from their peers.

### What is knowledge hiding?

We know that knowledge sharing among coworkers enhances individual (and group) performance and other beneficial outcomes, such as creativity, colleague-felt trust, work engagement, and innovation. Not surprisingly, many firms have invested significantly in systems and practices that are designed to facilitate knowledge transfer among employees. Nevertheless, knowledge hiding exists and is a prevalent phenomenon in organizations. In fact, a daily Globe & Mail poll from a couple of years ago conducted among working professionals suggests that as much as 76% per cent of individuals hide knowledge at their workplace.

Knowledge hiding can be classified as one of the organizational misbehaviors or deviant behaviors. It represents an intentional attempt to conceal or to withhold knowledge that others have requested. Knowledge hiding is thus different from a lack of knowledge sharing because in addition to the omission of knowledge sharing, it also incorporates an explicit intent to withhold knowledge that someone else has requested.

In this regard, knowledge hiding is a particularly distinct from knowledge sharing, occurring on digitized knowledge management systems where individuals post information requests to a general audience, or make information available to others (e.g., resources, reference materials, documents) without specific prompting to do

so. It can take three distinct forms: rationalized hiding, where the hider provides an explanation for why the knowledge is not forthcoming; evasive hiding, where the hider stalls or provides less information than what was requested; and playing dumb, where the hider pretends not to have the knowledge.

### Consequences of knowledge hiding

Knowledge hiding is particularly damaging to organizations because the distrust among employees it creates leads to a negative spiral of retaliation and distrust, harming long-term working relationships. One of the negative consequences of knowledge hiding pointed out by research is its detrimental effect on creativity. Not only does knowledge hiding prevent colleagues from generating creative ideas, but it also has negative consequences for the creativity of the knowledge hider! The study found that when employees hide knowledge, they trigger a reciprocal distrust loop in which coworkers are unwilling to share knowledge with them.

In plain terms, when employee A intentionally hides knowledge from employee B (who has requested it and is hence aware of the fact that hiding has occurred), this backfires on employee A. When employee B perceives negative behavior or misbehavior, they develop a basic mindset of distrust—that is, a lack of confidence in employee A and/or a concern that employee A may act to harm them. Due to the distrust created, employee B wants to retaliate and also hides knowledge from employee A.

Therefore: what goes around comes around. Employees who intentionally hide more knowledge seem bound to receive such selfish behavior in return from their co-workers, which will ultimately hurt them and decrease their creativity. This could also be described using the metaphor of “shooting yourself in the foot.”

### Manifestations of knowledge hiding in a digital setting, and how it can be prevented

Overcoming knowledge hiding in the digitized workplace, either on collaboration platforms or when the nature of collaboration takes place via digital channels, is even more difficult than in a general work setting. For example, traditional organizations may be able to overcome knowledge hiding through strategies such as fostering more direct contact and less e-mail communication, highlighting examples of trustworthiness, and avoiding incentives for “betrayal,” such as rewarding agents who poach each other's clients. In the digital setting, knowledge hidiers might experience increased feelings of being protected, or ‘hidden’ from the requesters’ curious eyes and thus immediate perceptions of knowledge hiding, distrust, and judgment. It may be psychologically easier to hide knowledge from an anonymous colleague, because the hider would not imagine any consequences for the target, nor immediately receive any retaliation. After all, we all know how much easier it is to deliver bad news (such as dumping someone) over the text or an email – but this implies that such actions are even more unethical and cowardly.

A study was conducted with data collected from a large social Q&A site consisting of multiple online communities with millions of registered users. It showed that the effect of enjoyment in helping others on one's attitude toward knowledge sharing is actually undermined by virtual organizational rewards, which speaks to the fact that extrinsic rewards and incentives do not work for preventing knowledge hiding.

Actually, how extrinsic rewards effect the extent of knowledge hiding also depends on how active individuals are in a digital community. For active members, virtual organizational rewards undermine enjoyment in helping others; for inactive members, however, virtual organizational rewards increase enjoyment in helping others. In other words – when employees or members of a digital community are not very active, providing external incentives that directly prevent knowledge hiding should work, but not for the engaged and active collaborators. Extrinsic rewards motivation may satisfy “lower-order” needs, but it may neglect “higher-order” needs for self-esteem and self-actualization.

Organizations, even those in the digital setting, may consider ways in which they can stimulate factors that prevent the occurrence of knowledge hiding, even when physical contact is impossible. In particular, they should focus on building the capacities of perspective taking and prosocial motivation among digitized employees. Recruitment and selection strategies could prioritize these employee characteristics; managers could also focus on encouraging these behaviors among existing employees. Perspective taking may be encouraged by providing employees with the opportunity to discover some personal information about coworkers (i.e., accomplishments, personal interests), also in an informal and casual manner.

#### About the author

**Matej Černe, PhD** is Assistant Professor in the Department of Management and Organization at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Economics (FELU), Slovenia, and Head of the Centre for Innovation Research CERINNO within the Centre of Excellence for Biosensors, Instrumentation, and Process control (CO BIK). His research interests include non-technological innovations, creativity, organizational behavior and psychology, leadership, and multi-level issues in management. He has received numerous awards for his research (e.g. Academy of Management Meetings best paper proceedings, CEEMAN Champions Award in category 'Research', EDAMBA top 10 dissertation awards), his research was published in top management journals (e.g. Academy of Management Journal), and serves as an editor-in-chief of The Dynamic Relationships Management Journal and editorial board member of The Leadership Quarterly and Economic and Business Review.



Grabbing lunch at this year's Academy of Management Conference, Anaheim.

Photo courtesy of Christoph Lutz

## SHARING

The Internet has long been a place for sharing – the sharing of ideas, knowledge, and opinions. Yet, recent Internet services have extended the notion of sharing from immaterial to material goods and services, thus creating a vibrant new domain for both business and research. Individuals share their cars, apartments, toys, couches, gardens, household items, sports gear, electronics, and much more. Such sharing often occurs with complete strangers, mediated via Internet platforms and apps such as Airbnb, Blablacar, Pley, Bookcrossing, and Sharely. The user numbers of the most popular sharing sites are skyrocketing and such services are enjoying unprecedented popularity. However, despite its apparent popularity, the exploration of the sharing phenomenon is still in its infancy. While a good deal of research has focused on business models and conceptual demarcations (e.g., what is the difference between sharing and pseudo-sharing?), stressing the benefits of the sharing economy and users' motivations to participate in it, little research has looked at the challenges of the sharing economy in terms of privacy, participation, and power.

To investigate these challenges, the Nordic Centre for Internet and Society, together with six partnering institutions, submitted a proposal to the European Union called "Ps2Share – Participation, Privacy, and Power in the Sharing Economy." The proposal was accepted, giving the Centre, as the project leader, the opportunity to conduct important research on the privacy, participation, and power challenges of the sharing economy. This EU Horizon 2020 project will take place in 2017. It will combine qualitative and quantitative approaches and, as a key part, include a large survey across different European countries.

