Program for the 1st Digital Publics Conference 2026

Wednesday, 21 October

(Last updated 2026-09-29)

Venue	UZH Digital Society Initiative (DSI) Rämistrasse 69 8001, Zürich

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12:00-12:30	Coffee and Welcome (Karsten Donnay)

12:30-14:00 Platform Governance and Content Moderation (Chair: Fabrizio Gilardi)

1. "What Drives Content Moderation on Social Media - Normative Rules or User Engagement?" by Dario Landwehr (University of Konstanz), Nikolina Filiposki (Technical University of Munich) Nils B. Weidmann (University of Konstanz), Margaret E. Roberts (University of California, San Diego), Yannis Theocharis (Technical University of Munich)
2. "What Community Notes is for? Tokenism, legitimisation, and the mirage of democratic content moderation" by João C. Magalhães (University of Manchester)
3. "Lawful but Unreadable: A Legal Complexity Index for Platform Terms and AI Disclosures across Latin America" by Sebastián Dueñas Müller (Pontifical Catholic University of Chile)
4. "Preferences for speech governance are polarized across 40 countries" by Tobia Spampatti (Max Planck Institute for Human Development), Laura K. Globig (New York University), Steven Rathje (Carnegie Mellon University), Jay J. Van Bavel (New York University), Hallgeir Sjåstad (Norwegian School of Economics)
5. "When Transparency Teaches: Automated Moderation, Social Learning, and Strategic Adaptation in Digital Publics" by Malika Talgatova (Technical University of Munich), Nils B. Weidmann (University of Konstanz), Margaret E. Roberts (University of California, San Diego), Yannis Theocharis (Technical University of Munich)

14:00-14:30 Coffee break

14:30-16:00 AI Systems and Political Bias (Chair: Alexandre Bovet)

1. "Uncovering Political Bias in Large Language Models using Parliamentary Voting Records" by Jieying Chen (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam), Karen de Jong Chen, Andreas Poole, Jan Burakowski, Elena Elderson Nosti, Joep Windt, Chendi Wang (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)
2. "Biased Provision: Tracking Cross-Provider Divergence in How AI and Search Supply Evidence on Contested Questions" by Morgan Wack (University of Zurich), Eva-Maria Vogel (University of Zurich), Christian Pipal (University of Zurich)
3. "AI Integration into Human Rights Monitoring: Who Decides What Counts as Human Rights Information?" by Milica Mirkovic (European University Institute)
4. "Brand-Level Trust and Perceived Political Slant Across Eight AI Chatbots" by Thomas Felesina (University of Queensland), Mathew Hornsey (University of Queensland), Samuel Pearson (University of Queensland)
5. "Whose Opinions Get Selected? A Study on How Algorithms Shape Online Deliberation" by Salim Hafid (Sciences Po), Manon Berriche (Sciences Po), Jean-Philippe Cointet (Sciences Po)

16:00-16:30 Coffee Break

16:30-18:00 Online Political Behavior (Chair: Anne Schulz)

1. "Contentious Publicness Across Geopolitical Divides: Connective and Collective Action Logics in U.S. TikTok Users' Discussions on Migrating to RedNote" by Allison Koh (University of Birmingham), Ting Luo (University of Birmingham), Tim Henrichsen (University of Birmingham)
2. "Loud Minorities, Silent Majorities: Political Efficacy, Platform Pessimism, and Who Stays Silent on Social Media" by Friederike Quint (Technical University of Munich)

3. “GenZ on the Internet, Streets, and Parliament: Methods and Results from a Deliberative experiment during Nepal's Power Vacuum” by Himanshu Panday, Hameeda Syed, Dridhata Silwal, Pooja Lama
4. “Does digital socialization in the 2000s shape long-term gender norms?” by Mathieu Dubied (European University Institute)
5. “Grassroots Movements and Platform Regulation: The Smartphone Free Childhood Movement as a Civil Society Governance Actor” by Gabriela Ferreira Varejao (Uppsala University), Sandor Adam Gorni (Stockholm University)

Social Event offsite

Thursday, 22 October

09:30-11:00 AI Literacy and Digital Inequality (Chair: Rebekka Rieser)

1. “Unequal Access to Digital Publics? AI Skill Differences in Everyday Participatory Tasks” by Eszter Hargittai (University of Zurich), Esther Gasser (University of Zurich), Izabella Martin-Kovács (University of Zurich), Emilia Vokart (University of Zurich), Vasilije Vuksanovic, Yuliia Nikitina (University of Zurich)
2. “Mapping Variations in People's AI Skills: Implications for an Equitable Digital Public” by Eszter Hargittai (University of Zurich), Abraham Bernstein (University of Zurich), Karsten Donnay (University of Zurich), Lucas Leemann (University of Zurich)
3. “IYKYK: Onlineness and the Visual Decoding of Political Ideology” by Kevin Munger (European University Institute), Mathieu Dubied (European University Institute), Marcos Echevarría Eirea (European University Institute), Fabian Pawelczyk (European University Institute), Sebastian Ramirez-Ruiz (European University Institute)
4. “Digital Technologies at Work: Workers, Unions, and Collective Bargaining in the Age of AI” by Paolo Agnolin (Princeton University), Valentina González-Rostani (University of Sothern California)
5. “Cognitive Traits and Welfare State Preferences in the AI Economy” by Matthias Haslberger (University of St. Gallen), Patrick

Emmenegger (University of St. Gallen), Jane Gingrich (University of Oxford), Jasmine Bhatia (Birkbeck University of London)

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break

11:30-13:00 Influence, Authority, and Persuasion (Chair: Morgan Wack)

