



Press information

Digital Humanism Conference 2026

Orientation in turbulent times

24–26 June 2026, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna

About the conference



Digital Humanism Conference 2026

Conference overview

The Digital Humanism Conference 2026 (#DigHum2026), under the motto "Orientation in turbulent times," will bring together experts, innovators, policymakers and citizens to address urgent questions of democracy, security, and solidarity in an era of AI and rapid technological change. Following the success of the inaugural Digital Humanism Conference in 2025, which brought together 500 participants from across the globe, the second edition will take place from **24 to 26 June 2026** at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna.

Building on the momentum of last year's conference, this year's programme focuses on finding orientation amid instability: *How do we balance security and freedom as AI transforms power structures? How do we build solidarity when digital technologies amplify division? How can we achieve digital sovereignty in a world of concentrated platform power?*

In partnership with The European Digital Humanism Initiative (EUDHIT) and the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW), and with support from the City of Vienna and the Vienna Science, Research and Technology Fund (WWTF), this 2.5-day conference offers a vital platform for critical exchange. Conference Chair Erich Prem and Programme Chair Katja Mayer have assembled an outstanding lineup of international speakers.

Keynote speakers include **Rumman Chowdhury** (Humane Intelligence) and **Bruce Schneier** (Inrupt), whose expertise in

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responsible AI and cybersecurity directly addresses the conference's core themes.

The conference welcomes researchers, policymakers, technologists, civil society actors, and all those committed to shaping digital technologies in line with democratic values, human rights, and social justice.

Programme and registration: dighum.wien

About the conference: dighum.wien/about-dighum2026

The background

At the heart of Digital Humanism is the commitment to ensure that AI and digital technologies enhance our shared human rights and freedoms rather than undermining them.

This moment is shaped by intensifying tensions: debates about AI risks and opportunities, economic speculation around digital technologies, and deepening geopolitical fragmentation. AI systems and digital platforms have become central infrastructures through which power, knowledge, security, and economic value are organised.

The developments of the past year have intensified the urgency articulated at DigHum2025. From the erosion of privacy and concentration of platform power to challenges of disinformation and the environmental costs of AI infrastructure, the need for democratic oversight and human-centred design of digital technologies has never been more pressing. The 2025 conference concluded with a clear message: there is no time left to wait.

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From diagnosis to action

The 2026 conference does not respond with diagnosis alone. It turns toward action, examining how AI systems, digital platforms, and data infrastructures can be reclaimed as a matter of public concern and collective responsibility. Digital Humanism is approached as a practice – unfolding through the AI design, platform governance, digital education, and the everyday decisions that configure digital systems and their social effects. The conference highlights the often-invisible work required to align digital technologies with democratic values, human rights, inclusion, diversity, and environmental responsibility.

Vienna as the origin and hub of Digital Humanism

The annual conference helps to position Vienna as a hub for critical discourse on technology, democracy, and human values. Vienna has been central to the Digital Humanism movement since the publication of the Vienna Manifesto in 2019, which has been signed by over 1,000 leaders worldwide. The city hosts ongoing initiatives across academia, industry, and public administration committed to human-centred approaches to digitalisation.

Universities have established research, PhD and teaching programmes in Digital Humanism, whilst the City of Vienna has integrated digital humanism principles into its digital strategy and innovation policies. Austrian companies and research institutions are actively developing and implementing approaches that prioritise democratic values in technology development.

Programme highlights

Wednesday, 24 June – Opening night

The conference kicks off at Vienna's prestigious Gartenbaukino with a screening of Valerie Veatch's documentary *Ghost in the Machine* (2026), offering a critical deep dive into the history and origins of AI.

Thursday, 25 June – Conference day 1

The first full day opens with keynote speaker Rumman Chowdhury (Humane Intelligence), setting the tone for sessions on digital labour, platform economies, the geopolitics of AI, democracy and freedom of speech, social media's effects on youth, and emerging practices in digital sovereignty.

Friday, 26 June – Conference day 2

Day two begins with Bruce Schneier (Inrupt) and continues with sessions on responsible AI science, public service innovation, digital commons and knowledge stewardship, participatory approaches in cities and regions, and the intersection of arts-based practices with visions of digital life in 2100.

Topics

- Geopolitics of AI
- Digital Labour
- Digital Life & The Arts
- Digital Sovereignty
- Democracy
- Digital Humanism Industry



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- Youth & Social Media
- Digital Humanism in Education
- Public Service
- Innovation and Regulation
- Digital Commons
- Economies of AI
- Knowledge in Crisis
- Measuring Digital Humanism

Confirmed speakers

Keynote speakers include **Rumman Chowdhury** (Humane Intelligence) and **Bruce Schneier** (Inrupt).

Additional confirmed speakers include Payal Arora (Utrecht University and Inclusive AI Lab), Peter Biegelbauer (Austrian Institute of Technology), Joanna J. Bryson (Hertie School), Cristina Caffarra (EuroStack Initiative Foundation), Sayeed Choudhury (Carnegie Mellon Libraries and Open Forum for AI), Tim Crane (Central European University), Adio-Adet Dinika (Distributed AI Research Institute and Data Workers' Inquiry), Claudia Garád (Wikimedia Europe and Wikimedia Austria), Thomas Lohninger (epicenter.works), Barbara Prainsack (University of Vienna), Francis Saa-Dittoh (University for Development Studies), Camilla Salim Wagner (Distributed AI Research Institute and Data Workers' Inquiry), and Felix Stalder (Zurich University of the Arts).

Aims of the conference

- To **advance** Digital Humanism through multidisciplinary discourse
- To **expand** Austria's position as a centre for human-centred approaches to AI and digitalisation
- To **strengthen** global networks and foster international collaboration
- To **showcase** existing initiatives, best practices, and practical examples of human-centred technology
- To **explore** how Digital Humanism can provide orientation in turbulent times

Target groups

- Global and national research and Digital Humanism community
- Decision-makers from politics and administration, nationally and internationally
- Technology developers, industry stakeholders, and social entrepreneurs
- Civil society organisations, NGOs, and international institutions
- Journalists, artists, and cultural practitioners
- All those committed to shaping a democratic digital future

Conference passes

- 2-Day Pass €130 (Reduced €80)



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- 1-Day Pass | Thursday or Friday €75 (Reduced €45)
- Wednesday evening (Opening film screening) Included with a 1-Day or 2-Day-Pass

Registration: dighum.wien/register

Date and location

24 June 2026

Gartenbaukino

Parkring 12, 1010 Vienna

25–26 June 2026

Austrian Academy of Sciences

Doktor-Ignaz-Seipel-Platz 2, 1010 Vienna

Financial support

City of Vienna and WWTF

Organisation

The conference is organised by the Digital Humanism Association in partnership with The European Digital Humanism Initiative (EUDHIT) and the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW), with support from the City of Vienna and the Vienna Science and Technology Fund (WWTF). It is co-chaired by Erich Prem (Conference Chair) and Katja Mayer (Programme Chair).

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