This will be the first EU research project with BI Norwegian Business School as the consortium leader, with Dr. Christian Fieseler and Dr. Christoph Lutz as the project's directors. Conclusions from this research will be used to develop evidence based policy recommendations for EU companies and institutions on how to improve their digital services. It aims to foster better awareness of the consequences which technologies, networks, and new digital media can have on the way people behave, think, interact, and socialize.



### Publication Feature

In April 2016, Eliane, Christian, and Christoph published a paper about the motivations for Internet-mediated sharing in *Computers in Human Behavior*. This research scrutinizes the diverse motives for internet-mediated sharing as well as their role in shaping attitudes towards sharing one's possessions in commercialized as well as non-commercialized settings. Based on qualitative and quantitative research, Eliane, Christian, and Christoph developed a scale of sharing motives with three dimensions: monetary, moral, and social-hedonic. Each dimension has a positive influence on users' sharing intention but social-hedonic motives are the strongest predictors.

The findings show that the reasons for participating in online sharing platforms are more nuanced than previously thought. Furthermore, the authors identified materialism, sociability and volunteering as predictors of sharing motives in different sharing contexts. Against this background, the possible role of monetary incentives as a necessary but not sufficient condition for sharing one's possessions with others was explored in more detail. The results indicated that commercial and non-commercial sharers differ substantially in their motives.

Bucher, E., Fieseler, C., & Lutz, C. (2016). What's mine is yours (for a nominal fee)—Exploring the spectrum of utilitarian to altruistic motives for Internet-mediated sharing. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 62, 316-326.



## Moral Judgment and Responsibilities in the Sharing Economy

*A guest essay by Michael Etter*

### Is Uber bad?

The answer depends on how we define and categorize it. Not surprisingly, the company tries to influence its categorization.

Companies in the so called 'sharing economy' have not only disrupted established industries but also created entirely new market categories. Perhaps the most prominent examples of this phenomenon are AirBnB, with its revolutionary offerings of peer-to-peer private accommodation, and Uber, with its transportation-on-demand services. In the creation of new market categories, language plays a pivotal role. It is through language that corporations define, distinguish, and legitimize emerging products and services. Often, it is a discursive struggle on the public stage, fought against competitors, regulators, and general scepticism alike. Words are used as weapons to shape and defend market positions and to maintain interpretative dominance over what businesses are and will be. Increasingly, words are used to define how companies "do good" and "don't harm society," becoming a tool for the moral legitimization of new organizations.

This linguistic battle is particularly evident in the face of recent controversies which surround new services and companies in the sharing economy. How these organizations and services are defined has important ramifications for how they are accessed, regulated, and understood. While there is general agreement that Uber has developed into a convenient and affordable mode of transportation, it remains less clear how Uber should be morally judged. Indeed, the questions of whether and how Uber is causing harm to society are the subjects of heated debates. Allegations of driver exploitation and customer safety neglect are frequently cited. Similarly, Uber is under fire over whether it actually provides solutions to societal problems whenever it claims to be creating flexible jobs, reducing congestion, limiting CO2 emissions, and offering a progressive alternative to the allegedly corrupt taxi industry.



Interpretation of what Uber actually ‘is’, is thus under constant negotiation and re-negotiation in the public sphere. Indeed, the way we define and categorize an organization is associated with particular expectations, responsibilities, and, therefore, judgments. Or, in other words, the legal and moral responsibilities ascribed to an organization depend at least in part on how we define it. Recently, Uber has been eager to clarify that it is neither a call-centre nor a cab company. Rather, Uber has argued repeatedly that it is a technological platform which simply matches supply with demand. In line with this definition, Uber does not perceive its drivers to be employees, but as third party contractors instead. This self-definition thus frees Uber from the legal responsibilities faced by employers, such as providing social benefits, on-the-job expenses, or insurance costs.

Considering Uber’s alleged ‘unique’ position - a ‘uniqueness’ which has allowed Uber to avoid considerable expense and regulation - it is interesting how Uber’s self-definition has undergone a dramatic shift over the relatively short history of its existence. At the beginning, Uber was known as UberCab, proudly associating itself with heritage and associations of the ‘cab’ industry. Today, in sharp contrast, Uber has shaken off that word, describing itself as an organization which provides city infrastructure, food transportation, and self-driving cars. Despite the existence of Uber-TAXI as a service, Uber is keen to hold itself apart from the taxi industry, as far away from the ‘cab’ as possible.

The definition of an emerging organization does not, however, occur in a vacuum. It is also shaped by other actors. Regardless of retrospective justification, Uber’s shift away from ‘UberCab’ was not solely a marketing strategy or an example of genius re-branding. In 2011, the City of San Francisco had ruled that “UberCab” could not use the word “cab” in its name, forcing “UberCab” to cease operations. Similarly, the Utilities Commission of the State of California, an agency which regulates luxury sedans, accused Uber of operating an unlicensed “limo-dispatch” service. In response to these rulings, Uber underwent a classic Silicon Valley re-incarnation. It merely changed its name and relaunched, running its operations as usual and simply claiming not to be a limousine service... at least for the time being.

Misunderstandings and ambiguities are common when negotiating the identity of an emerging company. While the press, tech-enthusiasts, and the scientific community – the author of this article included - categorize Uber as part of the sharing economy, Uber itself uses the word “sharing” rather cautiously. However, this resistance to inclusion is not ubiquitous. While rejecting the negative connotations, Uber welcomes the positive connotations of sharing, such as altruism, fun, and entrepreneurship. Discursive struggles, linguistic ambiguities and shifting connotations are thus highly important factors when negotiating the definitions, and thus responsibilities, of emerging organizations.

In our research, we find that corporations often, as in Uber's case, use and deliberately create ambiguities through language with a strategic purpose. Our current research project, in fact, studies how Uber uses communication tactics in order to avoid regulation and to prevent association with other, stigmatized, categories. It will be interesting to explore how Uber attempts to shape these processes strategically.

We focus on the public communication of Uber's CEO Travis Kalanick, as his countless public appearances offer excellent data with which we can analyse the dynamic interpretative changes and linguistic adaptations running parallel to Uber's overall corporate strategy. Currently, the entrepreneur tours the world in an effort to publicly define Uber as a high-tech infrastructure company at the forefront of technological progress. With this definition Kalanick justifies how, in the near future, Uber will put its own drivers out of work through Uber's self-driving car technology, making the world better by preventing car accidents caused by drivers: "Technology moves forward, we are talking about a million lives a year being saved."

