



University of
Zurich^{UZH}

IKMZ – Institute of Communication and Media Research

The IKMZ Speaker Series presents:

The Rest is Noise: Communication Environments in the Age of Generative AI. Insights from Simulations

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Monday, April 29, 2024

16:15-17:15

Room: AND-4-06

Within the AI-driven revolution of communication, we have primarily focused on technical capabilities and individualized outcomes. But as Clay Shirky observed, "Communications tools don't get socially interesting until they get technologically boring" (Shirky, 2008). The really interesting consequences of AI will therefore not arise from incremental technical advances, but from the **social** embedding and re-shaping of their use.

In this talk, I will sketch out how generative AI will change communication on the macro level. Exacerbating existing trends, I hypothesize AI to boost news avoidance, differential visibility, and virality-driven hypes. Figuring out the complex interplay between stochastically degraded soft content (or worse, "pink slime") and high-impact mass phenomena requires a serious appreciation of signal and noise. Using agent-based simulations, I will explore the causes, consequences, and implications of an AI-swamped information environment.

Pascal Jürgens is a professor of computational communication science at Trier University. His work focuses on (1) the development and validation of computational methods as well as (2) the impacts of computational methods on society. Particular foci have been network analysis of social media and audiences, effects of algorithmic platforms on news consumption, tracking methods, and deep learning, in particular for visual analysis. He currently serves as AE of Communication Methods and Measures (IF 11.4).

