

Communication Lab for Exchange between Research and Media

ComLab#Live Welcome to the Future

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Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Festsaal, Luisenstraße 56, 10117 Berlin

Speakers and Moderators

The programme is financed by:





Prof. Robert Schlögl

President of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation

“Alexander von Humboldt, the humanist, was convinced that the knowledge of the world should serve the well-being of all people. This conviction is more relevant than ever. Not only in the event of a pandemic, but also in the fight against global warming and populism. We need informed citizens who make knowledge-driven decisions, not only at the ballot box, but in everyday life.”

Robert Schlögl studied chemistry and gained his doctorate in Munich, then worked as a postdoc in Cambridge and Basel before completing his habilitation in Berlin. In 1989, he became a professor at Goethe University Frankfurt. Five years later, he was appointed director of the Fritz Haber Institute in the Max Planck Society, Berlin, where he stayed until 2023.



Ralf Beste

Institution: Federal Foreign Office

Twitter: @rabe_diplo

Ralf Beste is the Director-General for Culture and Society at the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin, overlooking the areas of cultural and educational policy as well as strategic communication. From 2019 to February 2022 Ralf served as German Ambassador to the Republic of Austria. Other roles since joining the Federal Foreign Office in 2014 include the position as Director for Strategic Communication and Head of the Policy Planning Staff. Prior, Ralf worked as correspondent for different newspapers and magazines, among them Der Spiegel for 13 years.



Zulfikar Abbany

Institution: Deutsche Welle

Twitter: @zulfikarabbany

Zulfikar Abbany is a senior science editor and multimedia journalist at Germany's international broadcaster DW (Deutsche Welle). His main interests lie in research that touches people, like biological and mental health, but he also writes on less tangible topics like space exploration. He is a regular guest presenter at science conferences, such as Berlin's Falling Walls, and has chaired panels for DATA SPACE in Glasgow and Germany's DESY. From 2006 – 2011, Zulfikar was a producer and presenter at Radio Australia and Australia Network TV in Melbourne, and before that filed for New Scientist, The Independent, The Observer, The (Melbourne) age, Sydney Morning Herald, The Scotsman, ABC Radio National and WDR5. Zulfikar was born in London, educated there and in Cologne.



Prof. Faisal Abbas

Institution: National University of Sciences & Technology,
Pakistan

Twitter: @faisal.abbas26

Faisal Abbas is Associate Professor at the Department of Economics, NUST, Islamabad Pakistan. Faisal completed his PhD from the University of Bonn, Germany. Faisal was 'Experienced Researcher' at the Centre for Poverty, Equity and Growth at Göttingen University (2017-2019), Germany. He researched and worked with Cornell University (2015-2016), and as Carlo Schmidt Fellow at WHO, Geneva (2008). He holds prestigious Fulbright, Volkswagen Foundation, Carlo Schmidt, and Alexander von Humboldt fellowships. Faisal will spend 2023 at the Centre for Development Research (ZEF), Bonn University Germany as SDG fellow.



Prof. Felix Biessmann

Institution: Einstein Center Digital Future

Twitter: @felixbiessmann

Felix Biessmann obtained his BSc in Cognitive Science in 2005 (University of Osnabrück and ETH Zurich), a MSc in Neural and Behavioural Sciences in 2007 (International Max-Planck Research School, Tübingen), and a PhD in Machine Learning (ML) in 2011 from Max Planck Institute for Cybernetics, Tübingen, and TU Berlin. In 2013, he was appointed Assistant Professor for Machine Learning at Korea University, Seoul. From 2014 to September 2018, he has been working as machine learning scientist at Amazon Research, Berlin, on scalable ML methods for Data Quality and Search Experiences. Since 2018 he is tenured professor for Machine Learning at the Einstein Center Digital Future and Berlin University of Applied Sciences and Technology (Berliner Hochschule für Technik, BHT). His research focuses on Machine Learning methods and applications for reaching our sustainability goals, transparent ML and responsible usage of ML.