#### About the author

**Michael Etter, PhD**, is a Marie Curie Fellow at the ETHOS Center for Responsible Business at Cass Business School of the City University London, Great Britain. Prior to his appointment at Cass, he worked as an assistant professor at Copenhagen Business School and as a visiting scholar at both the University of California, Santa Barbara and at Texas Tech University, Texas. Michael's research interests lie in the construction of social approval, legitimacy, and reputation in the digital world. His academic work has been published in leading management and communication journals, such as *Journal of Management Studies*, *Management Communication Quarterly*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Business and Society*, and *Corporate Communication: An International Journal*.



Photo by Johannessorger, CC BY-SA 4.0

## PARTICIPATION AND PRACTICES

A key research focus at the Nordic Centre is online participation and new participation practices. Several publications and talks have focused on the social structuration of online participation and there has been an increasing interest in the participatory potential of new media. Exemplary cases include open innovation contests, massive open online courses, prominent fundraising campaigns such as the Ice Bucket Challenge, and social movements, where Twitter, Facebook & co. facilitate the organization of protests, such as the ones during the Arab Spring.

Despite substantial research on both the emancipatory potential and the destructive force (think about cyberbullying, trolling, and hate speech) of participatory media, surprisingly little has been published on the question who uses such media in the first place. In other words, we lack in-depth evidence about the antecedents of social media adoption and the social structuration of online participation.

Several of Christoph's research pieces have attempted to fill this gap. In early 2016, Christoph published his last dissertation paper in *Social Media + Society*, in which he uses a social milieu approach to look at differences in online participation behavior in different social groups. The results indicate strong milieu differences in the intensity, variety, understanding, and attitudes toward online participation. Each milieu displays specific participatory patterns and some of the findings challenge existing research on digital and participation divides.

A second focus in the area of online participation - in collaboration with Christian Hoffmann from the University of Leipzig - was on individuals' understanding of the concept of online participation. Christoph presented two work-in-progress presentations on this topic at the DGPuK in Leipzig in March/April and the AoIR in Berlin in October. Both presentations were well received. Again, relying on the online and offline focus group data, Christoph and Christian Hoffmann showed that online participation is understood very differently between different people but not so much between different milieus. From there, Christoph and Christian derived a typology of online participation with eight types. The full paper with the in-depth explanation of this typology is currently under review.

Finally, on this topic, Christoph published a conference paper on the digital divide of six major social media platforms in Great Britain. This research was conducted in collaboration with Grant Blank from the Oxford Internet Institute (University of Oxford) and was published in the Proceedings of the 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Social Media & Society (the research was also presented at the conference in London, in July 2016). In addition to looking at individual platforms, Grant and Christoph investigated activities on social media such as status updates, posting pictures, writing, commenting, liking a company page, and unfollowing/unfriending.



### Publication Feature

With more than 10 billion matches made so far, Tinder has been viewed as revolutionizing the online dating market. Looking at previous findings about ‘old-school’ dating sites, it was clear that users were presenting themselves in an idealized fashion through carefully selected, sometimes even deceptively better looking, pictures. There was a certain amount of ‘staging’ going on.

The question was whether the same ‘staging’ was happening on Tinder and what factors would shape the choice between authentic or deceptive self-presentation. To answer this question, 497 American Tinder users were asked about their self-presentation using factors such as gender, education, self-esteem, loneliness and narcissism.

The results show that the majority of Tinder users presented themselves ‘authentically’. However, a substantial number of users are actively deceptive, either to impress their target or to compare favorably against other users/competitors. An important aspect of Tinder users’ self-presentation is the varied motivations for using the app and the motivations behind authentic/deceptive presentations. Six identified motivations are: ‘hooking up’, friendship-making, relationship-seeking, meeting new people while travelling, entertainment, and self-validation.

A central take-away from research on Tinder is that the divide between what the media is saying about Tinder and the reality of Tinder’s users is large. As Tinder becomes an increasing focus for business and marketing, developing a clear understanding of use motives and user intentions is essential.

REFERENCE: Ranzini, G. & Lutz, C. (2016), Love at first swipe? Explaining Tinder self-presentation and motives, *Mobile Media and Communication*. The paper was presented at the International Communication Association 2016 in Fukuoka, Japan.



Soaking up the local culture at this year's EGOS Conference, Naples.

Photo courtesy of Christoph Lutz

## **A glass half-full or half-empty?**

### **Labor participation in the platform economy**

*A guest essay by Christian Hoffmann*

The disruption of established business models can frequently be identified by the vocal resistance of entrenched interests. In the case of sharing services such as Uber or Airbnb, many cities have witnessed protests, even outrage, by taxi unions as well as the hospitality industry. In most cases, protestors denounce both the working conditions, including wage levels, and quality of crowdsourced services.

Not all elements of the emergent platform economy are as publicly controversial as the cited examples of Uber and Airbnb, though. Today, we can observe a wide variety of digital platforms facilitating the outsourcing of services to a crowd of freelance workers. Services range from transportation, food delivery, or household services, to design and programming, or even the sorting and tagging of photographs. Platforms such as TaskRabbit or Amazon Mechanical Turk allow for the crowdsourcing of tasks too detailed and cumbersome to commission in the pre-digital age.

Labor in the digital on-demand service industry is characterized by a dissolution of traditional institutional and organizational settings: Crowdworkers are commonly self-employed, most working part-time. They tend to be uncovered by labor agreements; in fact, it has proven exceedingly difficult to even organize the interests of digital laborers. Recent studies suggest that about one third of crowdworkers rely on digital platforms as their primary source of income, while the rest is complementing their income or just earning some pocket money on the side. In many respects, working conditions on digital platforms are very flexible – both in regards to time and location.

Given these fundamental, technology-induced changes in working conditions and the institutional setting of labor, a lively debate emerges on the benefits provided and challenges posed by digital on-demand service platforms. While some consider crowdwork a threat to worker income, safety and well-being, others focus more on the participatory opportunities provided by the digital work environment. In fact,



weighing the benefits against the harms of the platform economy may prove difficult, as both do not necessarily occur consistently throughout the workforce or all at the same time. Digital on-demand service platforms may also favor some segments of the population at the cost of others. All the more reason, therefore, to carefully consider apparent advantages and challenges provided by the platform economy.

### Glass half-full: Advantages of the platform economy

**Income:** An obvious advantage of the platform economy and one of its key success factors is the access to additional or new sources of income for thousands of workers. In the sharing economy, particularly, digital platforms allow users to monetize slack resources, such as time, space, and transportation. Barriers to access are generally very low (a key point of contention for many), allowing easy entry and exit of the digital workforce. As noted above, a majority of laborers is quite free in deciding whether, when or where to engage in crowdwork. Also, digital on-demand service platforms facilitate the commodification of tasks previously too small or cumbersome to outsource. In other words: Additional work and income is created by the fact that, online, human beings can be commissioned to work on and be compensated for jobs that would previously have been impossible or far too complicated to entrust to freelancers. Surveys show that many crowdworkers are quite happy with the income opportunities provided by the platform economy, particularly those who don't depend on digital labor as a primary source of income.

