



German Communication Association

Digital Communication Division
“Media, Public Spheres and Gender” Division

(Non-)binarity in Binary Structures – The Digital Communication of Identity and Diversity

Call for Papers of the Joint Annual Conference of the DGPuK-Divisions Digital Communication and
“Media, Public Spheres and Gender”
08th-10th November 2023 in Vienna, Austria

I. Presentations

a) Presentation of current research (without thematic specification)

The conference aims to create a forum for current research in the fields of *digital communication* and *gender studies in communication science* in its entire breadth. It thus enables a stronger exchange between the divisions. This is to take place in the form of presentations and subsequent discussions. There are no thematic requirements set for submissions. Both theoretical and empirical contributions from the fields mentioned above are welcome.

b) Submissions to the conference theme: (Non-)binarity in Binary Structures

Digital technologies play a crucial role in the representation and negotiation of gender identities. As in other areas of society, the norm of binary gender categories has shaped digital communication from the very beginning. However, the coexistence of binary and non-binary affordances is increasingly apparent, as not only the linguistic code but also the code of software must be reconceptualized from a queer theoretical perspective to adequately represent gender identities beyond binary categories (Bivens, 2017). In this regard, social media platforms are crucial, as they show us the simultaneous existence and non-existence of gender binaries. The conference is dedicated to the associated challenges and opportunities from a communication research and gender perspective. Therefore, **research contributions on binary and non-binary gender identities in digital media environments** will be presented and discussed in a topic-specific panel. Possible questions address, for example:

- *Theories of the digital public sphere*: Which theoretical approaches are applicable for describing and explaining (non-)binarity in digital structures and their effects? (e.g., critical theoretical approaches to technology, queer theory, and insights from science and technology studies)
- *Representations, portrayals, and effects*: How are (non-)binary identities represented in digital media environments? How do they represent themselves (e.g., avatars,

profiles)? How do distortions in the representation of gender or their portrayal, for example, affect perceptions, attitudes, or behavior?

- *Participation and discourse*: What conditions characterize the participation of (non-)binary gender identities in digital publics (e.g., hate speech, fake news)?
- *Methodology*: How can non-binarity be captured in quantitative and qualitative research? What are new methodological approaches needed?
- *Regulation and policies*: What are platform operators and policymakers doing to make digital media environments gender-inclusive? What role do economic (e.g., business models) and political conditions play in this?

Submission Guidelines

Anonymized abstracts (4.000 to 5.000 characters, including spaces, excluding references and appendices) can be submitted until **05 May 2023** in PDF format using the platform ConfTool: <https://www.conftool.pro/digicomm2023/>. Please indicate whether the contribution is to the a) open or b) topic-specific panel. Contributions to the open panel a) can be submitted in English or German. Contributions to the conference topic b) should be submitted in English.

All submissions will be peer-reviewed according to the following criteria, which are standard in the DGPUK: thematic fit to the call (in case of submission for the topic-specific panel), theoretical foundation, the relevance of the research question, appropriateness of the method/approach, novelty value/originality, clarity as well as conciseness of the presentation. The review process results will be announced at the end of June 2023. The organizers plan to publish selected contributions on the conference topic in an international journal special issue.

II. Workshops and other formats

The conference organizers reserve the right to ask individual colleagues to contribute to the conference topic (e.g., keynotes). In addition to classical lectures, workshops are planned. A particular time slot during the conference will be reserved for formats in which all session participants can actively participate.

a) Method Workshop: Automated recognition of gender in text and image

Automated analysis methods offer the potential to detect a wide range of variables in media material, including the identification of gender, which can be automatically detected in texts and images. This workshop aims to present various tools with which this detection is possible. It will be taught how automated analysis of gender in text and images can be performed (instruction and exercise). Furthermore, the potential and limitations of available tools will be critically discussed. The workshop is scheduled one day prior to the conference start.

b) Advocacy Workshop: Countering digital inequalities in intersectional participation, representation and advocacy

The workshop aims to connect the conference theme with experiences in leveraging non-binary advocacy for intersectional engagement and product outputs. The workshop will be conducted with the participation of journalism and communication studies students and the [Comms Policy Collaborative](#). The goal of the workshop is the sharing of knowledge and skills for impactful advocacy, and the co-creation of a strategic advocacy plan that all participants can utilize for engagement and collaboration with community stakeholders, with a focus on non-binary approaches. The workshop will be held in English and is scheduled for the day before the conference begins.

c) Early Career Panel/ Workshop

It is planned that formats for early-career researchers from the two divisions will take place in the context of the conference. Information about the submission modalities for these formats will be provided separately in the corresponding calls of the divisions and early career groups.

III. Conference Schedule

The conference starts on Wednesday, November 08, 2023, in the evening with a get-together and ends on Friday, November 10, 2023, around noon. More detailed information about the venue, accommodation, etc., will be announced in time in an invitation to the conference.

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Reference

Bivens, R. (2017). The gender binary will not be deprogrammed: Ten years of coding gender on Facebook. *New Media & Society, 19*(6), 880-898.