



Call for Abstracts

DELSI - 'Digital Epidemiology and its ethical, legal and social implications'

A Symposium
September 14 - 18, 2015
Berlin, Germany

The Department for Infectious Disease Epidemiology at Germany's Robert Koch Institute (RKI), in cooperation with the Center for Technology and Society, Technical University Berlin (TUB), invites proposals for papers for an interdisciplinary, binational symposium entitled 'Digital Epidemiology and its ethical, legal and social implications' (DELSI). Fifteen participants from Germany and the United Kingdom who are engaged in cutting edge research in their prospective fields will be competitively selected for this invitation-only event.

BACKGROUND

Digital developments in technology and science have created ground-breaking opportunities in knowledge generation. For public health and epidemiology, the Internet is increasingly recognized as a rich and expedient platform for health information capturing and sharing. New methods, including Big Data analytics and data mining, offer the possibility of faster disease assessment and response, while computerization is also understood as a way to lower costs and reduce administrative burden; however, new tools may also, among other things: 1) introduce critical epistemic questions; 2) challenge the way established health systems perceive, prioritize and manage health events; 3) confront decision making processes in public health research and practice; and 4) cause opportunities for rights infringements, such as privacy violations and social discrimination.

The DELSI symposium will provide a forum to explore the societal (ethical, legal, practical and social) dimensions of new digital tools in public health practice and disease monitoring in Germany and the United Kingdom. Participants will be asked to discuss the opportunities and risks of emerging technologies that inform methods to capture record and analyze epidemiologically relevant data from the Internet, social media, sensor data and other digital sources. In this context, they will also be expected to discuss the possible tensions within, and between, the imperatives of public health, security, social justice and civil rights. By tackling complex interdisciplinary questions, participants will actively contribute to a comparison of the field of public health in Germany and the United Kingdom with the aim of helping to inform contemporary methods of practice and directions in future policy.

The symposium will comprise lectures given by four invited global experts, as well as participant presentations. Contributions from both experts and participants will take place during interactive sessions. Participants will also be asked to bring their ideas to bear on scenario-building exercises to examine in further depth the possible tensions and changes as they manifest in different possible examples. Results of these exercises are intended to inform contemporary policy in digital epidemiology.

ELIGIBILITY

We invite qualified researchers (PhD candidates, post-docs, lecturers, and others) from Germany and the United Kingdom who will make a strong contribution to the analysis and assessment of the epistemic and societal implications of the latest approaches and technologies being applied in infectious disease surveillance.



Researchers may come from a variety of disciplines, including:

- Computer Science
- Epidemiology
- Ethics
- Humanities
- Law
- Public Health
- Social Sciences
- Science and Technology Studies
- Surveillance Studies
- Critical Security Studies

Participants must be able to attend all five days of the symposium: September 14 -18, 2015.

The conference language is English.

VENUE



The symposium will take place at the Schwanenwerder Estate, a historical lakeside location in Berlin. More information can be found at: <http://www.berlin-schwanenwerder.de/>.

EXPENSES AND HONORARIA

There is no fee to participate in the DELSI symposium. All participant travel expenses to/from the event venue will be covered by the organizers, as will accommodation and catering during the five-day symposium at Schwanenwerder. Other expenses will not be covered, unless reviewed and agreed upon in advance.

Participants will also receive a small allowance for paper preparation.

HOW TO APPLY

Please submit paper abstract proposals together with the enclosed form to delsi2015@rki.de by **March 19, 2015**. Proposals will be assessed by a multi-disciplinary selection committee and acceptance will be announced by April 21, 2015.

ABSTRACT GUIDELINES

Please attach a proposal abstract (maximum 350 words) that is related to at least one of the following questions:

- Does the use of emerging technologies and digital tools, especially Big Data, present an epistemic shift in epidemiology?
- Might the use of new digital tools change prioritization in agenda-setting, resource allocation and decision-making for infectious diseases in public health practice, which has traditionally aimed to improve health states and address determinants of health?



- There are implications for privacy and discrimination in digital epidemiology. Is it possible to mitigate, or even prevent, any potential consequent rights infringements?
- How should we assess the ethical and social impact of digital epidemiology, particularly given an increasing linking of health and security concerns within contemporary infectious disease management?
- What particular nuances of digital epidemiology emerge given contemporary health events of global concern, such as Ebola in West Africa or increasing worldwide antimicrobial resistance?

TERMS OF ACCEPTANCE

Upon selection, participants will be expected to confirm participation for all five days of the DELSI symposium. Full attendance is needed to ensure continuity throughout the symposium discussions and activities. Once accepted, participants are required to finalize their papers in accordance with the further programming of the symposium.

Papers presented and discussed during the symposium are expected to become the foundation for a publication or book.

CONTACT

For further thematic or organizational questions concerning the CfA and upcoming symposium, please email delisi2015@rki.de and someone from the coordinating team will respond to your message.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Tim Eckmanns, Department for Infectious Disease Epidemiology, RKI
Leon Hempel, Center for Technology and Society, TUB

This project is currently under review and will be made possible with funding from the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research.



DELSI:
Digital Epidemiology and its ethical, legal and social implications

2015 Symposium Application Form

Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone #: _____

Skype ID: _____

Institution: _____

Academic Position: _____; Department: _____

Research areas: _____

➤ PAST AND CURRENT PROJECTS (INCL. PUBLICATIONS AND COURSES) RELEVANT TO PROPOSED PAPER

➤ PLEASE ATTACH A SHORT CV