

Call for Participants

Computational Methods for Communication Science: Towards A Strategic Roadmap

February 12th to February 16th, 2018, Hanover, Germany

Empirical research on interpersonal, mediated, and public communication is facing fundamental challenges caused by the rapid diffusion and dynamic development of internet-based infrastructures, platforms, services, and applications. Much ‘classic‘ (mass) communication is nowadays ‘delivered‘ via internet connections, and entirely new forms of interpersonal, intragroup, and public communication have emerged. Interactive and mobile devices enable users to actively participate in many communication settings, including the production and dissemination of own messages of various forms, such as contributions to online chat conversations, text comments to news events, images, and videos. Hence, communication as a field is tasked to deal with this new type of data that requires specific methodological competencies which are currently not part of academic training in most social science and communication departments. In addition, many of these challenges are impossible to resolve within individual research projects, by individual scholars, or by single academic institutions.

Specifically, the challenges that social science communities, and the field of communication in particular, need to address relate to I) competencies, tools and methods for analyzing big data, II) the access to and availability of big data sets, which are often generated and owned by private companies whose business interests may conflict with public use policies, III) research ethics affected by the use of (mass) data traces of real human communication, and IV) organization and arrangement of interdisciplinary collaboration on big data research among social scientists and computer scientists for mutual (academic) benefits (e.g., finding the ‘right‘ partner, defining a project that offers appealing opportunities for both parties).

The Workshop

To address these issues, we are inviting international participants to Hanover: The mission of our workshop is to set the pathway into a new era of communication science in which the use of big data sets and methods are common and widely available research practices. We designed a week-long event to **a)** provide young scholars with the opportunity to acquire knowledge about computational methods and to develop skills to apply these methods within their research and **b)** bring together young and advanced scholars from communication and related social sciences to discuss the conceptual and strategic challenges described above.

The workshop will be organized in two parts. **The first stage** (3.5 days) is dedicated to the transfer of competencies. We particularly address young scholars who aim at acquiring skills to apply computational methods within communication science.

(0) Introduction into R (**Day 1**)

(1) Automated Content Analysis, (**Days 2 – 4**)*

(2) Topic Modeling, (**Days 2 – 4**)*

(3) Network Analysis, (**Days 2 – 4**)*

(4) Statistical Analysis of Large Data Sets, and (**Days 2 – 4**)*

(5) Acquiring Data Using APIs and Scraping. (**Days 2 – 4**)*

* training courses marked with an asterisk are scheduled parallel

The **second stage** (1.5 days on **Days 4 and 5**) will be a joint effort of junior and senior scholars and computational social science experts to discuss strategic areas of development for communication. In an interactive mix of input and workshops, scholars will actively engage with the issues related to the idea of *computational communication science (CCS)*:

- Big Data and Research Ethics,
- Combining Big Data and Conventional Methods,
- Arranging Interdisciplinary Collaboration, and
- Access and Availability of Big Data Resources.

Date	am	pm
February 12	R Training Course	
February 13		
February 14	Parallel Method Training Courses	
February 15		
February 16	Roadmap Event	

Details on our workshops, timeline, and trainers can be found on the workshop homepage: ccsconf.com.

Applications

We therefore invite interested young scholars from communication science and neighboring disciplines to apply for participation. We offer 50 places for young scholars (post-doctoral researchers and doctoral students) from empirical disciplines interested in the study of communication including but not limited to communication science, (media) psychology, sociology, and economics. Thanks to the generous funding of the Volkswagen Foundation, participants receive a full scholarship covering travel, accommodation costs, and workshop registration. Participants may choose to apply for the whole **5-day layout (R-Workshop, 1 CSS-method training course, and workshop conference)** or for the **4-day layout (1 CSS-method training course + workshop conference)** or the **2-day layout (workshop conference only)**.

To apply, scholars are asked to provide a short letter of motivation, including (1) a (prospective) research question in their area of expertise, (2) discuss how computational methods can add an advantage to answering this question, (3) how computational methods may help improve the underlying theory, and (4) what computational methods may add to the applicant's academic profile. The letter must be written in English language and not exceed a maximum of 500 words/3500 characters.

Online applications are required; no e-mail applications will be accepted. Please refer to the online application form:

<https://ww3.unipark.de/uc/ccshanover/>

Location and Timeline

The event will be held in Hannover, Germany. Workshops will take place at the Department of Journalism and Communication Research (IJK), Hanover University of Music, Drama, and Media (<http://www.ijk.hmtm-hannover.de/en/en>). The roadmap conference will be held at the Leibniz House, Convention Center of Hanover's universities in the historical old town.

Online applications are due September 15th, 2017, 12:00 pm, CEST.
Letters of invitation will be sent out by September 30th, 2017.

Conference Team

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