**Deterritorialization:** Not all, but many jobs facilitated by digital on-demand service platforms are free of spatial restraints. This obviously does not hold for physical tasks, such as hosting, cleaning, delivery or transportation. But platforms such as TaskRabbit or Amazon Mechanical Turk are largely focused on the manipulation of digital artefacts, such as sorting, tagging, designing, programming, writing etc. In these cases, freelancers from around the world can apply for a task. The purely digital segments of the platform economy, thereby, may well constitute the most globalized market ever witnessed by mankind: aside from potential language barriers entirely devoid of physical boundaries. This does not only constitute an advantage to millions of workers denied access to developed economies due to political restrictions, but also to those in the West who live far away from economic centers or are otherwise unable to commute to/access a physical workplace.

**Flexibility:** A benefit touted not only by platform providers themselves is the flexibility associated with crowdwork due to the modularity and volume of work facilitated and distributed online. The platform economy tends to break down jobs into millions of individual, clearly identifiable and trackable tasks that can then be allocated to those willing to complete it in the time and place specified. Due to the modularity of crowdwork, laborers can start and end their work practically at any time they wish. Due to the volume of work, they can mostly rely on the fact that new work will be available again whenever they choose to reengage. Again, this holds especially true for



those not relying on crowdwork as their primary source of income. In these instances, crowdwork may even be associated with a degree of worker emancipation, as individuals are no longer bound to a specific employer – instead they face a ubiquitous, instantaneous choice of thousands of international clients.

**Anonymity:** At first glance, it may strike some as surprising to cite anonymity as a key advantage of digital labor. It is, of course, true that not all crowdwork is anonymous – users tend to maintain nymous profiles on platforms such as Uber or Airbnb. In the case of physical services, personal interaction can hardly be avoided entirely. Yet, again, a sizeable segment of the platform economy focuses on virtual services, with workers manipulating digital artefacts. In these instances, clients and freelancers do not personally interact, it is also not necessary (or in some cases even possible) to maintain a comprehensive nymous user profile. Some platforms, such as Amazon Mechanical Turk, deliberately avoid the personal identification of freelancers, since they market their services as a form of “human computation”. The advantage of these truly anonymous forms of crowdwork is the avoidance of traditional forms of discrimination, for example due to ethnicity, disability or gender. Anonymous crowdwork, in other words, may level the playing field for those discriminated against in the traditional offline economy. In fact, some studies indicate that the participation of women and ethnic minorities is especially high in the on-demand service economy.

### Glass half-empty: Challenges of the platform economy

**Income:** There is an inherent irony in the fact that income is both a chance and challenge of the platform economy. Yet the fact is undeniable that average wages available on digital on-demand service platforms tend to be low. A key selling proposition of these platforms to their users is precisely that the services available are simply cheaper than those offered by alternative, established providers. This is mostly due to the fact that part-time freelancers require less pay. Also, incidental wage costs are avoided by relying on freelance work. In addition, slack resources can frequently be considered sunk costs and can therefore be marketed for profit at discounted rates. The resultant low average wages constitute a challenge for those relying on crowdwork as a primary source of income – in some instances a third of all crowdworkers, with numbers varying by time and platform. These workers struggle to make a living online and frequently face precarious working conditions. This challenge may be exacerbated if traditional jobs are substituted or lost due to the competition provided by digital platforms – which brings us back to the resistance of traditional businesses and their employees cited at the outset.

**Isolation:** Freelancers offering their services on crowdworking platforms may benefit from flexible working conditions and the opportunity provided by deterritorialization. On the flipside, they are not given a realistic perspective of ever entering full-time employment. Digital on-demand service platforms constitute spot markets.

Platform providers are eager to stress that they are not employers of those marketing their work online. Workers, therefore, are not – nor will they ever be – members of an organization or a team. Instead, they are part of a more or less anonymous online crowd. This institutional foundation of crowdwork insulates workers, as can be witnessed by the failing attempts to organize worker interests. While some may cherish the opportunity to remain anonymous or work from home. Others may well miss regular interactions with coworkers and clients and may even face the threat of spiraling into ever more overwhelming social isolation. Camaraderie, solidarity, friendship and social capital are not phenomena facilitated by the platform economy.

**Deregulation:** Another ambiguous feature of the platform economy is the flexibility offered by freelance work and spot markets. Easy entry and exit as well as global access do certainly come as a benefit to many crowdworkers. Yet, as discussed above, the institutional setting of crowdwork encumbers the organization of worker interests and all but precludes employment relationships. Thereby, numerous workers are forced into what some may call pseudo-freelance work (“pseudo”, since the term implies a level of independence or entrepreneurship while there really is no alternative or choice associated with the form of crowdwork). Western, developed economies, tend to be particularly characterized by dense labor regulations mainly aimed at worker protection and (social) security. Many of the institutions of worker protection embedded in full-time employment relationships remain inaccessible to crowdworkers, though. The emergence of the platform economy once again illustrates that protective regulation tends to create insider-outsider-conflicts. Policy makers will struggle with balancing the maintenance of established protections or benefits against the opportunities provided by deregulation, flexibility and access. In the case of cross-national work, many may be tempted to implement protective policies – diminishing a key opportunity associated with the platform economy.

**Disempowerment:** Platform providers tend to tout the participatory opportunities provided by crowdwork – up to and including discrimination avoidance. According to this narrative, the platform economy will empower users to reap new economic benefits, provide additional work or streams of income, and create unprecedented flexibility in the workplace. The role played by the platform providers themselves remains noticeably vague in this argument. As recent research begins to point out: the platform economy replaces dyadic employer-employee-relationships with triadic client-freelancer-platform-relationships. In these triadic relationships, platforms emerge as tremendously powerful new players since, as the saying goes, “code is law”. In other words: the settings and processes facilitated by dominant platforms largely determine the quality and quantity of work available to freelancers and services available to clients. Of course, digital on-demand service platforms are for-profit enterprises. Therefore, platform providers will compete to offer ever more convenient and efficient services to clients. Workers on the other hand, while not irrelevant, may end up holding the short end of the stick in this dynamic, as individual elements of a crowd tend to be easily replaceable. And on a global scale, the crowd

is quite sizeable. Again, particularly those relying on crowdwork as a primary source of income may find themselves entirely dependent upon platforms systematically disfavoring worker interests in their settings and policies.

