



Newsletter 2026_02 (February)

Dear readers,
dear colleagues,

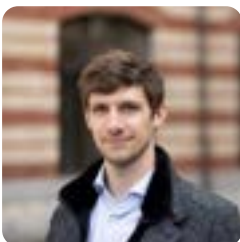
over the past months, this newsletter has become an established channel for internal communication at RC Trust. With this issue, we continue to open it to a broader audience - to everyone interested in our research, chairs, people, and activities.

Alongside our website and social media channels, this newsletter provides a concise overview of selected highlights from the Center - from research results and awards to new team members, events, and funding opportunities.

We hope you enjoy discovering what is currently happening at RC Trust.

From the Center

Highlights, recognition, and strategic developments.



International Recognition for Peer-Review Excellence

Prof. Alexander Marx received the **AAAI Outstanding Program Committee Award 2026**. Out of more than 26,000 reviewers worldwide, only 42 researchers were recognized for exceptional contributions to scientific quality and fairness in peer review.

[Read more](#)

Open Positions at RC Trust

Professorship

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7426957866135097344>

2 Postdoctoral Researchers

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7427286780040773632>

PhD Position

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7429143731540295680>

If you know excellent candidates, feel free to share.

People & Team News

Welcoming new colleagues and strengthening our research groups.



Inclusive AI Engineered for Impact

Nancy Bou Kamel has joined the Chair of Inclusive Technology and Collective Engagement led by Prof. Giulia Barbareschi. With her background in data science and machine learning engineering, she strengthens the lab's technical AI expertise.

[Read more](#)



Welcome to the Team: Claudia Gerrits van den Ende

Claudia Gerrits van den Ende joins the Inclusive Technology and Collective Engagement group as office manager and project coordinator. With experience in project coordination and MINT education, she supports the team's organizational backbone.



Expanding Human-Centered AI Research

Soumik Bhattacharjee has joined the Human-AI Interaction group led by Prof. Sven Mayer as a research assistant, strengthening the interdisciplinary profile of the group.

[Read more](#)

New Team Members in the Human-AI Interaction Group

As of 1 March 2026, Aria Kalforian and Fiona Lau joined as PhD researchers, and Jonathan Liebers as a Postdoctoral Researcher in Sven Mayer's group.

Research & Publications

New results, conference contributions, and academic output.

IASEAI 2026 – Paris

The group of Prof. Bilal Zafar presented two papers at IASEAI 2026:

– *Rote Learning Considered Useful: Generalizing over Memorized Data in LLMs*

– *The Algorithmic Self-Portrait: Deconstructing Memory in ChatGPT*

Both in collaboration with MPI-SWS.

AI Certification, Trust, and Language Framing

Certified AI System = Trustworthy?

Sarah Gaballah (RUB), Nur Efsan Cetinkaya (UDE), Magdalena Wischnewski (TUD), and Angela Sasse (RUB) examine how experts and lay users perceive AI certification and what they expect from trustworthy AI labels. The study explores whether certification alone is sufficient to build justified trust.

Certified But Imperfect

Magdalena Wischnewski (TUD), Alisa Scharmann (UDE), Annika Ridder (UDE), and Nicole Krämer (UDE) investigate how AI certifications interact with system performance in shaping trust and reliance on AI systems. The findings highlight how formal certification and actual system quality jointly influence user judgments.

Does How We Talk About LLMs Matter?

In an extended abstract, Magdalena Wischnewski (TUD) and Dennis Nguyen (Utrecht University) analyze how mentalistic versus mechanistic language affects user perceptions of large language models. The poster contribution was funded by the Young Academy.

<https://graduierenzentrum.tu-dortmund.de/en/postdocs/young-academy/>

Multivariate Contrast Testing

In *Journal of Multivariate Analysis*, Marlène Baumeister, Konstantin Emil Thiel, Lynn Matits, Georg Zimmermann, Markus Pauly, and Paavo Sattler propose an extended multiple contrast testing approach within a semiparametric MANCOVA framework.

AI for and on Hardware

At the International Conference on Microelectronics, Hassan Nassar and colleagues – including Markus Pauly – explored cross-layer AI approaches for

hardware security and system efficiency.

Tree Cover Dynamics Over 20,000 Years

Nils Weitzel and collaborators published a new preprint comparing pollen-based reconstructions and Earth system model simulations to better understand long-term forest dynamics.

<https://doi.org/10.5194/egusphere-2025-6393>

Talks, Outreach & Public Engagement

Research in dialogue with society and institutions.



Computer Science Day 2026 at RUB

At the Faculty of Computer Science, Prof. Rebekah Overdorf delivered her inaugural lecture on detecting and analyzing harmful activities on online platforms.

[Read more](#)



Statistics Comes Alive on Campus

More than 300 students explore the world of data and probability at TU Dortmund.

