

Call for Contributions

Creative AI Exploration and Imagination: Innovative Methods for Alternative Digital Futures

Leipzig University, Germany

25–26 September 2025

Are you exploring the intersections of citizen engagement, futures methods and artificial intelligence? Do you experiment with arts-based and/or participatory futures methods to reimagine digital futures? We invite you to share your work at our upcoming show-and-tell workshop.

Idea and Background

Artificial intelligence (AI) and other types of digital technologies are deeply intertwined with the everyday lives of citizens, yet their underlying conditions and consequences often remain invisible or difficult to grasp. Many people experience the digital transformation as inevitable and uncontrollable, as exemplified by the current public discourse around the “AI race” and generative AI technologies. Innovative approaches and methods are urgently needed to empower citizens to critically engage with digital transformation processes and imagine alternative futures.

This workshop moves beyond traditional information dissemination and focuses on playful and artistic engagement methods, such as arts-based and future methods. These approaches foster experiential and creative explorations of AI and digital transformation, using photography, music, literary and poetic texts, diaries, comics and visual narratives, installations, or excursions. These methods are not aimed at conveying the current state of AI technology but rather at collaboratively defining future frameworks for action, governance, and regulation with civil society actors. Arts-based methods are particularly valuable as they allow participants to experience, explore and imagine alternative scenarios beyond the status quo and/or dominant narratives about how “the” future will unfold.

This workshop seeks to bring together researchers involved in such projects, practitioners, citizens, and other experts working in this field. The event aims to map real-time experiences and identify good practices and model initiatives for engaging with citizens, civil society organizations, community organizers, and public administrations around critical questions about AI and digital technologies. These efforts are planned to culminate in a publication titled “(Re)-Imagining AI with and for the People.”

The event is supported by the ARQUS University Alliance and the German Academic Exchange Service DAAD.

Objectives and Contributions

The workshop will explore and test transfer methods for playful and artistic engagement (arts-based methods and future methods) with AI and digital transformation. Participants will discuss the theoretical foundations of these methodologies, address practical challenges in their application and transfer, and examine the role of arts-based and future methods in fostering civil society participation, enabling citizens to critically engage with the everyday impacts of AI and envision alternative uses, frameworks, and regulations for a citizen-centered digital transformation.

Practical aspects of applying arts-based and future methods in the AI context should be illuminated through collaboration with local partners. Stakeholders such as citizens, media education initiatives, and NGOs critical of digitalization are invited to join the conversation and exploration. The workshop also aims to address ethical considerations in applying these methods, documenting how such approaches influence the dynamics between researchers and participants.

We welcome contributions from a broad range of disciplines and sectors involving researchers and academics, designers, artists and creative practitioners, community organizers and activists, technologists and developers, as well as policy advocates and educators.

We invite arts-based and future methods contributions that:

- Demonstrate innovative citizen-led AI applications or projects.
- Showcase participatory methods for engaging diverse communities with AI.
- Explore alternative narratives and imaginaries of digital futures.
- Examine the role of creativity in developing ethical and inclusive AI.
- Provide critical reflections on challenges and lessons learned.

The Show-and-Tell format is designed to encourage interaction and dialogue. Contributors will present their work in interactive sessions and engage directly with participants through live demonstrations, creative storytelling, or multimedia presentations.

The registration fee is 150 Euro and includes lunch catering and coffee & tea breaks.

Submission Guidelines

Please submit the following by **31 March 2025**

1. A title and brief description of your contribution (300 words max).
2. A short bio (150 words max) of the presenter(s).
3. Any technical or logistical requirements for your presentation.

Email your submission to christian.pentzold@uni-leipzig.de with the subject line: **Show and Tell Submission – [Your Name/Project Name]**.

Key Dates

- Submission Deadline: 31 March 2025
- Notification of Acceptance: 15 May 2025
- Event Date: 25–26 September 2025

Organizers

The local event is organized by: Christian Pentzold, Emma Hughes, and Benedikt Haupt, Leipzig University in collaboration with Juliane Jarke & Laura Kunz, University of Graz; Rob Kitchin & Olly Dawkins, Maynooth University; and Stefano Crabu & Federico Neresini, University of Padua.

For more information, please visit the website: <https://tinyurl.com/5n8e7ptn>

For inquiries, please contact us at christian.pentzold@uni-leipzig.de

SPONSORED BY THE



Federal Ministry
of Education
and Research



Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst
German Academic Exchange Service