Call for Participation

Digitalisation Research Seminar (DigiSem 2026)

Balancing Digital Safety between Risks, Rights, and Regulation

The Weizenbaum Institute (WI), the Bavarian Research Institute for Digital Transformation (bidt), the Center for Advanced Internet Studies (CAIS) and the Leibniz Institute for Media Research – Hans Bredow Institute (HBI) invite doctoral and postdoctoral researchers to present their work at the joint Digitalisation Research Seminar – DigiSem 2026 on:

21–22 September 2026 at **WI** in **Berlin**.

This year's Digitalisation Research Seminar is dedicated to **Digital Safety** as a human-centered, interdisciplinary research field. We aim to bring together early career researchers who examine human and societal risks of digital technologies, including harm arising from bias, dis- and misinformation, loss of control, and institutional misalignment, as well as challenges in risk prevention for vulnerable groups, such as children.

Our goal is to promote **interdisciplinary dialogue** and **networking** among early career researchers, and to advance research that contributes to safer, more responsible, and socially sustainable digital systems. Constructive feedback and cross-cutting discussions are central to the seminar.

We invite early career researchers (PhD candidates, postdoctoral researchers, and advanced Master's students) to submit papers for an interdisciplinary exchange on risks and challenges arising from digital systems that affect human safety, well-being, and societal stability, and goes beyond issues of cybersecurity.

Topics of interest include (but are not limited to):

- Use of technologies to increase security
- Risks of using AI on bias and decision making
- Regulation of social media for human and societal safety
- Protection of of vulnerable groups (esp. children and young people) in the digital space

- Criminal misuse of digital technologies (deep fakes, doxing, cybercrime, identity theft, etc.)

Keynote

Prof. Dr. Lena Kästner (University Bayreuth): “Digital Safety - A political, technical and social reflection of current developments” (Working title)

Important Dates

CfP opens: 01 April 2026
Deadline for abstract submission: 01 June 2026
Notification of acceptance: 30 June 2026
Registration opens: 01 July 2026
Deadline for registration: 07 September 2026

Submission and Participation Guidelines
Submissions should present research that relates to one of the main topics. Inter- and transdisciplinary work is particularly encouraged. Please submit an abstract of max. 300 words via EasyChair by 01 June 2026. Please indicate preferred presentation type as talk or poster presentation. Presentations should be 15 minutes plus 10 minutes q&a.

We are happy to inform you that participation in the DigiSem is free of charge and that catering will be provided for participants throughout the event. Please note that travel expenses must be covered by participants themselves.

If you have any questions, please contact the responsible organisers as indicated below or have a look at the respective websites.

We are looking forward to your contributions!

Kind regards,
the Organising Team

Maria Staudte, bidt
Nina Hahne, CAIS
Katharina Mosene, HBI
Stefanie Regel, WI

About the convening institutions:

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

CAIS: The Center for Advanced Internet Studies (CAIS) in North Rhine-Westphalia promotes the active shaping of the social, political, economic, and cultural changes that digitalization brings about. The Center

sees itself as a place for innovative interdisciplinary research and as a source of inspiration for a critical public that wants to find agreement on models for a self-determined life in the digital society.

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

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