On 10 February 2026, more than 300 students visited TU Dortmund University for the annual *Dortmunder Tag der Statistik*. Organized by the Faculty of Statistics – the only independent faculty of its kind in the German-speaking world – the event once again demonstrated how accessible, relevant, and engaging statistical thinking can be. Through talks, interactive formats, and direct exchange with researchers, students gained insight into how data-driven methods shape science and society.

[Read more](#)



When AI Blurs the Line

In a recent WDR interview, Dr. Bianca Nowak explained why AI-generated misinformation spreads rapidly and why it matters for society.

Read more



Safer Internet Day 2026

More than 50,000 students participated in the nationwide klicksafe session on AI and relationships. RC Trust member Paula Ebner contributed to this important public discussion.

Read more



Strengthening Societal Resilience

At a workshop hosted by the Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (BBK), Dr. Oksana Huss discussed resilience in times of crisis based on empirical research on Ukrainian local governments.

Read more



Anti-Corruption Symposium in Doha

Nils Köbis, Oksana Huss, and Carolina Gerli participated in the 5th Anti-Corruption Academic Symposium on AI in anti-corruption contexts.

Shonan Seminar in Japan

In March 2026, Prof. Daniel Neider is participating in a Shonan Seminar in Japan, an internationally recognized format that brings together leading researchers to explore emerging questions in computer science. The seminar provides an intensive setting for collaboration and the development of new research directions in formal methods and theoretical foundations of computing.

<https://shonan.nii.ac.jp/seminars/235/>

AI Colloquium

Research in dialogue with society, policy, and practice.



Visit Prof. Edward A. Lee

On 5 March 2026, Edward A. Lee will present *Is Information Digital? A Defense of Reality*, exploring fundamental questions about digital representation, embodied interaction, and learning in cyber-physical systems.

Read more



Many Thanks to Prof. Allan Tucker

We thank Allan Tucker (Brunel University London) for his insightful talk on synthetic health data generation and the responsible use of generative models.

Video highlight

Funding & Calls

MERCUR 2026

The MERCUR program supports collaborative research projects across at least two UA Ruhr universities, with funding up to €300,000. Project sketches can be submitted until 23 March 2026.

<https://www.uaruhr.de/forschung/forschungsunterstuetzung/mercur-projektfoerderung/>

Forum Junge Spitzenforschung 2026

Call for applications via TU Innovation.

<https://tu-innovation.de/>

Digitalwoche Bochum 2026

The city of Bochum invites organizations to contribute to the Digitalwoche (22–26 June 2026). Contributions can focus on digital security or other digital topics.

<https://www.bochum-smartcity.de/event/digitaltag-2026-in-bochum/>

DoDaS Young Researchers Colloquium

Registration open until 31 March 2026 for the new regular colloquium format starting in summer semester 2026.

<https://dodas.tu-dortmund.de/aktuelles/details/dodas-young-researchers-colloquium-47003/>

Community Notes

Events and initiatives from our extended network.

RC OHR Seminar Series

Interdisciplinary perspectives on One Health in a monthly digital format.

The RC OHR Seminar Series takes place monthly on the first Wednesday (16:00–17:00, via Zoom) and brings together researchers working on One Health topics. Current thematic focuses include water research, oncology, and neuroscience, with plans to increasingly open the series to external speakers. The format offers an accessible platform for interdisciplinary exchange across institutions and disciplines.

Zoom link:

[https://uni-due.zoom-x.de/j/66460181534?
pwd=gxqPi316LrKohbgZnoynlPG1eS75pX.1](https://uni-due.zoom-x.de/j/66460181534?pwd=gxqPi316LrKohbgZnoynlPG1eS75pX.1)

Gambrinus Fellowship Lecture

On 10 March 2026, Prof. Bruno Sudret (ETH Zurich) will speak at TU Dortmund on uncertainty quantification and reliability engineering.

<https://international.tu-dortmund.de/nachrichtendetail/gambrinus-fellowship-gastvortrag-von-prof-bruno-sudret-eth-zuerich-60799/>

LiDO4 Inauguration

On 17 March 2026, TU Dortmund will inaugurate the new high-performance computer LiDO4.

<https://dodas.tu-dortmund.de/aktuelles/details/lido4-einweihung-save-the-date-59144/>

Workshops & Upcoming Events

Opportunities to connect research, practice, and society.



AI Workshop: Trustworthy AI at Work

Register now for the AI Workshop on 17 March 2026, connecting research and practice around trustworthy AI in the workplace.

[Read more](#)



HARRIS 2026 - Hardware Security Workshop

HARRIS 2026 will take place on 24 - 25 March 2026, with optional tutorials on 23 March. The workshop is co-organized by Steffen Becker.

[Read more](#)

