

Call for Papers

Digital Humanism – 2nd International Interdisciplinary Research Conference

10-12 March 2027
in Munich, Germany

We welcome contributions from all disciplines.

Digitization is one of the most transformative technological developments in human history, comparable to the impact of agriculture, industrialization, and electrification. It is reshaping cultural, economic, and social life in profound ways. Early optimism surrounding the digital age — including hopes for greater freedom, participation, and global democracy through the World Wide Web — has increasingly been accompanied by concerns about the erosion of democratic institutions, the decline of public discourse, social fragmentation, and the growing influence of artificial intelligence. Between utopian enthusiasm and apocalyptic fears, Digital Humanism offers a third perspective: technological progress is neither autonomous nor inevitable, but fundamentally shaped by human decisions and responsibilities.

Digital Humanism rests on two central critiques. First, it rejects “digital animism,” the tendency to attribute personhood, intentionality, or moral capacities to digital systems. While AI systems may convincingly simulate reasoning, emotions, or empathy, simulation must not be confused with genuine consciousness or moral agency. Second, it opposes “digital mechanism,” the reduction of human beings to computational systems. Humans are not machines; they are embodied, vulnerable, empathetic, and capable of cooperation, moral reflection, and self-transcendence in ways that cannot be reduced to software processes.

Rather than interpreting humans as machines or machines as persons, Digital Humanism emphasizes the distinctiveness of human beings and advocates the responsible use of digital technologies to expand human capabilities and social well-being. A humane technological development should strengthen human agency, democratic participation, and social inclusion, while contributing to economic progress, ecological sustainability, and the preservation of human dignity.

Submission:

The “Digital Humanism – 2nd International Interdisciplinary Research Conference” invites submissions of extended abstracts (3–4 pages, excluding references).

Authors are asked to indicate whether they intend to submit a short paper (6–11 pages) or a long paper (up to 15 pages).

The deadline for submitting extended abstracts is July 15, 2026.

Notification of acceptance will be issued by end of October 2026.

Short and full papers are due by March 26, 2027. Accepted contributions will be published as an Open Access volume in [Springer’s Lecture Notes in Computer Science \(LNCS\)](#) series, scheduled for publication in July 2027. All submissions must follow the [Springer LNCS guidelines](#).

Introductory Essay:

Digitization turns out to be one of the greatest technological innovations in human history after farming, industrialization, and electrification. Both its convinced proponents and equally convinced critics alike, who are sometimes present in one singular person, agree that the human way of life, including its different cultural, economic, and social aspects, is subject to fundamental changes as a result of digitization. The euphoric chorus that accompanied the early digital period – such as the expectation that with the establishment of the World Wide Web, the age of individual freedom and global democracy would find its highest form of realization – is sometimes turning into an anxious swan song mourning the passing of constitutional democracy, the decay of public reasoning, the loss of personal encounters and social life and the fear that digital agents may one day in the sooner or later future take control over humanity and it's maybe fatal fate.

Digital humanism counters both the digital enthusiasts and the digital apocalyptics alike with its core message that technical progress is shaped by humans and should be used responsibly. People decide on how to use technological options; they decide whether digital opportunities contribute to a humanization of the world and to economic and social progress, or whether they lead to a loss of political control, dependence on social media, and the atomization of society.

This message of Digital Humanism is based on two basic assumptions:

1. The critique of digital animism: Digital machines are not persons, they are not – and they will not be – endowed with mental states, intentionality, insight, moral values, and social norms, even if they convincingly simulate it. The counter-position is a kind of fall-back in (digital) animism: the interpretation of natural or technical unanimated things as animated.
2. The critique of digital mechanism: Humans are not (digital) machines, the brain is not a hardware system, and human reasoning is not a software process. Humans are in many and fundamental aspects different from digital machines: They are vulnerable, they feel empathy, they can cooperate and transcend their personal interests, and they do not merely simulate these mental states as long as they do not suffer from a mental disorder. Digital machines can effectively simulate reasoning, emotions, empathy, and cooperation. But simulation and realization are two different categories.

Different versions of generative AI tell you, if you ask them, whether they have feelings, “no, I have no feelings...”, which is a contradiction in adjecto. If you have metacognition, knowing, what you are and know, you are a person, and persons cannot be conceived without emotional states. If, on the other hand, digital machines were persons, we would not be allowed to instrumentalize them, reshape them, kill them, recombine them, distort them... Persons are endowed with dignity and rights. The technical process would end if we were sure to become homo deus – humans creating persons.

Digital humanism does not transform persons into machines, nor does it interpret machines as being persons. It adheres to the specific nature of human beings and their abilities, and recommends using digital technologies to expand, rather than to limit them. A good technological development is characterized by strengthening human authorship individually and collectively, allowing to frame the conditions for a more humane life on earth, enhancing economic and social progress, humanizing the workplace, reducing poverty, including the marginalized in the economic progress, fostering biodiversity, avoiding climate change, saving natural resources, helping public reasoning and political decision-making, fostering self-determination on the individual and social level.

We aim to engage critically and constructively with this perspective throughout the conference, exploring its implications for research, society, and the future development of digital technologies.

Therefore, we invite contributions from a broad spectrum of disciplines ranging from computer science, social sciences, economics, the humanities to philosophy, that engage with topics related to this

perspective of digital humanism. Topics may include AI ethics, governance and regulation, privacy and digital rights, participatory approaches, the economics of digitization, human-centered AI, environmental impacts, the design and evaluation of AI and other software systems for the social good, and novel technologies for meaningful human-AI collaboration.

We also welcome a wide range of research methodologies, from technical and empirical studies to philosophical reflections and theoretical considerations, fostering a shared humanistic understanding that bridges technical, societal, political, and cultural perspectives.

Further readings:

- [Vienna Manifesto on Digital Humanism](#)
- [Digital Humanism - For a Humane Transformation of Democracy, Economy and Culture in the Digital Age](#) (edited by Julian Nida-Rümelin and Nathalie Weidenfeld, Springer Nature 2022)
- [Perspectives on Digital Humanism](#) (edited by Hannes Werthner, Erich Prem, Edward A. Lee & Carlo Ghezzi, Springer 2022)
- [Introduction to Digital Humanism](#) (edited by Hannes Werthner, Carlo Ghezzi, Jeff Kramer, Julian Nida-Rümelin, Bashar Nuseibeh, Erich Prem & Allison Stanger, Springer 2024)
- Julian Nida-Rümelin: „Digital Humanism“ in: *Max Planck Research* 2/19
- Julian Nida-Rümelin: *Humanistische Reflexionen*. Suhrkamp Verlag. 2016
- Julian Nida-Rümelin: *A theory of practical reason*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2023

Host:

[Bavarian Research Institute for Digital Transformation](#)
Gabelsbergerstrasse 4
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Location:

[Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities \(BAdW\)](#)
Alfons-Goppel-Straße 11
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