Press Release

Research Alliance: Focusing on Digital Transformation

ForDigital: The Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) and the University of Mannheim investigate and shape digitalization – Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts funds research with € 900,000 over the course of three years.

Industry 4.0, cloud computing and social media all reveal that information and communication technologies are developing with tremendous speed. How all this affects the economy, society and the individual is the subject matter of the research alliance “Digitalization: Transformation of socio-economic processes”, ForDigital in short, of the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) and the University of Mannheim. Their aim is to better understand the mechanisms of digital transformation, and design innovative information and communication technology solutions. The initiative sponsored by the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts of the state of Baden-Wuerttemberg connects researchers of both institutions and other parties. ForDigital officially starts with a kick-off event on July 5, 2016.

“Digitalization offers diverse new opportunities for economy and society, for our professional life and our private sphere. In order to reach its full potential, digitalization has to be researched and designed from different perspectives. With ForDigital, the alliance members connect social, economic and technological research questions in an ideal way”, says Professor Oliver Kraft, Vice President for Research at KIT. Professor Dr. Rosemarie Tracy, Vice President for Research, Equal Opportunities and Young Researchers explains: “The joint research is expected to enhance the competence areas of both institutions, support young researchers and result in high-quality publications.”

The research alliance examines both risks and opportunities: “An unlimited offer of real-time information and increasing flexibility through modern information and communication technologies are among the largest advantages of digitalization. At the same time, we must recognize challenges and possible dangers,” says Business Informatics Professor Alexander Mädche, speaker of the alliance from KIT. Professor Armin Heinzl, the speaker from Mannheim, adds: “With the alliance, we would like to facilitate the transition from analog to digital for companies and society without disregarding fundamental phenomena such as privacy, data security and techno stress.” Further speakers of the alliance are Professor Christof Weinhardt of KIT and Professor Florian Stahl of the University of Mannheim.

A central issue of ForDigital is the digital transformation of the economy. It concerns digital infrastructures, the digitalization of business procedures, products and services. Other main...
research interests are the individual and society, for instance with regard to the potentials for and changes to health and well-being, the generation of positive user experience, legal aspects as well as economic and social impacts.

With the scientific exchange, ForDigital wants to lay the foundation for a long-term cooperation and an efficient research focus in the region. The aim of the research alliance is also to acquire external funds across locations. Associated partners of the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) and the University of Mannheim are the Centre for European Economic Research (ZEW), the Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences (GESIS), the Central Institute of Mental Health (ZI), the FIZ Karlsruhe – Leibniz Institute for Information Infrastructure, the Research Center for Information Technology (FZI) and the Fraunhofer Institute of Optronics, System Technologies (IOSB).

ForDigital is an open research network. In addition to the researchers included in the application, it is possible for all scientists from KIT and the University of Mannheim as well as the associated research institutions to hand-in cooperation recommendations.

The MWK supports ForDigital with € 300,000 per year over a course of three years. The partners contribute € 200,000 annually and bring in infrastructure.

Further Information on ForDigital: http://www.fordigital.org

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