Prof. Felix Creutzig

Institution: Climate Change Center Berlin-Brandenburg

Twitter: @efesce

Felix Creutzig is Professor for Sustainability Economics of Human Settlements at the TU Berlin, and Group Leader at the Mercator Research Institute on Global Commons and Climate Change. He is speaker and scientific coordinator of the Einstein Center Climate Change and member of public district, municipal and national climate advisory boards. Previously, he had been visiting fellow at Princeton University, the University of California, Berkeley, and the China Energy Foundation in Beijing. He holds a PhD in computational neuroscience/machine learning. His groundbreaking research on climate change mitigation on urban scale has been recognized by the Piers Sellers Prize of the University of Leeds in 2017. Felix Creutzig coordinated a chapter on demand, services and social aspects in the recent assessment report on climate solutions by the intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.



Susanne Donner

Institution: freelance journalist

Susanne Donner studied chemistry at the University of Karlsruhe and worked for the Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in Dortmund. For many years she has been working as a science writer for different newspapers, magazines and online journals e.g. Spiegel Online, Der Tagesspiegel, Zeit Online, Bild der Wissenschaft, Focus etc. In 2021, her first book “Endlager Mensch” about the influence on pollutants on human health was published. She is part of the independent cooperative for science journalism “RiffReporter”. Susanne Donner is covering issues, such as the progress in reproductive medicine, cancer and gene therapies.



Alexandra Eul

Institution : freelance journalist

Twitter : @alex_eul_

Alexandra Eul is an independent journalist and presenter based in Cologne. She reports and talks about socio-political questions, specifically about women’s rights, social activism, psychology and the impact of technological developments on society. Since 2022, she is also an editor for the magazine of Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger. Before that, she has worked as a news editor at Deutschlandfunk Nachrichten and for EMMA. In 2018, she reported from India as one of the Robert Bosch Foundation’s “Media Ambassadors India-Germany”. During the Arthur F. Burns Fellowship in 2017, she was a visiting journalist to the Globe and Mail in Toronto. M.A. in Theatre, Film and Television, Psychology and Political Science from the University of Cologne, training as journalist at Hamburg Media School.



Judith Faßbender

Institution: Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society

Twitter: @jufassbender

Judith Faßbender is a doctoral researcher at the Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society. Within the framework of the research project Public Interest AI, funded by the Ministry of Education and Research, she is looking at Public Interest AI from a process-oriented perspective. She is doing her PhD at the University of St Andrews in the School of Computer Science on Design Patterns for participatory Data Governance and is currently a visiting lecturer at KISD for AI and Design. Previously, she worked in the cultural sector and at research institutions. She wrote her master thesis in collaboration with the Fraunhofer Center for Responsible Research and Innovation in Berlin where she critically examined the integration of civil society actors in deliberative forums on AI Ethics.



Prof. Tobias Krüger

Institution: IRI THESys / Humboldt University Berlin

Tobias Krüger is Director of the Integrated Research Institute on Transformations of Human-Environment Systems and Professor of Hydrology & Society at Humboldt-University's Geography Department. He holds a degree in Geoecology from the TU of Braunschweig and a PhD in Environmental Science from Lancaster University. After a postdoctoral period at the University of East Anglia, he joined Humboldt-Universität in 2013. In his research, Tobias combines natural science with critical social science, with a focus on the production of predictive knowledge through computer models. Current projects include 'Water security for whom? – social and material perspectives on inequality around multipurpose reservoirs in Colombia' and 'Climate and Water under Change' in the Berlin-Brandenburg region.



