

CALL FOR PAPERS

Symposium on Science Communication and Communicative AI

5–6 November 2026, Augsburg, Germany

AI-based applications like chatbots, voicebots and interactive avatars have become embedded in science communication, used increasingly as "novel information intermediaries" (Greussing et al., 2025) and as tools for the production of professional science communication content (Henke, 2025). In this way, AI, and particularly *communicative* AI (Hepp et al., 2023), is increasingly taking on roles previously reserved for human science communicators. AI applications may assume distinct roles as communicative agents engaging directly with publics, for example, in purpose-built science communication chatbots (Vaghefi et al., 2023), and as mediators supporting scientists, journalists, and other practitioners in their efforts to summarise and translate scientific topics for different audiences.

While improving access to science by addressing particular knowledge needs in a personalised and dialogical manner (Alvarez et al., 2024), AI-mediated science communication may, without proper guardrails, contribute to the proliferation of "emergent facts" (Dierickx et al., 2026) and "algorithmic truth" (Shin, 2025) rather than scientific consensus. These risks are not incidental but architectural: the design of AI systems, from interface choices and underlying algorithms to data curation and interaction patterns, fundamentally shapes what becomes possible in AI-mediated science communication practice (Klein-Avraham et al., 2024; Sadek et al., 2024), making AI a "design challenge" for the field (Kalmár & Stenfert, 2020). This is particularly consequential given the rapid permeation of commercial AI applications into science communication contexts.

Yet, AI is not only shaping science communication practice: it has itself become a contested object of public discourse and thereby a sought-after subject of science communication research (Kessler et al., 2025), raising questions about representation and framing, stakeholder voices, and, crucially, how publics perceive, evaluate, and make sense of this technology. These perceptions are not merely cognitive: encounters with AI, also within science communication contexts, are affectively charged, giving rise to questions about the emotional and attitudinal dimensions of such encounters (Baake et al., 2025; Jonas & Taddicken, 2025). Taken together, the dual role of AI — as communicative agent of science and socially contested technology of science communication itself — underscores the importance of interdisciplinary perspectives, interlocking questions of science communication practice, content, and impact with those of (responsible) system design (Silva Luna et al., 2025) and automated research methodologies (Hohenwalde et al., 2025).

This symposium takes a holistic perspective on AI in science communication, inviting contributions relating to one of the following four themes:

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Theme 1 – Communicative Roles of AI in Science Communication

Which roles can and does AI take on in science communication, and how does this transform the science communication landscape – both in practice and in research? Presentations may cover topics such as:

- How does AI mediate epistemic authority and trust in science communication?
- What is the role of AI in knowledge brokerage between expert and public domains?
- What are types or examples of hybrid human-AI partnerships in science journalism or other science communication practices?

Theme 2 – Science Communication about AI

How is AI being represented and discussed in the public debate? Presentations may cover topics such as:

- How is AI represented in news and social media?
- Which stakeholders participate in the discourse, which are missing?
- How are AI opportunities, risks, and ethical dimensions framed?
- What methodological strategies, including automated and LLM-supported content analyses can be used for studying AI discourse? What are benefits and challenges?

Theme 3 – Affective Dimensions of AI in Science Communication

What emotions come into play when science communication is AI-mediated, and how does this impact the public's perception of science and technology? Presentations may include the following topics:

- How are emotions present in AI-generated content relating to science, and what emotional processes emerge when AI itself serves as science communicator?
- How do epistemic emotions (e.g., curiosity, confusion, wonder) shape information processing, sense-making and attitude formation in AI-mediated science communication, and how do configurations of AI systems shape emotional and epistemic outcomes?
- How does AI transform emotion work for both practitioners and audiences of science communication, and what forms does this take?

Theme 4 – Designing AI for Science Communication

How may AI be designed for science communication, and what role can researchers play in this? Presentations may include topics such as:

- What are the affordances of AI systems for science communication practices?
- How can AI be useful to implement participatory or co-design approaches involving diverse stakeholders?
- What are norms and values guiding AI usage in science communication and what could be the bases of quality assessment?
- What are best practices for AI usage in science communication, i.e., domain-specific chatbots, science communication assistants or video avatars? How do users adopt these tools?

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

We welcome submissions for in-person presentations and posters (particularly for works-in-progress). Submissions from practitioners are welcome alongside academic contributions. In addition to theoretical and empirical contributions, we explicitly invite methodological insights on using AI for science communication research, and best practice examples.

- Abstract (300-500 words excluding references) + max. 5 keywords
- Language: English
- Submission sent to comai2026@phil.uni-augsburg.de by 1 August 2026, 11:59pm CEST
- Notification of acceptance: 31 August 2026

ORGANISERS

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The symposium is held in the framework of the research project [Science communication about and with communicative artificial intelligence: emotions, engagement, effects](#) (*Wissenschaftskommunikation über und mit kommunikativer künstlicher Intelligenz: Emotionen, Engagement, Effekte* - Wiss-KKI) funded by the German Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space (funding code: 01WK2305B; duration: 01-11-2023 to 31-03-2027). The interdisciplinary research collaboration between University of Augsburg¹, Technische Universität Braunschweig² and Technische Universität München³ investigates the dual role of communicative AI in science communication—as both communicative agent and subject matter—examining quality dimensions, audience interactions and emotional dynamics, and value-based design principles for AI-mediated science communication.

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