## Conclusion

As the American satirist H. L. Mencken once so pointedly put it: “For every complex problem there is an answer that is clear, simple, and wrong.” This certainly holds true for the evolving platform economy, the analysis of its consequences and the derivation of policy recommendations. The reality of digital on-demand service platforms is riddled with ambiguity – not least due to its recent establishment and dynamic development. When considering the benefits and challenges associated with now forms of digital labor, each element tends to come as a mixed bag, revealing both encouraging and troubling aspects. In fact, one and the same feature of crowdwork tends to provide benefits to some and threatens harm to others. While research still struggles to make sense of the platform economy, policy makers are well-advised to carefully balance the available insights and avoid rash interventions that may encumber evolutionary improvements. In any case, it is increasingly obvious that one party bears the brunt of responsibility for a beneficial development of digital labor: the platform providers. By setting standards, establishing policies and default processes, through programming the working and service environment, providers take on tremendous responsibility both for their clients and the thousands and thousands of freelance workers complementing their income or making a living in the digital space. The platform economy bears its title for a reason, after all.

## About the Author

**Christian Hoffmann, PhD**, is a Professor of Communication Management at the Institute for Communication and Media Science at the University of Leipzig. Christian is also a lecturer at the University of St Gallen, Singapore Management University, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, and Zurich University of Economics. Christian’s research interests lie in the fields of strategic communication, management, financial communication, and political communication. He has a particular focus on the challenges and opportunities of new media.



Photo by Johannessorger, CC BY-SA 4.0

## QUANTIFIED SELF

Around the globe, millions of people are tracking their various behaviors and performances on a daily basis. Information about physical activities, recreational experiences, finances, and even sex lives is being constantly collected through self-tracking mobile applications and wearable technologies. Rather than being the exclusive toy of tech-savvy young professionals, this movement towards self-tracking is inclusive of all ages, genders, and countries of residence. Right now, self-tracking mobile applications and devices powered with wearable technologies are recording data instantaneously and this process, of collecting personal data, analyzing it, and adjusting behavior accordingly, is called 'self-quantification'.

At the Nordic Centre, we are studying the various stages which make self-quantification an interesting yet complex process. These stages are: data collection, analysis, reflection, and action upon data. In our research we use a mixed-method approach with an emphasis on experimental design in order to explore the relationship between self-quantification and other related constructs.

Our focus on self-quantification is threefold. Firstly, we are investigating what personality traits and environmental factors might encourage people to track themselves and engage with personal data. Secondly, we are interested in the actual process of self-quantification. Specifically, we are studying the meaning which people assign to each stage of self-quantification process, the engagement level of self-quantifiers, and the role of self-tracking devices and applications. Thirdly, we are interested in the implications of self-quantification. We want to examine how self-quantification affects our perception of our bodies and selves, our privacy concerns, our attitudes towards information sharing, our consumer behavior, and our life aspirations and values.

To date, our findings suggest that conscientious and sympathetic people are more prone to engage in self-quantification and that self-quantification has a positive effect on information sharing. Specifically, we have found that people who engage in self-quantification on a regular basis are more likely to disclose personal data in other contexts.

## Flexible work arrangements = Appealing work arrangements?

*A guest essay by Steffen Giessner*

The digitization of our economy has changed the way we work. As a result, the percentage of mobile workers has consistently increased and technologies such as smartphones, clouds, and video conferencing will further enable employees to pursue mobile work. While this creates many new opportunities for collaborative and flexible work, recent cases indicate that there might be pitfalls to this development as well. Marissa Mayer, as CEO of Yahoo, banned telecommuting. Similarly, companies such as Best Buy and Reddit also restricted their flexible work arrangements. The basic assumption behind these decisions is that increasing “traditional” face-to-face interaction will foster more collaboration and innovation.

One question may be whether flexible work arrangements (i.e., conditions enabling work from home or flexible office spaces) have positive or negative effects on innovation and productivity. Another question is how much these work arrangements can contribute to attracting talent. In other words, will such flexible work arrangements make organizations more attractive for potential job candidates?

We<sup>1</sup> explored this question in a recent study with university students at the Rotterdam School of Management. In a first study, we drafted different job descriptions, the job being described as having either flexible or “traditional” work arrangements in terms of time and office presence (i.e., telecommuting vs. non-telecommuting). Afterwards, we asked the students how innovative they perceived the organization to be. As expected, the students perceived the organization as more innovative when the job advertisement emphasized flexible work arrangements. A similar finding was found when we compared flexible office arrangements (i.e., open offices with creative spaces) to “traditional” separated offices. Thus, flexible offices and flexible work arrangements seem to foster a perception of a more innovative organization. In a follow-up study, our participants read one out of four different job descriptions. Next to the standard job description, we added information about telecommuting (i.e., present or not present) and office spaces (flexible or “traditional”).

The results showed that students judged those organizations as most attractive who provided telecommuting and flexible work offices. Even the indication that just one of these new ways of work is present in the organization seems to be enough to result in positive evaluations of organizational attractiveness. Students evaluated the job as less attractive only if the job description provided information on traditional office spaces and no flexible work arrangements.

So, what does it imply for organizational practice? It seems that the provision of any type of flexible work arrangement increases the perceived innovativeness of an organization and, therefore, attracts talent. Companies like Yahoo, Reddit, and Best Buy, which seemingly foster a reputation of no longer providing flexible work arrangements, may suffer in attracting new talent for their organization. In the long run, this might be more costly for the organization than the potentially positive effects of restructuring their work arrangements. Hence, maybe Yahoo, Reddit, and Best Buy need to rethink their strategies? Instead of banning telecommuting, these companies could provide incentives to be in the office instead. Areas for redesign may include: office space layout, support for living arrangements close to the office, or support in commuting. In these ways, talent may be attracted and, importantly, retained long-term at organizations.

[1] The findings reported are based on a master thesis of Christoph van Balen “New Ways of Working as perceived by job applicants: Implicit organizational theories and their effects on organizational attractiveness” from the Rotterdam School of Management

### About the Author

**Steffen Giessner, PhD** is a Professor of Organisational Behaviour and Change at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University. His research interests, located at the intersection of organizational psychology and management, include human resource excellence, leadership, and sustainable RSM. His primary topics are employee support during organisational mergers, followers’ perceptions of leadership, antecedents of leader behaviour, and non-verbal communication of power. Steffen has been published in top management journals (e.g. Journal of Applied Psychology and Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes).





**Up close and personal with the robots of Tokyo. Night excursion during this year's ICA Conference, Tokyo. Photo courtesy of Christoph Lutz.**





## HEADLINES

### Opening of the Nordic Centre for Internet and Society

#### 1st September

The 1st of September 2016 witnessed the opening of BI's new research centre: The Nordic Centre for Internet and Society. Our opening celebration began with a welcome speech by the President of BI, Inge Jan Henjestad, and was followed up with speeches by the Head of Department of Communication and Culture, Gillian Warner-Søderholm, and our two centre directors, Christian Fieseler and Sut I Wong. Five of our Advisory Board Members had keynote speeches, among them were Fredrik Kallum from Cisco, Yvonne Fosser from Innovation Norway, Roger Schjerva from ICT Norway, Jan Gerlach from Wikimedia Foundation, and Rune Foshaug from NHO. Topics ranged across the field of digitization: collaboration, trust, privacy, security, organizational behaviour, and the impact on professional life.



