

## **Bots Building Bridges (3B): Theoretical, Empirical, and Technological Foundations for Systems that Monitor and Support Political Deliberation Online**

Initiative: Künstliche Intelligenz – Ihre Auswirkungen auf die Gesellschaft von morgen

Ausschreibung: Künstliche Intelligenz – Ihre Auswirkungen auf die Gesellschaft von morgen - Full Grant (nur nach Aufforderung)

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Online social networks have become an integral part of the public sphere, but they are also criticized for contributing to the crisis in Western democracies by facilitating the emergence of echo chambers, amplifying conflicts, and enabling manipulations of public opinion via social bots. This state of affairs is the result of a complex interplay of technical systems, human actors, and partisan agendas that cannot be understood by one discipline alone. Interdisciplinary understanding of these phenomena needs to be based on theoretical expertise in computer science and the social sciences, empirical analysis and psychological experiments, plus a dialogue with civil society stakeholders. The focus of the project is on three levels of analysis of political communication online: the detection of social bots and their strategies to manipulate communication (actor level); conflictual discussions among users (interaction level); and the emergence of echo chambers (structural level). Based on a deeper understanding of the issues at each level, the 3B project will develop tools and methods that monitor and support political deliberation online. Our tools and methods will (1) discover manipulative social bots, (2) monitor the quality and diversity of political discussions, and (3) build bridges between digital communities in order to contribute to the diversification of opinions in echo chambers.

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