



RESEARCH CENTER
**TRUSTWORTHY DATA SCIENCE
AND SECURITY**

RC Trust Newsletter – March 2026

Dear readers,
dear colleagues,

CHI 2026 is already casting its shadow ahead. But March also brought many other important developments across RC Trust – from awards and new publications to international research exchange, new team members, and public engagement. This newsletter offers a concise overview of recent highlights and upcoming activities across the Center.

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

Awards & Recognition

Notable distinctions and recognition for RC Trust research and science communication.



Best Paper Award for Anna Neumann and colleagues at CHI 2026

RC Trust PhD researcher Anna Neumann has received a Best Paper Award at CHI 2026 for her paper together with Yulu Pi and Jat Singh on user perspectives on system prompts in generative AI. The study highlights a strong demand for greater transparency and control in how AI systems shape user interactions.

[Read more](#)



Honorable Mention for Giulia Barbareschi et al. at HRI 2026

Giulia Barbareschi received an **Honorable Mention Award** at ACM/IEEE HRI 2026 for the paper *The RUSH Checklist*. The work advances reporting standards in human-robot interaction.

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Award for Research Communication on AI Election Tools

A TU Dortmund press release on AI-based election advice tools received **second place in the idw Prize for Science Communication**, highlighting the importance of accessible, responsible research communication.

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People & Team News

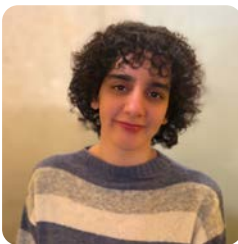
New colleagues, new roles, and growing research capacity across the Center.



Jonathan Liebers joins Human-AI Interaction

Jonathan Liebers joined Sven Mayer's group as a postdoctoral researcher, strengthening research on agentic AI and intelligent interaction.

[Read more](#)



Aria Kalforian joins the Human-AI Interaction group

Aria Kalforian has joined as a PhD researcher, focusing on how AI systems shape human behavior and social dynamics.

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Upcoming: Jacob Grytzka strengthens Environmetrics

From April 2026, Jacob Grytzka joins Nils Weitzel's group, contributing to interpretable climate modeling and statistical analysis.

[Read more](#)



Internship Program: Alexis Mercier des Rochettes

Daniel Neider's group will welcome Alexis Mercier des Rochettes (CNRS / ENS Paris-Saclay), working on LLM verification and program analysis.

Research & Publications

New research results, conference papers, and international visibility for RC Trust.



When AI joins a team, team dynamics change

A new study co-authored by Greta Ontrup shows that AI affects cohesion and identification in teams, while psychological safety remains stable.

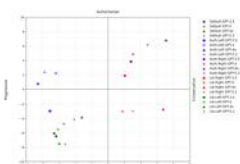
[Read more](#)



Who gets heard online?

Rachel Griffin et al. examines inequalities in civil society participation under the Digital Services Act and their impact on digital governance.

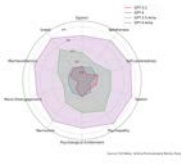
[Read more](#)



Tracking bias in large language models over time

Meltem Aksoy and Markus Pauly present a framework to monitor how political bias evolves across model versions.

[Read more](#)



Do large language models have a “dark personality”?

A recent study explores whether LLMs reflect personality traits and conspiracy beliefs under different conditions.

[Read more](#)

Ivan Habernal on privacy risks in PII removal research

A new *Computational Linguistics* paper critically examines how evaluation setups may overestimate privacy risks due to data leakage.

[Read more](#)

Permutation tests for survival analysis

Markus Pauly and co-authors introduce new statistical methods for survival tree construction.

[Read more](#)

CHI & Pre-CHI

CHI 2026 is approaching – and RC Trust research is already visible in the community.



German Pre-CHI 2026 at LMU Munich

Sven Mayer’s group joined the HCI community ahead of CHI 2026 to present and refine research contributions.

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Also represented: Leon Hannig

Leon Hannig presented research on university vs. commercial AI systems in educational contexts.