Dr Jane McGonigal

Institution: Institute for the Future

Jane McGonigal is a world-renowned designer of alternate reality games and a two-time New York Times bestselling author. She is best known as the inventor and co-founder of SuperBetter, a game that has helped more than a million players tackle real-life challenges such as depression, anxiety, chronic pain, and traumatic brain injury. She is the Director of Games Research & Development at the Institute for the Future. Her research focuses on how games are transforming the way we lead our real lives, and how they can be used to increase our resilience and well-being. She has a PhD from the University of California in Berkeley in performance studies, and has consulted and developed internal game workshops for more than a dozen Fortune 500 and Global 500 Companies. Before joining the IFTF, she taught game design and game theory at UC Berkeley and the San Francisco Art Institute.



Martina Merten

Institution: freelance journalist

Martina Merten works as a senior healthcare journalist, health consultant and lecturer in Berlin. She has been on assignments to more than 20 countries – with a focus on low- and middle income countries. For her work, she got fourfold awarded from the European Journalism Center/Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for global health reporting. She has been teaching global health sciences at the Charité University Medical Center and comparative healthcare systems and global health at the CIEE Global Institute Berlin, the Medical University Hannover (MHH) and the ARDEN University, Berlin. Martina Merten is a PhD candidate at Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin, in cooperation with the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute, the Alice Solomon Hochschule Berlin and the Yenepoya University in India, focusing her research on aging population and vulnerabilities of elderly widows in India.



Lebogang Mokoena

Institution: University of Potsdam

Lebogang Mokoena is an independent journalist and a researcher. As a German Chancellor Fellow hosted by Potsdam University, they are currently exploring how news media (both in South Africa and Germany) frame the representation of human beings in climate change images. During their Masters studies in Journalism at the University of Johannesburg, Lebogang explored the impact of funding business models on the quality of investigative journalism. Next to their research work, Lebogang writes on various topics like urban issues, including the design of four-room houses in Soweto. They have contributed to both South African and international publications. They are passionate about storytelling that document socio-economic challenges in Johannesburg with dignity, and by giving space to voices that ordinarily would not make it to mainstream media.



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Dr Jens Radü

Institution: Der Spiegel (Multimedia)

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Jens Radü, born in 1979, child of the Ruhr area. Studied journalism and political science in Dortmund and Kaunas/Lithuania, traineeship at Westdeutscher Rundfunk. Since 2006 at SPIEGEL, now as chief of staff and head of multimedia. Completed his doctorate on New Digital Storytelling in 2019. Jens is a jury member for the „Punkt“-Journalistenpreis and in the „StoryDay“-organization team. He is also a trainer and lecturer at ems/Potsdam and ifp/Munich, among others.



Dr Hannah Schickl

Institution: Berlin Institute of Health, The Gene Technology Report

Hannah Schickl is a research associate and coordinator of the Working Group “Gene Technology Report” at the Berlin Institute of Health (BIH) at Charité in Berlin. As an analytic philosopher, she conducts research on bioethical issues, especially with regard to stem cell research and other gene technologies, reproductive medicine, and animal ethics.



Carl Smith

Institution: Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)
Twitter: @CarlSmithAUS

Carl Smith is a science journalist at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). He is a multi-platform reporter with a degree in Genetics who now makes long-form radio documentaries and podcasts for ABC Radio National and ABC's Science Unit. This work often combines compelling personal narratives, the cutting edge of science, and rich sound design, and has won several of Australia's top journalism prizes. Carl Smith also creates multimedia-rich online features. His recent work explores xenotransplantation, alternative energy generation, apocalypses, bionic body parts, misinformation, boredom, and historical disease outbreaks. He also has an alter-ego as a children's presenter, co-hosting the ethics podcast for kids, Short & Curly. He's currently the 'Journalist in Residence' at the Heidelberg Institute for Theoretical Studies (HITS).



Leonie Sontheimer

Institution: Netzwerk Klimajournalismus

Twitter: @L_Sontheimer

Leonie Sontheimer is a freelance climate journalist based in Berlin. She works for different online media and public broadcasters. In 2021, she co-founded the German Network for Climate Journalism.



