



PRESS INFORMATION

Digital Humanism Conference 2026

Orientation in turbulent times

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

Biography: Katja Mayer

[Short]

As sociologist, **Katja Mayer** is employing her expertise at the crossroads of science, technology, and society. She has been contributing as a senior postdoc at the Department of Science and Technology Studies at the University of Vienna since 2019. There, she applies a critical perspective to the politics of open science and open data, with a specific focus on citizen science, computational social sciences and artificial intelligence.

Her academic journey exhibits an unwavering dedication to exploring the intricate relationships between technology and society. For her master's degree, she engaged in an in-depth exploration of the social construction of speech recognition technologies. Her PhD work, in turn, investigated the visual cultures that form the foundation of social network analysis and data science. Mayer's long-standing

interest lies in the interactions between social scientific methods and society itself, considering how these methods both mirror and shape the societies they seek to study, thus adding a nuanced dimension to the contemporary dialogue on the social implications of scientific practices.

Prior to fully committing herself to academia, Mayer garnered practical experience in the IT industry, serving as a consultant and a knowledge management expert. She also spent time in the field of information retrieval. This hands-on engagement with applied knowledge production fields provided her with a thorough understanding of IT systems, infrastructures, business landscapes, and data extraction methodologies, insights that would later inform her research and teaching pursuits.

Her passion for science led her to the role of research advisor to the President of the European Research Council (ERC). In this capacity, she dedicated her expertise to the disciplines of social sciences, humanities, and arts-based research. After her tenure at the ERC, she joined the newly established chair of Computational Social Sciences and Big Data at TU Munich. There, she maintained a strong focus on social media research and pioneered the incorporation of Critical Data Studies in teaching political and computer scientists, particularly emphasizing data-driven decision making.

Mayer's academic contributions were recognized with the prestigious Elise Richter Fellowship (FWF) in 2019. This award, aimed at advancing the work of remarkable female scholars, facilitated her current role at the Department of Science and Technology Studies, University of Vienna, where she also participates in the research platform: Governance of Digital Practices.

Beyond research, Mayer holds the title of Senior Scientist at the Center for Social Innovation in Vienna and serves as an Associate Researcher at the University of Vienna's platform "Responsible Research and Innovation in Scientific Practice". She has taught a range of subjects, including Sociology, STS, and Web Sciences, at several institutions such as the University of Vienna, the Danube University Krems, the University of Art and Design Linz, and the University of Lucerne.

Mayer has broadened her academic perspective as a visiting fellow at the School of Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon University (USA). She also engages in Open Science policy, contributed as an active member of the Open Access Network Austria (OANA), where she co-lead a working group tasked with developing a "National Strategy for the Transition to Open Science".

Katja Mayer has been closely involved in shaping Digital Humanism as an interdisciplinary research field and community of practice. Her work combines conceptual, strategic, and public facing contributions, including co-authoring the 2018 study on Digital Humanism communities of practice for WWTF and the City of Vienna, serving on advisory and strategy boards such as the Digital Humanism Strategy Board and the advisory board of the DIGHUM College, contributing to programme committees of DigHum and DigHumRes, and chairing the Programme Committee of the DigHum 2026 Conference. She has also advanced the field through teaching, keynote interventions, conference papers, and public events addressing Digital Humanism from perspectives including open science, feminist epistemology, critical posthumanism, and the commons.