

AI and Dis/ability: Co-Constitution, Appropriation, and Design

Interdisciplinary Conference

12 – 13 November, 2025 | Helmut-Schmidt-University

**Location: Pop-up-Horst, Winterhuder Weg 112,
22085 Hamburg (www.pop-up-horst.de)**

AI-based assistance and support systems are increasingly changing the everyday lives of people with dis/abilities. Too often, however, these technologies are developed without meaningful involvement of those directly affected—risking the entrenchment of existing exclusion mechanisms and the transfer of social inequalities into digital spaces.

How can AI systems be designed to foster inclusion, participation, and genuine co-creation? What ethical and technical challenges arise when AI intervenes in sensitive areas of life such as communication, mobility, or body perception? And how can techno-ableist logics be questioned—and ultimately dismantled—through participatory design practices?

Against this backdrop, the conference AI and Dis/ability invites you to engage in an interdisciplinary dialogue on current developments in AI-supported assistance systems. Existing findings from research, technology, practice, and organized self-advocacy will be documented and discussed with a view to shaping ethically, politically, and legally responsible AI in inclusive contexts.

The conference will center on questions such as:

- How can inclusive development processes for AI assistance systems be designed and standardized?
- What risks arise from algorithmic bias, limited data diversity, or insufficient participation?
 - How can technological innovation be brought together with social justice, diversity, and ethical responsibility?
- In what ways do AI applications reproduce power relations, norms and body images – and how can these be critically examined?
- What roles do languages, comprehensibility, and translation (e.g. plain language) play at the interface of accessibility, autonomy, and digital participation?
- How can regulatory and technical frameworks be designed to enable genuine inclusion rather than create new barriers?

The conference brings together theoretical contributions from disability studies, media theory, ethics, computer science, and linguistics with practice-oriented insights into current projects—among them AI-based assistance systems, accessible digital interfaces, and participatory approaches to technology design.

Schedule

Wednesday, November 12th, 2025

08:45 am – 09:15 am *Registration*

09:15 am – 09:30 am *Welcome by the Organizers*

09:30 am – 10:45 am: Session 1 – Methods and Theoretical Concepts

Peter Biniok: “Soziotechnische Assistenzensembles und Digitale Dienstbarkeit. Ein Konzeptvorschlag” (Sociotechnical Ensembles of Assistance and Digital Servitude: A Conceptual Proposal)

Sigfried Saerberg: “Theoretischer Impuls zu grundlegenden Begriffen im Feld der Disability Studies” (Theoretical Impulse on Core Notions in the Field of Disability Studies)

Andreas Wagenknecht: “Is AI already history? Methodological approaches to a historical understanding of disability and AI”

Discussion

10:45 am – 11:00 am: *Coffee Break*

11:00 am – 12:00 am: Session 2 – Media Disability Studies

Katta Spiel: “Artificially Disabled – On the Ontological Limits of Inclusion in AI Governed Futures”

Katharina Klapheck: “How NOT to build an AI. Critical Queer Crip perspectives on commercial ‘assistive technology’”

Discussion

12:00 am – 01:30 pm: *Light Lunch and Networking*

01:30 pm – 02:30 pm: Session 3: Practical Approaches in AI-based Language Simplification & Incl. Design

Britt Jensen & Susanne Zornow: “Leichte Sprache & partizipative Projektarbeit mit Menschen mit Lernbehinderung” (German Easy-to-Read Language & Participatory Project Work with People with Learning Disabilities)

Silvana Deilen: “KI-gestützte Übersetzung in Leichte und Einfache Sprache” (AI-based Translation into German Easy-to-Read and Plain Language)

Discussion

02:30 pm – 03:30 pm: Session 4: - Inclusive Design and AI-based language simplification

Vivian Motti: Conversational Interfaces for All: Neuroinclusive AI applications

Beate Ochsner: “Smartes Hören und die Bedingungen von Teilhabe: KI im Spannungsfeld von Zugang und Kontrolle” (Smart Hearing and the Conditions of Participation: AI in the Tension Between Access and Control)

Discussion

03:30 pm – 04:00 pm: *Coffee Break*

04:00 pm – 05:00 pm: Session 5: Evaluating AI-based language simplification

Nils Freyer & Lars Klöser: “AI and Text-Simplification - Evaluation Beyond Mere Performance Metrics”

Margot Madina: “The Art (and Difficulty) of Measuring Simplicity”

Discussion

05:00 pm – 06:00 pm: Session 6: Media Disability Studies

Os Keyes: “Disability and Personhood under Neoliberal AI”

Mara Mills: “Blind AI Studies”

Discussion

06:00 - 06:30 pm *Conclusion*

Thursday, November 13th, 2025

09:00 am – 10:30 am: Session 7 – Emerging Perspectives, Research Highlights, and Dialogue

Max Tretter & Serena Bischoff: Crippling AI: “Warum, wie und wozu wir KI be_hindern sollten” (Crippling AI: Why, How, and for What Purpose We Should dis-/able AI)

Anna-Marie Rönsch: “Die algorithmische Ko-Konstitution von Dis/Ability: Eine medienarchäologische Untersuchung medizinischer Expertensysteme” (The Algorithmic Co-Constitution of Dis/Ability: A Media-Archaeological Inquiry into Medical Expert Systems)

Discussion

Max Tretter & David Obremski: “KI-gestützte Übersetzung zwischen Gebärdensprache und gesprochener Sprache: Potenziale, Kritik und ethische Perspektive” (AI-Supported Translation between Sign Language and Spoken Language: Potentials, Critique, and Ethical Perspectives)

Andreas Brenneis: „KI und Be_hinderung: Aspekte, Normordnungen, Designansätze“ (AI and Dis/Ability: Aspects, Normative Frameworks, and Design Approaches)

Discussion

10:30 am – 11:00 am: *Coffee Break*

11:00 am – 11:30 am: *Conclusion / Closing Remarks*

11:30 am: *Light Lunch / End of the Workshop*

Organisation Team:

 AI Ethics Research Hub	<i>AI Ethics Research Hub @ Helmut Schmidt University</i> Maximilian Waschka, M.A. Mareike Proske, M.A. Prof. Dr. Gerhard Schreiber
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<https://www.hsu-hh.de/opal/>



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