

ZeMKI-Forschungskolloquium

ZeMKI Research Seminar

Linzer Str. 4, Room 60.070, 28359 Bremen, DE

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Prof. Dr. Katrin Weller
(GESIS, Germany)

Towards Safe and Transparent Access to Online Platform Data – under the Digital Services Act and Beyond

Abstract:

This presentation examines the ongoing challenge of enabling researchers to access online platform data in a usable form, while safeguarding social media users and upholding high standards of data quality. The European Digital Services Act (DSA) grants researchers, for the first time, a legal right to access even non-public data from very large online platforms – provided specific conditions are met. These conditions concern not only the scope of research (systemic risks within the EU) and platform size, but also impose rigorous requirements for secure data processing. In this context, practical solutions for secure, reproducible, and transparent access remain urgently needed. Drawing on archival practices, trusted research environments, and community expertise, this talk explores possible approaches for governing researcher access to online platform data. These approaches not only fulfill the needs of the DSA, but also hold potential to reshape data sharing practices in online platform research more broadly.

Bio:

Prof. Dr. Katrin Weller is Scientific Director of the Department Data Services for the Social Sciences at GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences and Professor of Research Data Management at Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf, Germany. Katrin's interdisciplinary work bridges data archiving and computational social science – driven by a mission to enhance the accessibility and quality of research data. She collaborates internationally with researchers and infrastructure institutions, advancing best practices in data archiving and data sharing. Katrin's work focuses particularly on online platform data and other forms of digital behavioral data as emerging types of research data. She investigates the specific challenges these data sources pose for research data management and archiving, especially when dealing with sensitive content. Her research aims to develop innovative solutions to responsibly handle and preserve such complex data.