Opening our new Centre. Photo courtesy of @HandelshoyskBI

## The Nordic Centre secures EU Horizon 2020 Funding

28th July

The European Commission issued a decision awarding Horizon 2020 funding to The Nordic Centre for a new project on 'Power, Participation, and Privacy in the Sharing Economy'. The one year research project will commence in 2017 and will include collaboration between a consortium of world-class researchers based in Norway, Germany, The Netherlands, Italy, Denmark, and Switzerland. This will be the first EU research project with BI Norwegian Business School as the consortium leader, with Dr. Christian Fieseler and Dr. Christoph Lutz as the project's directors. In alignment with the European Commission's emerging interest in the economic impact of sharing services such as Uber and Airbnb, this Horizon 2020 project will focus on questions of inclusion/exclusion within the sharing economy while addressing participation gaps and placing a special emphasis on the role of privacy concerns. Conclusions from this research will be used to develop evidence based policy recommendations for EU companies and institutions on how to improve their digital services.



**Signing the agreement for our H2020 Project.**

Photo courtesy of Gemma Newlands

## Inaugural Advisory Board Meeting

22nd June

The Nordic Centre had its first advisory board meeting in June. This newly established advisory board helps the Centre shape its overall research, fundraising, and outreach strategy. The board currently consists of members from HR-Norge, Basefarm, Wikimedia, Accenture, Startup Norway, Innovasjon Norge, NHO, Cisco, Telenor, and IKT Norge.



**Lunch with the Advisory Board.**

Photo courtesy of Thy Hoai Thi Nguyen

## Nordic Centre joins Global Network of Interdisciplinary Internet & Society Research Centres

22nd September

Furthering our goals of international collaboration, The Nordic Centre has joined 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 and we are already collaborating with The Berkman Klein Centre on our flagship project: Fair Labour and the Digitised Economy. We aim to strengthen our pre-existing links and foster new collaborative efforts in the future.

## CONFERENCES

### Computer Supported Collaborative Work Conference, San Francisco

**27th February - 2nd March**

In traditional organizations, employers take responsibility for the training and development of their employees. However, the relationships between platform and crowdworkers on the one hand, and between requesters and crowdworkers on the other hand, are temporary and not fixed. Hence, the questions arise of what kind of responsibility platforms and requesters have towards their crowdworkers and who is the responsible party - the platform or the requester? These were questions discussed at this year's CSCW conference in San Francisco where Dominique participated at a workshop and presented the paper "Finding meaning in a hopeless place – The construction of meaning in crowdwork" written together with Sut I and Christian.

### We Robot Conference, Miami

**1st-2nd April**

The privacy implications of social robots are far-reaching and concern both informational and physical privacy. In their conference presentation, Christoph and co-author Aurelia Tamò from the ETH Zürich addressed the privacy implications of healthcare robots. Their main contribution was mapping the privacy ecosystem in robotic healthcare technology, and analyzing the complex interplay of robots and humans.

## International Communication Association Conference, Fukuoka

### 9th - 13th June

Four members of BI's Nordic Centre for Internet & Society presented their research at this year's Annual Conference of the International Communication Association in Fukuoka, Japan. Christian Fieseler, Eliane Bucher, Kateryna Maltseva, and Christoph Lutz gave a total of eight talks, showcasing the broad and current research conducted at the Centre. The topics of their talks ranged from motivations to participate in the sharing economy, to crowdworkers' fairness perception of platforms as intermediaries, and users' self-presentation on the dating app Tinder.

## Annual Colloquium of the European Group for Organizational Studies, Naples

### 7th - 9th July

Christian Fieseler and Christoph Lutz gave two presentations at this year's Annual Colloquium of the European Group for Organizational Studies (EGOS) in Naples, Italy. This year's Colloquium had the topic "Organizing in the Shadow of Power" and convened more than 2000 international attendants. Christian Fieseler presented a paper co-authored with Eliane Bucher and Christian P. Hoffmann (University of Leipzig) about inequality on the crowdworking platform "Mechanical Turk". Christoph Lutz's paper (co-authored with Christian Fieseler, Eliane Bucher and Christian P. Hoffmann) revolved around privacy concerns in the sharing economy. Both presentations received helpful and encouraging feedback and were positively received.

## Social Media & Society Conference, London

### 18th July

Over 3 days in July 2016, leading social media researchers displayed their full papers, work in progress papers, and posters. Christoph Lutz presented a paper alongside co-author Grant Blank from the University of Oxford (Oxford Internet Institute). The paper dealt with the inequalities in social media use of six platforms in Great Britain: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+ and Instagram. The presentation received positive feedback from the audience and the full article is available in the conference proceedings. In addition to receiving positive feedback and a lot of inspiration on the current state of social media research, Christoph Lutz (@lutzid) also won the "Most Engaged Attendee on Twitter" award.

## Association of Internet Researchers, Berlin

### 5th - 8th October

This year's annual AOIR conference, held at the Humboldt University of Berlin, welcomed over 550 participants from over 30 countries. Leading Internet researchers displayed their work on critical issues, with a focus on social media participation, algorithms, precarious digital labour, crowdwork, and Artificial Intelligence. AOIR was also a notably inclusive conference where a great number of feminist scholars and those discussing racial topics had a platform. Christoph Lutz was among this cohort, not only presenting his paper on Online Participation, but also chairing a session on Digital Divides.

## Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, Anaheim

### 12th August

Five research papers were presented by members of the Nordic Centre at the Academy of Management Conference in Anaheim this year. The topics of the papers were from various disciplines, including leadership, team research, organizational communication and information system, managerial and organizational cognition. The five papers elaborate the issues of 1) the role of network centrality using ResearchGate for academics; 2) how crowdworkers experience meaning of their work; 3) the role of transactive memory system on virtual team performance; 4) the role of (in)congruent leader member exchange on employee voice; and 5) the role of gamification on corporate social responsibility. Dominique Kost and her co-authors' paper was included in the best paper proceedings.

## New Friends Conference, Barcelona

### 2nd - 4th November

Christoph Lutz presented his research on social robots at the New Friends 2016 Conference in Barcelona. In addition to his presentation on "Privacy Concerns and Social Robots" (with co-author Aurelia Tamò from the University of Zurich), Christoph – together with two collaborators – also moderated a workshop on the ethical, legal, and social (ELS) issues of social robots in Healthcare and Education.





