

Data Donation for Communication Research

Pre-Conference at the European Communication Conference

ECC 2026, Brno 7-8 September 2026

Data Donation for Communication Research

The collection of data donations to access digital trace data for academic research has quickly gained importance in communication research. Hereby, users of digital platforms and services such as Google, Instagram, TikTok, Spotify, or ChatGPT are asked to download their personal data and donate these data to a research project. This makes a wide range of data accessible for researchers and offers great opportunities for communication research. For researchers who are not yet familiar with data donation or would like to learn more about specific tools to conduct data donation projects, the ECC26-pre-conference offers an introductory workshop to data donation for communication researchers. Furthermore, the pre-conference provides a platform for all data donation researchers to present their empirical insights and to address challenges they are facing when applying this method. Participation is free of charge and the two half-day events can be booked independent of each other.

Workshop: Introduction to Data Donation for Communication Research

The workshop on Data Donation for Communication Research will provide 1) an introduction to this new approach, 2) an introduction to and demonstration of the Data Donation Module—an open-source web application for data donation projects, and 3) guidance for designing your own data donation project. By the end of the workshop, you will understand the advantages and limitations of collecting data donations for research and gain practical knowledge of how a data donation collection can be implemented in your own research projects.

Workshop Structure and Agenda

- 1. Introduction to data donation:** We will provide a brief overview of what data donation is, why it is a promising new approach for communication research, and what key considerations are needed when designing a data donation project.
- 2. Introduction to the Data Donation Module:** We will present the Data Donation Module, an open-source web application that can be used to conduct data donation projects across all digital (media) platforms and other digital traces. This section includes a walkthrough of setting up a project, including crucial design decisions, recruitment of participants, monitoring of a project, and data analysis.
- 3. Best Practices:** We provide insights into various data donation projects and outline the most important dos and don'ts—from ethical approval to publishing your results.

Organizational information

Date:	7 September afternoon (time to be specified)
Location:	Faculty of Arts, Arna Nováka 1, 602 00 Brno (room to be specified)
Organizers:	Prof. Dr. Thomas Friemel, Sina Horner & Dr. Nico Pfiffner, Data Donation Lab (University of Zurich)
Registration:	Information for registration will be provided soon. Register for the Newsletter of the Data Donation Lab to receive updates on this workshop.
Fees:	Participation is free of charge

Presentations: Applications of Data Donation in Communication Research

In recent years many communication researchers have started to use data donation in their research projects. This ranges from qualitative studies and in-depth interviews with participants about their digital traces to large scale data collection and quantitative analysis with computation methods. Furthermore, researchers are working on methodological issues, theoretical reflections, legal regulations, and public awareness of this new research approach. The pre-conference provides a platform for all interested researchers to discuss latest findings and future directions. We welcome classic conference presentations but are also open for suggestions of other (exchange) formats (e.g., fishbowl, world café, roundtables).

Proposals for presentations and exchange formats should be submitted as extended abstracts, consisting of a maximum of 1,000 words (excluding tables, figures, and references) and be written in English. Submission deadline is **31 March 2026**. The organising committee will evaluate all received proposals regarding their thematic fit to the symposium as well as the quality and clarity of the presented method and argumentation. If necessary external reviews will be consulted.

Important dates

Submission deadline:	31 March 2026
Acceptance notification:	30 April 2026
Registration opens:	1 Mai 2026
Participation confirmation:	31 Mai 2026 (deadline for presenters to confirm their participation)
Registration deadline:	15 August 2026

Organizational information

Date:	8 September morning (time to be specified)
Location:	Faculty of Arts, Arna Nováka 1, 602 00 Brno (room to be specified)
Organizers:	Prof. Dr. Thomas Friemel, Sina Horner & Dr. Nico Pfiffner, Data Donation Lab (University of Zurich)
Committee:	Dr. Ernesto de Leon, University of Amsterdam Prof. Dr. Thomas Friemel, University of Zurich Prof. Dr. Valerie Hase, University of Klagenfurt Sina Horner, University of Zurich Dr. Nico Pfiffner, University of Zurich Elisabeth Schmidbauer, LMU Munich
Registration:	Information for registration will be provided soon. Register for the Newsletter of the Data Donation Lab to receive updates on this part of the pre-conference.
Fees:	Participation is free of charge