

Digital Responsibility and Responsible AI in Marketing

Lara Lobschat

Maastricht University

Matilda Dorotic

BI Norwegian Business School

Dipayan Biswas

University of South Florida

MICHAEL HAENLEIN

ESCP Business School/University of Liverpool Management School

MING-HUI HUANG

National Taiwan University

Kelly Martin

Colorado State University, USA

ANA VALENZUELA

ESADE

Jochen Wirtz

NUS Business School/National University of Singapore

Klaus Wertenbroch

INSEAD

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Special Session: Digital Responsibility and Responsible AI in Marketing

Session Chair and Co-chair: Matilda Dorotic (BI Norwegian Business School) and Lara Lobschat (Maastricht University)

Abstract of the session

This workshop introduces an innovative and interactive format designed to advance research on digital responsibility and responsible AI in marketing. Bringing together senior scholars, thought leaders, and junior researchers from the EMAC community, the session fosters collaborative exploration of emerging challenges related to digital responsibility, privacy, autonomy, human-AI alignment, transparency, and the societal implications of intelligent systems and transformative firms' practices. The workshop begins with short impulse presentations by respected scholars that outline underexplored opportunities and research gaps. These inputs serve as catalysts for a speed-dating style exchange in which participants pitch research ideas, receive focused feedback, and engage in rapid, rotating dialogues with experts and peers. Alternatively, if a larger group of participants joins the session, we can form focus group discussions. By the end of the session, attendees will have identified promising research avenues, reflected on shared insights, and contributed to shaping a future research agenda on responsible AI and digital responsibility in marketing. The workshop will serve as a foundation for a collaborative, agenda-setting publication involving presenters and active participants.

Invited participants who will provide short trigger presentations on research gaps and needs include (in alphabetical order):

- ❖ **Dipayan (Dip) Biswas** - University of South Florida
- ❖ **Michael Haenlein** - ESCP Business School, Paris
- ❖ **Ming-Hui Huang** - National Taiwan University
- ❖ **Kelly Martin** - Colorado State University
- ❖ **Ana Martinez Valenzuela**, ESADE Business School
- ❖ **Jochen Wirtz**, National University of Singapore
- ❖ **Klaus Wertenbroch**, INSEAD

We hereby confirm that all participants listed above have agreed to register for the conference, share their impulse ideas in a brief 2–3 minute contribution, and participate in the workshop should the proposal be accepted.

Note: This session will be loosely linked to the Special Interest Group in Digital Marketing event, which will feature three prominent scholars discussing research on digital responsibility and will provide an opportunity to promote the special session.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE SESSION

Workshop Proposal: Digital Responsibility and Responsible AI in Marketing

This proposal introduces an innovative workshop format designed to foster joint exploration of research opportunities at the intersection of responsible business, digital responsibility, and AI. The session aims to stimulate collaboration between senior researchers, invited thought leaders, and European junior scholars, encouraging both the development of a shared research agenda and the professional growth of emerging scholars.

Firms are innovating rapidly and using unprecedented amounts of data in marketing. As digital technologies and AI systems become embedded in practice, concerns about individual and societal wellbeing have intensified. Public debate and evolving regulation highlight risks to consumer decision making, critical thinking, and openness to epistemic diversity. These challenges stem not only from AI system design and the rules governing algorithmic agents, but also from the ways digital data are captured, interpreted, and repurposed—shaped by sociotechnical choices that increasingly blur boundaries between facts and constructed realities.

Digital responsibility and human-AI alignment represent key frontiers for technical and social science research. Ensuring that AI systems and firm policies align with human wellbeing, values, and intentions is especially important in human–AI interaction domains, where misalignment can cause harm. Recent evidence shows, for example, that human–AI combinations in high-risk medical decisions may perform worse than either the best human or AI alone (Vaccaro et al., 2025), underscoring the need to understand when AI should augment or replace human judgment.

At the same time, firms’ digital responsibility has expanded beyond traditional CSR. Corporate Digital Responsibility (CDR)—now a recognized organizational duty —requires firms to proactively manage the ethical, societal, and environmental consequences of digital practices. This includes responsible handling of user-generated data (UGD), which is increasingly gathered not only through deliberate user actions but also passively and without explicit awareness. These developments underscore the need for marketing research that examines not only how firms comply with regulation, but how regulation interacts with technology design, data practices, and stakeholder rights to shape consumer wellbeing. They also resonate with calls from the digital responsibility literature for new forms of distributed accountability across ecosystem actors.

The emergence of AI-driven services raises further challenges related to human autonomy, safety, and the protection of vulnerable populations. Firms must design, deploy, and monitor technologies in ways that anticipate risks and mitigate harmful outcomes. Meeting these demands requires new forms of responsible business practice and invites marketing researchers to address an evolving responsibility landscape. Novel empirical evidence, together with rapid technological shifts, highlights the need for innovative research that can guide firms as well as public policy makers.

Suggested Topics for Discussion (not limited to):

- Privacy, data governance, and risks of digital exclusion
- Challenges for Human Wellbeing in an AI-Driven World
- Safeguards for human autonomy in human–AI interactions
- Transparency, harm communication, and accountability in the use of data and AI
- Societal impact of service robots and autonomous agents
- Responsible AI policies, governance, and alignment challenges
- Vulnerabilities of minority and majority consumer groups
- Agentic network communication and emerging market structures
- Ethical challenges in generative AI for marketing
- Novel regulatory models and their implications for business practice
- Bridging the principles to practice gap in (corporate) digital responsibility
- Accountability and responsibility across core and peripheral ecosystems

Format

We propose an innovative and highly interactive workshop format that blends thought leadership with collaborative ideation. The session begins with short impulse presentations delivered by invited experts, who will outline key issues and emerging research frontiers in digital responsibility and responsible AI. These presentations serve as catalysts for reflection and idea generation.

Following this initial framing, participants engage in a “speed-dating” style format in which individual researchers—junior scholars in particular—can pitch their research ideas

directly to senior researchers and thought leaders. The audience will be mixed to encourage diverse exchanges, allowing multiple rounds of brief one-on-one or small-group discussions. If interest exceeds the capacity of the speed-dating structure, the session will transition to focus groups organized around thematic areas. In all cases, interaction and collaborative exploration remain central.

At the end of the session, participants will be invited to share what they learned, what new ideas emerged, and which future research avenues they believe are most promising. The long-term goal of the workshop is to identify collective insights that will feed into a co-authored paper proposing a new research agenda for digital responsibility in the age of AI. Speakers and active contributors will be invited to join this scholarly effort, helping to advance research that guides responsible business practice in digitally mediated markets.

Expected Learning Points and Outcomes

Participants in this workshop will:

- Gain a deeper understanding of emerging challenges in digital responsibility, including privacy, alignment, transparency, and autonomy in AI-mediated markets.
- Learn how AI design choices and regulatory developments shape consumer wellbeing, market structures, and firm accountability.
- Develop the ability to frame responsible AI challenges as researchable marketing problems that connect theory, empirical evidence, and societal impact.
- Identify new interdisciplinary research opportunities by engaging directly with thought leaders and peers from different European institutions.
- Strengthen their capacity to communicate early-stage research ideas and receive structured, actionable feedback.
- Explore how responsible AI governance, ethical design principles, and societal concerns can be integrated into marketing scholarship.
- Contribute to the formation of a collective research agenda on digital responsibility that can inform firms, policy makers, and academic discourse.
- Potentially join a collaborative writing effort leading to a co-authored conceptual or agenda-setting paper on responsible AI in marketing.

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