1. "Propaganda That Doesn't Look Political: Experimental Evidence on Influencer-Based Pro-Russian Propaganda" by Nina Steffen (University of Fribourg), Jonathan Klüser (University of Zurich)
2. "Adding Fuel to the (Gun)Fire: How Politicians Polarize the Public Debate" by Lehan Zhang (ETH), Gabriele Gratton (University of New South Wales), Pauline Grosjean (University of New South Wales), Hasin Yousaf (University of New South Wales)
3. "Following Alpha Male and Tradwife Influencers: A Field Experiment on Attitudes, Norms, and Wellbeing" by Emma Hoes (University of Zurich), Jonathan Klüser (University of Zurich), Sacha Altay (University of Zurich), Vicente Valentim (IE University)
4. "Scripting "AI-Psychosis": Digital Delusions & the Serial Automation of Cultural Reproduction" by Lee A. Flamand (Ruhr University Bochum)
5. "The AI's Poker Face: Contrasting Persuasion and Sycophancy in Voice-Based Multi-Turn Conversations" by Ilia Frantzi (Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich), Bernie Hogan (University of Oxford), Max Lang (University of Oxford), Paul C. Bauer (GESIS)

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break

14:00-15:30 Digital Authoritarianism and Control (Chair: Sara Kallis)

1. "Digitalisation and traditional authority in Africa" by Alex Yeandle (University of Oxford)
2. "Entertainment First, Politics Second? When and Why Citizens Circumvent Online Censorship" by Philipp M. Lutscher (University of Oslo), Vilde Lunnan Djuve (University of Oslo)
3. "Mobilizing Manufactured Narratives: How Digital Participatory Propaganda Fuels Transnational Far-Right Movements in Southeast Asia" by Salma Aqida (Goethe University Frankfurt)

4. “From Digital Democracy to Digital Authoritarianism? The Transformation of Digital Publics and State Power in Indonesia (2008-2025)” by Anggi Anggraeni Kusumoningtyas (University of Indonesia)

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee Break

16:00- 17:00 Keynote: “Bridging Divides with Generative AI: A Field Experiment with NextDoor” by Chris Bail (Duke University)

17:30-19:30 Reception on-site (Food and Drinks)

Friday, 23 October

09:30-11:00 Knowledge Production and Accountability (Chair: Philip DiSalvo)

1. “Which World Gets Covered? Online Media Ideology and the Geography of News” by Lucas Paulo da Silva (University of Zurich), Jungmin Han (Trinity College Dublin)
2. “From Manifestos to Mandates: How Coalition Institutions Redistribute Programmatic Representation” by Slava Jankin (University of Birmingham), Michael Laver (New York University), Christine Sheldon (University of Cambridge)
3. “Public skepticism about the use of AI in scientific research” by Christian Bretter (University of Queensland), Boryana Todorova (University of Queensland), Caitlin Curtis (University of Queensland), Matthew J Hornsey (University of Queensland)
4. “Digital Statecraft Amidst Ruins of War: Negotiating Visions of Progress and Durabilities of Conflict Through Sri Lanka's Unique Digital Identity” by Fabian Hofmann (ETH)
5. “Open-source intelligence as a practice of data solidarity? Evidence from civil society work for Ukraine” by Ivan Josipovic (University of Zurich)

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee Break

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DSI COMMUNITY DIGITAL PUBLICS

11:30-13:00 Misinformation and Information Integrity (Chair: Emma Hoes)

1. "Public Education Against Political Misinformation: A Field Experiment in Bahia, Brazil" by Sumitra Badrinathan (American University), Simon Chauchard (University Carlos II), Fernando Barros de Mello (University Carlos III)
2. "The synthetic content Factory" by Anouck Butraud-Assathian (Sorbonne University)
3. "Searching Through Data Voids: Belief Updating in Misinformation Environments" by Nini Petriashvili (European University Institute)
4. "Perceptions of and Exposure to Misinformation on Social Media" by Georgia Dagher, Silvia Majo-Vazquez (Free University of Amsterdam), Ana Sofia Cardenal (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya), Mariken van der Velden (Free University of Amsterdam), Laia Castro (University of Barcelona), Aukse Balcytiene (Vytautas Magnus University), Paula Szewach (Barcelona Supercomputing Center), Wouter van Atteveldt (Free University of Amsterdam), Andreu Casas (University of Oxford)
5. "The Role of Stakeholder Coalitions in Safeguarding Information Integrity in African Elections" by Elizabeth Orembo (Research ICT Africa)

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break

14:00-15:30 Conversational AI and Democratic Participation (Chair: Karsten Donnay)

1. "Homogenization or Fragmentation? How Culture and Identity Condition the Social Effects of Conversational AI" by Daniel Karell (Yale University), Hannah Waight (University of Oregon), Alex Yan (Yale University)
2. "Proactive Dialogue Management for Conversational Voting Advice Applications" by Fynn Bachmann (University of Zurich), Selene Baez Santamaria (University of Zurich), Abraham Bernstein (University of Zurich)
3. "Scaling and Evolving Voting Advice Applications with Artificial Intelligence" by Clifton van der Linden (McMaster University)
4. "Conversational AI shifts beliefs and policy support among skeptics across contested societal issues" by Johannes Kotz (University of Konstanz), Kevin E. Tiede (University of Erfurt), Maj-Britt Sterba

(University of Konstanz), Jelena Meyer (University of Konstanz), Christian Breunig (University of Konstanz), Wolfgang Gaissmaier (University of Konstanz)

5. "Artificial Infiltration: How Low-Quality Sources Shape AI Chatbots' Political Advice" by Agustin Prinetti (Rice University)

15:30 – 17:00 Goodbye Drinks