**Enjoying this year's top quality conference locations.**

Photo courtesy of Christoph Lutz



## TALKS

### Leader Toolbox Seminar on Leadership in the Digital Age, Oslo

**26th February**

As part of BI's public lecture series, Sut I and Christian discussed with around 200 participants the changing role of leadership in the digital landscape. Among the topics discussed were new forms of division of labor among humans and robots, new ways of leading platform workers, and how to manage the increasingly blurry lines between work, private and play.

### Visit to McMaster University, Hamilton

**18th June**

Sut I Wong visited McMaster University in Hamilton, Canada to discuss and brainstorm ongoing research projects. She spoke with Dr. Catherine E. Connelly, who holds a Canada Research Chair in organizational behaviour and is an Associate Professor of human resources and management at McMaster University's DeGroote School of Business.

### Visit to Macau and Hong Kong

**July**

In July, Sut I Wong visited the United Nations University Institute on Computing and Society (UNU-CS) in Macau and the Digital Asia Hub in Hong Kong. During the visits, Sut I presented the ongoing research projects of our team members at NCIS.

## Talk at University of Oslo, Oslo

### 25th October

Christian Fieseler and Christoph Lutz introduced the Nordic Centre for Internet & Society to an audience of media and communication scholars of the University of Oslo. Their talk focused on the general vision of the Centre and they summarized specific research projects and results.

## Keynote at Oslo Innovation Week, Oslo

### 19th October

Sut I Wong gave a keynote talk on Digital Communication in China. Sut I, whose research focuses on leadership, empowerment, and the effects of culture on organizations, discussed China's emerging digital communication trend. Her talk explored the respective business opportunities and challenges which develop for companies when entering the Chinese market and how work organization is related to internal organizational communication.

## BI's Alumni Day

### 11th November

As part of BI's Alumni Day 2016, Sut I Wong discussed the role of leadership in the digital age. Sut I, with a keen eye for future developments, presented a thought-provoking talk on the future of leadership. She asked 'What does it take to be a great leader in the digital age?'

## Panel Discussion at A.I. in Asia

### 21st November

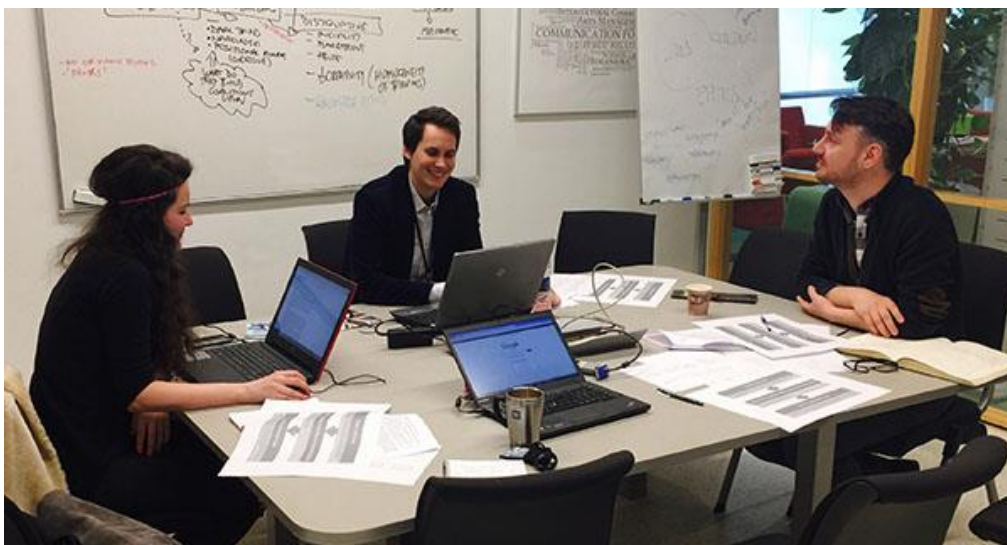
Sut I, as an invited speaker, discussed the usage of Artificial Intelligence in management at the AI in Asia Workshop organized by Digital Asia Hub. Attention was drawn to the interesting usage of AI in organizational decision-making processes. To off-load certain administrative work, AI personal assistants have already been developed and implemented in organizations. Should the next step, rather than seeing AI as merely a potential personal assistant, be to see AI as a personal coach for leaders able to better observe their own decision-making patterns and to seek alternative and/or better decision-making strategies?



**Centre Director Christian Fieseler at the Leader Toolbox Seminar.**

Photo courtesy of Sut I Wong

## GUESTS



**Taking a deep dive into research with our guests Dr Matej Černe and Ms. Aldijana Bunjak.** Photo courtesy of Sut I Wong

**Dr. Matej Černe and Ms. Aldijana Bunjak**

**26th April**

Our collaborators, Dr. Matej Černe, and his PhD student, Ms. Aldijana Bunjak, from the University of Ljubljana visited our centre. Dr. Černe's research focuses on team processes and leadership roles in employee innovation and creativity. During their three day research workshop together with Christian and Sut I, they planned out a series of research projects looking into online leader emergence and incivility, and the role of reflection on online feedback among digital workers.

**Dr. Giulia Ranzini**

**25th - 28th October**

Dr. Giulia Ranzini visited to Oslo to present her research on mobile dating and coordinate the upcoming EU H2020 project on the sharing economy. Her presentation explored users' diverse motivations for using the dating app Tinder, comparing users' authentic and deceptive self-presentations. Giulia is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Communication at VU Amsterdam. Her research deals with aspects of self-presentation and identity on social media and in online dating environments.

**Dr. Hannah Trittin**

**25th - 28th October**

Dr. Hannah Trittin, from the University of Zurich, visited the Nordic Centre and presented her ongoing research about corporate social responsibility (CSR) communication and aspirational talk. Her research uses in-depth qualitative and observational data from a leading multi-national German corporation to outline changes in CSR communication over time. Her presentation demonstrated that the importance of CSR talk – especially aspirational talk – has increased over the last 20 years. Since September 2016, Hannah has been a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Chair for Foundations of Business Administration and Theories of the Firm.

**Leslie Dunton-Downer**

**11th - 13th May**

Leslie Dunton-Downer, a writer based in Cambridge, Massachusetts and Fellow at the American Academy in Berlin shared with us her exploration of Berlin's position on the current digital rights map. She presented her project The Magical Secrecy Tour, co-produced with the digital arts & technology festival transmediale, and with N.K. Projekt, a bus journey into the surveillance culture of Berlin, during which she considered subjects such as access to the internet, privacy and data protection, government and corporate transparency, digital journalism and publishing, whistleblowing, and hacktivism.

**Dr. Sebastian Kernbach**

### **30th - 3rd June**

In June, we hosted Dr. Sebastian Kernbach at BI. During his time, he held a number of workshops on visual thinking and novel communication skills with visual methods such as diagrams, knowledge maps or visual metaphors. Sebastian is a lecturer, consultant, and visual coach in the area of Knowledge Visualization and Visual Thinking. He works at the University of St. Gallen at the Institute of Media and Communication Management as project manager and postdoctoral researcher.

