

- Call for Papers -

***Conference “Expertise in the digital transformation”***

**May 23-24, 2024 at the Weizenbaum Institute in Berlin**

**organized by  
the Research Group “Reorganisation of Knowledge Practices” at Weizenbaum Institute  
in cooperation with the Section for Science and Technology Studies  
of the German Sociological Association**

What is expertise? Who owns it? And where does it originate from? These questions are not new but have become more pressing with the advent of digital transformation. Digitalization is becoming constantly more crucial in producing knowledge and generating expertise. Far beyond the automatization of existing standardized and coordinated procedures, numerous digital applications are increasingly generating information that directly influence social and academic knowledge production and decision-making.

Present debates, particularly those about generative AI such as ChatGPT, highlight significant tensions: At what point do digital tools cease to support knowledge creation and begin to fundamentally influence or replace traditional practices of knowledge production and human expertise? While AI has presented numerous opportunities for the generation of expertise, concerns arise over the quality and validity of the knowledge produced.

Current studies have already examined these developments in various ways. Discussions focus on how the quality of human expertise compares to technologically generated expertise when using such technologies (boyd and Crawford 2012; Christin 2016). The reliability, trustworthiness, and "objectivity" attributed to digital applications versus human knowledge, evaluation, and experience are also under investigation. Furthermore, attention is directed towards the implications of digital data processing and assessment. How does this affect commonly shared knowledge and social perceptions within different social spheres? This includes phenomena as diverse as the perception of music accessed through streaming platforms (Alaimo and Kallinikos 2020), the management and monitoring of work processes at corporations (Kellogg et al. 2020; Krzywdzinski and Butollo 2022), as well as the evaluation of scientific achievements (Franzen 2015; Haustein 2016). Furthermore, the question arises which kinds of expertise are becoming necessary to make use of these technologies. And what expertise may be lost in the process? This also connects to research on the potential risks resulting from a lack of expertise, for instance, illustrated by studies on digital applications to assess employability in the job market (Allhutter et al. 2020; Büchner and Dosdall 2021). Last but not least, this raises the issue of regulations governing the usage and integration of such technologies in organizations' decision-making processes (Katzenbach 2022; Schwarting and Ulbricht 2022): Are they used for optimizing expertise or rather for reasons of economic efficiency? Additionally, these developments pose the question of who benefits from this digital support in knowledge production: Do people with high levels of skill or those with lower levels of skill profit from them? Furthermore, how does this influence concerns about social inequality (Gerdon et al. 2022)?

Many studies addressing these questions in various social domains are already underway. Moreover, attempts are being made to formulate a comprehensive oversight on the social, political, and cultural

implications of the digital transformation of society (Baecker 2007; Stalder 2016; Nassehi 2019; Schrape 2021; Fourcade and Healy (forthcoming)). With this conference, we aim to compare and discuss the results from different social domains to gain more general insights into the impact of digital transformation on knowledge-based work in areas ranging from industry and administration to science or the judiciary. How does digitalization change expertise and also the experts? How are practices of knowledge production transformed and what do we regard as expertise? And how does this influence our commonly shared perception of reality?

The conference will take place in Berlin from May 23 to 24, 2024. Submissions are welcome in German or English (approximately 500 words) and must be sent to [tagung.digitale-expertise@weizenbaum-institut.de](mailto:tagung.digitale-expertise@weizenbaum-institut.de) by January 31, 2024. Decisions about submissions will be communicated by the end of February.

In the context of the conference, a forum for doctoral researchers is planned to discuss research on digital transformation of expertise and to provide room for mutual exchange. The objective of the forum is to explore questions such as how to collect and analyse data on digital phenomena, what are innovative methods, and how to link current theories and methodological approaches. Interested doctoral researchers may apply and submit a summary of their research interest and methodological and theoretical considerations with a maximum length requirement (1000 words). This should also be submitted by January 31 to [tagung.digitale-expertise@weizenbaum-institut.de](mailto:tagung.digitale-expertise@weizenbaum-institut.de). Decisions on submissions will also be communicated by the end of February.

Organized by:

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## Literature

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