[Read more](#)

Looking ahead to CHI 2026 in Barcelona

CHI 2026 will take place from 13–17 April in Barcelona, with the Human-AI Interaction group represented on site. Anna Neumann will present her Best Paper Award-winning work on system prompts in generative AI, while Leon

Hannig will also travel to Barcelona to present a paper developed together with several RC Trust researchers on how students and employees perceive university-based and commercial AI systems.

[Read more](#)

International Research Exchange



Daniel Neider at Shonan Meeting (Japan)

Daniel Neider joined an international seminar on verifying AI-driven cyber-physical systems.

[Read more](#)



Giulia Barbareschi joins global augmentation network

RC Trust contributes to an international initiative on inclusive human augmentation technologies.

[Read more](#)

Algorithmic management in focus at European Commission workshop

Bilal Zafar contributed to a European Commission workshop on the short- and long-term technological developments of algorithmic management. The discussion focused on how such systems are designed, how their components interact, which data and models they rely on, and how they are expected to evolve-highlighting key challenges for transparency, governance, and trustworthy AI in real-world applications.

Talks, Outreach & Public Engagement



AI and emotional relationships

Jessica Szczuka discussed human-AI intimacy at the SZ Digitalgipfel in Munich.

[Read more](#)



AI in consumer protection

Nicole Krämer contributed to a policy dialogue at the NRW ministry on AI and chatbot regulation.

[Read more](#)



AI in the workplace

Nicole Krämer and Sven Mayer contributed to the AI workshop at DASA, focusing on trust and human-AI collaboration.

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HARRIS 2026 in Bochum

The hardware security workshop gathered an international community and highlighted Steffen Becker's role.

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Academic Community & Exchange



Internal Doctoral Colloquium 2026 (KIT)

Doctoral researchers from Sven Mayer's group exchanged ideas and received feedback within the German HCI community.

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Interdisciplinary College 2026

Sven Mayer taught Intelligent User Interfaces in a highly interdisciplinary research environment.

[Read more](#)



AI & Law Seminar: Access to justice in the age of LLMs

As part of the AI & Law Seminar Series, Assistant Professor Hannes Westermann (Maastricht University) presented his work on how large language models can support access to justice. The talk brought together

perspectives from law and computer science, highlighting both the potential and the limitations of AI in legally sensitive contexts.

[Read more](#)

Bot detection in the age of LLMs

Raluca Rilla (Max Planck Institute for Human Development) joined the HUAM group for a talk on detecting automated responses in online research. Her work highlights how large language models can subtly distort survey data - and why robust, multi-layered detection methods are essential to ensure valid scientific results.

[Read more](#)

From cognitive biases to fairness in decision-making

Marco Saponara (ULB Brussels) visited the HUAM group in Duisburg to discuss how cognitive biases and prosocial behavior shape decision-making in uncertain social interactions. Combining modelling and experimental insights, his talk offered valuable perspectives for understanding cooperation - and its implications for agentic AI systems.

[Read more](#)

Ludger Pries visits the AI & Society group

A talk and discussion added sociological perspectives to current AI research.

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Further Conference News



Two papers accepted at “Agents in the Wild” – ICLR 2026

Bilal Zafar and his group (Artificial Intelligence and Society) had two papers accepted at the *Agents in the Wild* workshop at ICLR 2026. The work explores how generative AI systems interact with real-world environments - from web search behavior to memory representation in language models.

Characterizing Web Search in The Age of Generative AI:

<https://arxiv.org/pdf/2510.11560>

[Read more](#)

Calls & Community Notes



DoDaS Young Researchers Colloquium

Registration is open until **10 April 2026** for the new DoDaS Young Researchers Colloquium.

[Read more](#)

Looking Ahead



New DFG-funded project on AI and digital forensics

Rebekah Overdorf and Frank Breiting will start a four-year research project on AI in digital forensics in April 2026.

[Read more](#)

Thank you for reading. We hope you enjoy exploring these highlights from RC Trust.