**Dr. Lawrence McGrath**

### **20th - 22nd April**

Dr. Lawrence McGrath visited us in April to share his research on creativity. Lawrence researches management creativity and visualisation at the University of St. Gallen's Institute for Media and Communications Management. His core areas there are ideation, creativity pairs and visual tools

**Miriam Feuls**

### **6th - 8th April**

Miriam Feuls visited us in spring to talk about her work on strategic foresight in creative industries, and on the role of pioneers in cultural fields. In her talk, she explored the role of the social avant-garde and proposed a new understanding for examining and explaining the development of the new. Miriam Feuls is a lecturer and PhD student at the University of the Arts in Berlin Germany. Her background is in communication science, media sociology, strategic marketing and economics. She centers her work on (cultural) innovation and strategic foresight designed as interdisciplinary research.

**Dr. Matthes Fleck**

### **23rd - 26th August**

Dr. Matthes Fleck, from the University of Applied Science Lucerne, visited us in fall to share his work on social network and communication theory. During his stay, Dr. Fleck and the team worked on joint research on social media dialogues.



**Centre Director Sut I Wong presenting on Digital Leadership.**

Photo courtesy Christian Fieseler

## PUBLICATIONS

### Journal Articles

Blank, G., & Lutz, C. (2016). Benefits and harms from Internet use: A differentiated analysis of Great Britain. *New Media & Society*, *online first*, 1461444816667135.

Blank, G., & Lutz, C. (2016). The Social Structuration of Six Major Social Media Platforms in the United Kingdom: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Google+ and Pinterest. In *Proceedings of the 2016 International Conference on Social Media & Society* (Vol. 8). ACM. 10.1145/2930971.2930979

Bucher, E., & Fieseler, C. (2016). The flow of digital labor. *New Media & Society*, *online first*, 1461444816644566.

Bucher, E., Fieseler, C., & Lutz, C. (2016). What's mine is yours (for a nominal fee)—Exploring the spectrum of utilitarian to altruistic motives for Internet-mediated sharing. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *62*, 316-326.

Hoffmann, C.P., Lutz, C., & Meckel, M. (2016). A relational altmetric? Network centrality on ResearchGate as an indicator of scientific impact. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, *67*(4), 765-775.

Lutz, C. (2016). A social milieu approach to the online participation divides in Germany. *Social Media+ Society*, *2*(1), 2056305115626749.

Ranzini, G., & Lutz, C. (2016). Love at first swipe? Explaining Tinder self-presentation and motives. *Mobile Media & Communication*, *online first*, 2050157916664559.

### Presentations

Bucher, Eliane; Fieseler, Christian; Hoffmann, Christian Pieter. An Exploration of the Worker-Platform Relationships in the Context of Crowdsourced Digital Labor. 32nd European Group for Organizational Studies Conference



Bucher, Eliane; Fieseler, Christian; Hoffmann, Christian Pieter. Unfairness by Design? Examining Institutionalized Inequality on Digital On-Demand Service Platforms. 66th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association; 2016-06-09 - 2016-06-13

Hoffmann, C. P., & Lutz, C. (2016). Online Non-Participation: Exploring Abstinence from Participatory Internet Uses. Extended abstract and presentation at the 2016 DGPuK Conference, Leipzig, 30 March-1 April.

Hoffmann, C. P., Lutz, C., & Meckel, M. (2016). Two Paths to Adoption: Cognitive and Affective Drivers of Social Media Adoption in Public Administration. Extended abstract and presentation at the 2016 DGPuK Conference, Leipzig, 30 March-1 April.

Hoffmann, C., Lutz, C., & Meckel, C. (2016). Academic Social Capital? Relating Centrality on ResearchGate to Established Impact Measures. Full paper presented at AOM Annual Meeting, Anaheim, 5-9 August.

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Maltseva, Kateryna; Fieseler, Christian. A Gamification Approach to Corporate Social Responsibility Communications. 66th Annual Conference of the International Communication Association;

## TEAM

### **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 holds a Bachelor of Arts in Classics (First Class) and a Master of Philosophy in Roman History, both from the University of Oxford. Since graduating, Gemma has worked with a number of leading technology start-ups in London and is currently using her insights at BI as a Research Assistant.



**Thy Hoai Thi Nguyen**

Thy is a student in the Master of Science in Leadership and Organizational Psychology Program. Thy graduated from the University of Oslo with a Bachelor of Science and spent one semester as an exchange student at the University of California Berkeley.

**Caroline Rabe**

Caroline is currently enrolled in the Master of Science program in Leadership and Organizational Psychology at BI. She has also studied the innovation method Design Thinking at HPI School of Design Thinking in Potsdam.



## NETWORK OF CENTRES



GLOBAL NETWORK OF **INTERNET AND SOCIETY** RESEARCH CENTERS

**Logo of the Global Network of Internet and Society Research Centres.**

Photo from <http://networkofcenters.net/>, Fair Use.

Furthering our goals of international collaboration, The Nordic Centre has joined 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 and we are already collaborating with The Berkman Klein Centre on our flagship project: Fair Labour and the Digitised Economy.

We aim to strengthen our pre-existing links and foster new collaborative efforts in the future.



Photo by Christian Fieseler

## ADVISORY BOARD

The Nordic Centre had its first advisory board meeting in June. This newly established advisory board helps the Centre shape its overall research, fundraising, and outreach strategy. The board currently consists of members from (in alphabetical order):

Accenture - Chris Hirst  
 Basefarm - Marcel Ravenshorst  
 Cisco - Fredrik Kallum  
 HR-Norge - Lars Christian Elvenes  
 Innovasjon Norge - Yvonne Fosser  
 IKT Norge - Roger Schjerva  
 NHO - Rune Foshaug  
 Team Conclude - Ivar Kroghrud  
 Telenor - Anne Flagstad  
 Wikimedia - Jan Gerlach

The composition of the board aims to reflect the different sectors and areas of interest that are highly relevant to the Nordic Centre. In particular, Accenture and Cisco help us to stay close to state-of-the-art computer-mediated communication technologies and how organizations might take advantages of them. Innovasjon Norge, IKT Norge, and NHO help us to connect with the Norwegian industry environment and respective developments. With Basefarm and Telenor, we aim to gain insights into the telecom and internet industries. With HR-Norge, we aim to reach out to HR professionals in Norway and to seek their opinions and practices in handling digitalization in organizations. Team Conclude, representing a start-up segment, helps us in seeing how start-ups may gain advantages from current technology advancements in their business innovation. Last but not the least, Wikimedia helps us in understanding the dynamics of crowdsourcing knowledge platforms.