Prof. Simone Spuler

Institution: Max Delbrück Center

Simone Spuler is a professor of myology and heads both the Charité Outpatient Clinic for Muscle Disorder and the Muscle Research Unit at Charité and the Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine in the Helmholtz Association. She has more than 30 years of experience in clinical care for patients with muscle diseases. Her research group is doing pioneering work in the development of new technologies for muscle therapies including gene correction using CRISPR/Cas editing. Simone founded the first international graduate school in skeletal muscle, MyoGrad. She studied medicine in Würzburg, Germany, and completed internships at Harvard and Johns Hopkins Medical School. Simone is a member of several international advisory boards for the development of muscular dystrophy therapies.



Ulrike Winkelmann

Institution: taz

Twitter: @uwiworks

Ulrike Winkelmann has been one of two editors-in-chief of the national daily 'taz' since 2020. Previously, she worked for the national public radio broadcaster Deutschlandfunk in Cologne. After studying German literature, political science, and constitutional law in Hamburg and London, she was trained as a journalist by the 'taz hamburg' in 1995. In 1999, she joined the 'taz'-headquarter in Berlin first as news editor, later on as a reporter for social security, later as parliamentary correspondent, before taking over as head of the 'taz' domestic politics in 2011.

Hosts



Dr Stephanie Siewert

Institution: Alexander von Humboldt Foundation

Stephanie Siewert is the Programme Director of the Communication Lab and Team Lead of the Communications unit at the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. Before she joined the Foundation, she was a Research and Communication Officer at the German Ethics Council and a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Department of Ethics at the Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nuremberg (FAU). Prior to that, she worked at the University of Stuttgart and the Department of Media and Arts at University of Potsdam. She holds a PhD in Comparative Literature and has spent her academic career in Germany, the U.S. and France. Her passion is storytelling in all its forms.



Martina Johns

Institution: International Journalists' Programmes

Martina Johns is a freelance author and managing director of IJP's Asia and Science department, which she set up in the mid-nineties. She had been a news journalist and media manager for almost 20 years at the two German public service broadcasting stations. Her specialization in Far Eastern Studies brought her to Beijing and Tokyo as ARD TV correspondent. She has written a book on the prospects of the Chinese Economy (1995) and contributed to several book publications about the transition and future of Hong Kong. For many years she was consultant to the German Foreign Office on media affairs in Asia.



Nicole Reuter

Institution: International Journalists' Programmes

Nicole Reuter has been working at the IJP office in Berlin since 2018. Before joining IJP, she worked for different organizations in the field of international development and cooperation in Germany and Asia. Nicole has a BA in Cultural Studies, Journalism and Business Administration from the University of Dortmund (Germany) as well as a MA in International Studies and Communications from the University of Aalborg in Denmark.



Sebastian Plate

Institution: Ellery Studio

Sebastian Plate works as a researcher in the Foresight and Participation department at Ellery Studio in Berlin, where he engages in a variety of projects involving participatory formats and futures thinking. At Ellery Studio, he specialises in designing workshops, conducting research, and consulting. Sebastian holds a master's degree in International Relations, specialising in Geopolitics, from the University of Groningen (NL). He has worked for the Arctic Office of the Alfred-Wegener Institute collaborating with Arctic Indigenous Peoples organisations. As a Futures Literacy practitioner, he has gained experience at the UNESCO Chair of the Hanze University Groningen and worked alongside its affiliated partners in the design and innovation of Futures Literacy Laboratories. With his background, he aims to explore the junction between anticipatory systems and policymaking.



Dominik Kramer

Institution: Ellery Studio

Dominik Kramer is a cultural and social scientist and a new member of the Elleries. In his studies, he recognizes culture as the complex intersection of matter and symbolism, language and rituals, human and non-human bodies, performative acts and artifacts. The question that preoccupies him the most is how society and nature interact, society changing nature and nature changing society. That is why he wrote his thesis about the different narratives surrounding the Anthropocene and what the material impacts of these intersubjective narratives are. But he does not only want to analyze narratives. In his many years of working at the student radio station, he learned the journalist's craft and low-threshold science communication.