

Call for contributions

On 13 December 2024, the Swiss Labour Research Network LABORIS and the community WORK of the Digital Society Initiative DSI are jointly organising a conference at the University of Zurich on

Work and Social Justice: Challenges and Opportunities in the Digital Age

The ubiquitous integration of digital technologies in the workplace has affected work practices, management, and organisation. As we navigate this dynamic environment, it is critical to explore the multi-layered aspects of digital transformations, particularly with regards to their implications for social justice.

This call for papers invites researchers, practitioners, and civil society actors to engage with the topic of "Work and Social Justice". We aim to foster a transdisciplinary dialogue that will deepen our understanding of this complex intersection: How do work and social justice interact in the digital age?

Contributions are welcome on, but not limited to, the following topics:

1 Inequality
Exploring how digitalisation reinforces or mitigates inequalities in employment opportunities, benefits, and rights, for example along lines of class, race, gender, and body

2 Empowerment
Discussing worker empowerment and exploring opportunities for individual or collective action, solidarity, and organisation in the digital age

3 Unpaid work
Examining linkages between digitalisation and unpaid work, ranging from care work to volunteering or from the platform economy to workfare programs

4 Regulation
Assessing how existing regulations address the consequences of digitalisation, for example regarding labour standards and corporate accountability

5 Historical Perspectives
Discussing current rhetorics of digitalisation and bringing them into dialogue with past socio-technical changes, their discourses, dynamics and consequences

6 Exploitation

Examining the impact of digitalisation on working conditions, rights and vulnerabilities of workers and exploring strategies to promote fair treatment

7 Control

Assessing threats to workers' autonomy and rights from algorithmic management, big data, and artificial intelligence

8 Health

Exploring how digital advances can improve the inclusion of workers with chronic health conditions and mitigate risks of social exclusion and job loss

9 Organisation

Discussing new forms of digitally driven collaboration, leadership models and organizational culture contributing to social justice

10 Internationalisation

Examining global dimensions of digitalisation, including outsourcing, offshoring, and the impact on work and workers in different geographical contexts

We invite theoretical and/or empirical presentations, case studies and encourage innovative formats (15 min. plus discussion). Authors are invited to submit their abstracts of maximum 300 words electronically to the conference secretariat (karin.klein@uzh.ch) by 13 Sept. 2024. If the number of submissions exceeds that of available slots, the organizing committee will make a selection. Presenters will be notified of acceptance by 15 October.

We look forward to receiving your contributions.

Brigitta Bernet, Nicolas Pons-Vignon,
Karin Schwiter & Peter Streckeisen

The main language of the conference is English. Presentations in German or French are welcome with slides in English to facilitate exchange. The conference is an in-person event (remote participation is not possible). It is free of charge and includes lunch and coffee breaks. The conference will feature presentations, discussions, and provide ample opportunity for scientific exchange and networking. It closes with the award ceremony for the young researchers' award for labour sociology, industrial relations and trade union research in Switzerland (donated by the trade union Unia) and an apéro. For questions about submissions or conference details, please contact our conference secretariat at karin.klein@uzh.ch.