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Blended Intensive Program

Learning from the Future: Social Work Perspectives on a Digital Society

Online April 30, 2025 | **In Person** May 5 – May 9, 2025



This Blended Intensive Program "Learning from the Future: Social Work Perspectives on a Digital Society" is organized by MCI | The Entrepreneurial School[®] in collaboration with the University of Eastern Finland, University College Dublin, and University of Zagreb.

The Blended Intensive Program (BIP) is an initiative under the Erasmus+ program, aimed at enhancing higher education and fostering international collaboration through a mix of virtual and physical mobility.

The overall goal of the BIP is to enrich the educational experiences of participants, promote international co-operation, and adapt to the evolving needs of higher education in a globalized world.

This BIP is aimed at people interested in fostering knowledge exchange and innovation in the digital transformation of social work. Starting with an online session, where participants will exchange insights on current practices and key terminology, we will meet at MCI from May 5-9, 2025. The topics include digital empathy, risks of digitalization in social work, digital supervision and family mediation and navigating digitalization in social work and more topics.

Participants will articulate potential future trends in digital technologies influencing social work and social care practice

and critically evaluate the benefits and challenges of integrating these technologies. They will understand and apply ethical principles to real-life scenarios, analyze data practices and the impact of AI on social service processes, and assess the efficacy of virtual social care services. Participants will develop strategies for delivering compassionate care online, and assess the risks digitality can have on social work.

This BIP is going to be a Green Event. We strongly encourage sustainable travel, not only to the conference but also in Innsbruck during the conference. Please take advantage of our public transport system, but most of all our walkability in Innsbruck in the beautiful May weather.

We look forward to this exciting week of exchange and collaboration!

Contact person: Lena Knaus

lena.knaus@mci.edu, +43 512 2070 3402

MCI | The Entrepreneurial School[®]

Universitaetsstrasse 15, A-6020 Innsbruck
+43 512 2070-0, office@mci.edu, www.mci.edu

Program overview

Monday

"Setting the Stage for Social Work in a Digital Society"

9:00–9:30 a.m.	Welcome & Introduction through Andreas Altmann, Rector of MCI and Belachew Gebrewold, Head of Department & Studies, Department of Social Work
9:30–10:00 a.m.	Get to know each other
~10:00–10:15 a.m.	Coffee Break
10:15–10:45 a.m.	Keynote: Robert Koglek, MCI Title: Learning from the Future
10:45 a.m.–12:00 p.m.	Workshop Facilitator: Robert Koglek, MCI
12:00–1:00 p.m.	Lunch Break
1:00–1:45 p.m.	Speaker: Ning An, Hefei University of Technology, Online – Digital Empathy: Implications for Aging Societies
1:45–2:45 p.m.	Workshop Part I Facilitator: Honglin Chen, University of Eastern Finland – Interactive group session following Digital empathy and dilemma
~2:45–3:00 p.m.	Coffee Break
3:00–4:00 p.m.	Workshop Part II Facilitator: Honglin Chen, University of Eastern Finland – Interactive group session following Digital empathy and dilemma

Tuesday

"Digital Tools and Methods in Social Work"

9:00–9:15 a.m.	Start & Introduction
9:15–10:00 a.m.	Speaker: Lucija Vejmelka, University of Zagreb Title: The Digital Odyssey of Social Work: The Future is Now
~10:00–10:15 a.m.	Coffee Break
10:15–11:00 a.m.	Lecture and Workshop Speaker: Kristina Urbanc, University of Zagreb - Supervision of Social Workers in the Digital Environment
11:00–11:45 a.m.	Speaker: Vanja Branica, University of Zagreb - Resolving Family Disputes in the Digital Age: Can Online be Helpful?
11:45 a.m.–12:00 p.m.	Conclusion and closure of morning session
12:00–1:00 p.m.	Lunch Break (Catering Provided)
1:00–2:00 p.m.	Speaker: Naonori Kodate, University College Dublin – Assistive Technologies, Robotics and Gerontological Social Work Practice
2:00–2:15 p.m.	Coffee Break
2:15–3:15 p.m.	Original Documentary Screening "Circuits of Care: Ageing and Japan's Robot Revolution" & Discussion
3:30–5:30 p.m.	Voluntary Excursion to Nordkette – depending on weather conditions

All events at MCI I –
rooms 301/302

Wednesday

"Influences of Social Justice in the Digital Society and Artificial Intelligence in Social Work"

9:00–9:15 a.m.	Start & Introduction
9:15–10:00 a.m.	Speaker: Elmien Claassens, University of Pretoria – Social Justice and the Digital Society: Bridging the Digital Divide and the Injustices of Digital Exclusion
~10:00–10:15 a.m.	Coffee Break
10:15 a.m.–12:00 p.m.	Workshop Facilitator: Elmien Claassens, University of Pretoria
12:00–1:00 p.m.	Lunch Break
1:00–1:30 p.m.	Speaker: Thomas Dierker, MCI – Technology, Data and Ethics - Basics for the Application of AI in Social Work
1:30–2:45 p.m.	Workshop Facilitator: Thomas Dierker, MCI AI applications in social work and their significance for the future
~2:45–3:00 p.m.	Coffee Break
3:00–3:45 p.m.	Speaker: Lauri Goldkind, Fordham University – Social Work & AI: Transformation or Collapse?

Thursday

"Learning from risk and practice"

9:00–10:45 a.m.	Speaker: Chwen Jen Chen, University Malaysia Sarawak – "Application of AI in Teaching Methods and Assignments" (participation of students optional – this is targeted to lecturers)
~10:45–11:00 a.m.	Coffee Break
11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.	Morning Session Part II: Learning for the Future – Risks in Digital Social Work – MCI Workshop Facilitator: Robert Koglek, MCI
1:00–2:00 p.m.	Lunch Break
2:00–4:00 p.m.	Speaker: Michael Freudenthaler – "Smart Inclusive" - Overview and Results of an Interdisciplinary Project Using a Participatory Approach
~3:00–3:15 p.m.	Coffee Break
From 6:00 p.m.	Evening Event: Farewell Event

Friday

"Co-Creating the Future of Digital Social Work"

9:00–9:15 a.m.	Start & Introduction
9:15–10:30 a.m.	Workshop: Open Space - Harvest from the week and Open Space conversation Facilitator: Thomas Dierker, MCI
~10:30–10:45 a.m.	Coffee Break
10:45 a.m.–12:00 p.m.	Visual mapping and plenary share
12:00–12:15 p.m.	Wrap-Up, afterwards departure