UNIVERSITÄT LEIPZIG

Call for Abstracts

International Conference: **Big Data Discourses: Communicating, Deliberating, and Imagining Datafication**

Leipzig University, Germany
1–2 February, 2024

Please submit abstracts via email (bigdatadiscourses@gmail.com) by 15 October 2023 (for further information go to https://www.sozphil.uni-leipzig.de/international-conference-big-data-discourses).

International Conference
Big Data Discourses: Communicating, Deliberating, and Imagining Datafication
Leipzig University, 1–2 February, 2024

Confirmed keynote speaker: Minna Ruckenstein, University of Helsinki

Approaching datafication through discourse means to understand and to engage with the eminent reality-making power of communication, deliberation, and imagination. It foregrounds the work that goes into rendering datafication a socially relevant phenomenon and problem.

The conference sets out from the idea that the public understanding of datafication is driven by discourses in the media and among policymakers and the imaginaries they evoke. The event invites us to look at what datafication is or should be for a variety of publics and speakers and how they discuss, criticize, or envision the collection and use of data at different places, speaking from different situations, and at different times. That way, the conference does not merely interrogate the status quo of big data analytics. Rather, discourses also involve prospective ambitions and normative stances about potential, desirable, or unwanted innovations. The conference turns its attention to discourses whose programs of thought actively shape the social constitution of Big Data and translate into practices, organizational forms, policies, and institutions. Discourses are in fact integral to how we come to engage with datafication.

Inquiring into the semantics, interpretations, and cultural values that prelude, accompany, and surround investments and innovations into Big Data requires by definition interdisciplinary work. This includes, among others, critical data studies, STS, sociology, communication, linguistics, political science, cultural studies, geography and education, as well as security studies and gender studies.

By taking the understanding of datafication as a matter of contingent articulation, the conference helps to dismantle claims about the given and irrevocable facticity of data formats and data analytics so as to explore ways of reimagining their status and implications. In doing so, it seeks

to gain leverage in critically examining how datafication's social imaginations are shaped and to enable alternative readings.

The conference is open to theoretical and empirical approaches. Due to the variety of paradigms, we believe that it is necessary to work across disciplines and embrace an international perspective. It invites senior as well as emerging scholars to contemplate the entanglement of discourse and technology.

Contributions can address, but are not limited to, the following aspects:
- Deliberation, policymaking processes, and datafication
- Rhetoric and metaphors of dataism
- Datafication imagery and visuals
- Critiques of dataveillance and data colonialism
- Non-Western voices on global and local form of data exploitation
- Media reports and (data) journalism on data analytics
- Discourses around data analytics in fields such as education, health, policing, welfare, etc.
- Visions and anticipations of future data usage
- Fictions and works of art engaging with data and data analytics
- Domestication of data-driven services and technologies
- Folk theories around datafication and people's algorithmic imaginaries
- Critical studies of data analytics' marketing material and business talk
- Self-presentation of actors from data-rich sectors
- Data feminism
- Data scandals and the performance of whistleblowers as public figures
- Narratives and counternarratives around datafication

The conference will take place at the Department for Communication and Media Studies at Leipzig University, Germany. It is supported by the German Research Foundation.

Submission Guidelines
Abstracts must be submitted via email (bigdatadiscourses@gmail.com) by 15 October 2023. Submissions must contain a front page with all information about the author(s) as well as an anonymized extended abstract (max. 500 words excl. front page and bibliographical references).

General Information
The conference will begin on Thursday, 1 February 2024 and end on Friday, 2 February 2024 at noon. For updated information concerning the program, registration, accommodation, and travel, please visit our website https://www.sozphil.uni-leipzig.de/international-conference-big-data-discourses The registration fee is 100 Euro.

Key Dates
15 October 2023:	deadline for abstract submissions
1 November 2023:	notification of acceptance
1 December 2023:	publication of conference program
1 to 2 February 2024:	conference

Organizers and Contact
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Web: https://www.sozphil.uni-leipzig.de/international-conference-big-data-discourses

Conference Venue
Department of Communication and Media Studies, Leipzig University, Nikolaistrasse 27-29, 04109 Leipzig, Germany