

1. Publication date

ASAP

2. Closing date

15 May 2016

3. Organisational Unit

Faculty of Law – Institute for Information Law (IViR)

4. Level of Education

Doctorate

5. Scope of work

30 hours per week

6. Salary indication

3.400-4.654EUR gross per month, based on 38 hours per week

7. Title

1 Postdoc researcher in Communication Science/Journalism/Media studies for the project

Profiling and targeting news readers – implications for the democratic role of the digital media, user rights and public information policy (PersoNews)

8. Vacancy type

Research & Education

9. Introduction

The Institute for Information Law (IViR) is part of the Law Faculty of the University of Amsterdam, and for the past 25 years one of the leading centres in Europe and worldwide in research into Information Law. IViR is host to an international team of more than 35 researchers who conduct research for national and European funding organisations (NWO, DFG, ERC), European institutions (European Commission, European Parliament, Council of Europe), international organisations and national governments and regulatory authorities.

The postdocs will work as part of a multidisciplinary team of 2 communication scientists and 2 PhD legal students, led by Prof. Natali Helberger. The team will operate within the larger structure of a research collaboration between the Institute for Information Law and the Amsterdam School of Communication Research (ASCoR) to conduct research into the shift from public to personalised communication in the areas of politics, commerce and health (*“Personalised Communication”*).

The researcher will be charged with performing empirical work (mostly observational and interview studies) on studying the adoption of algorithms and Big Data in newsrooms, and evolving algorithmic journalistic practices and ethics. The research will be part of a European ERC project **“Profiling and targeting news readers – implications for the democratic role of the digital media, user rights and public information policy”**. The overall goal of the project is to explore how algorithmic profiling and targeting affects the daily routine of the media, the relationship

between media users and the media, and the emergence of new forms of algorithmic journalistic ethics and best practices.

10. Job / Project Description

In the digital media environment, user attention is scarce and competition for 'eyeballs' is fierce. Big Data analysis, algorithmic profiling and targeting readers with customised news and advertisements that match their individual interests are widely seen as potential solutions. The datafication of news providers enables new metrics to assess newsroom performance, new financing strategies, and, through the personalisation of news media content, new means to capture the audience's attention. Personalisation is also part of a more fundamental paradigm shift in the media's role from public interest intermediary to personal information coach. This research will answer critical questions about the implications for individual users and contribute to a new normative theory of the role of personalised media in a democratic society.

To do so, the PersoNews project integrates legal research, communication sciences and political sciences, undertakes comparative, normative and evidence-based research, and carries out experiments, interviews and surveys. The overall project will perform (1) quantitative and qualitative research to identify the users' attitudes and concerns, as well as the perceived advantages and costs associated with personalisation; (2) study the drivers behind and the obstacles to news media personalisation, their effect on journalistic practices and whether they translate into new algorithmic journalistic ethics and self-regulation; and (3) conduct a legal-normative analysis which will critically re-examine the existing regulatory and normative framework, identify gaps and make suggestions for future legal design.

The successful candidate will lead the efforts in the second domain (drivers, obstacles, opportunities for the integration of algorithms into newsrooms and emerging algorithmic ethics).

Tasks

To conduct comparative research, as a member of a multi-disciplinary team, into users' relationship with implicit and explicit media personalisation in the UK, Netherlands and Germany, including:

- The formulation of new, inventive research methodology to study this domain.
- The design, execution and analysis of cross-country studies based upon the multi-sited ethnography of newsrooms, and on interviews, surveys and experiments on users' attitudes and practices.
- The formulation of the theoretical framework in law and communications to contextualise the findings.
- Expanding the scope and reach of other, similar research initiatives on the topic together with the Personalised Communication team.
- Supervising master students and perhaps taking on a light teaching task (as part of a summer course programme, for example).
- Being involved and participating in general project management tasks (including the organisation of workshops, quality control, dissemination, outreach and acquisition activities).

11. Requirements

The candidate should have:

- A clear research interest in the topic of the project.
- A background in communication science, media studies, cultural studies, and/or journalism studies
- Experience with ethnographic and/or qualitative interviewing.
- Interest in handling and analysing large amounts of data and some experience with a programming language (Python, Ruby, Java, PHP), SQL, R or other similar languages would be a plus but are not required.
- The ability, willingness, and commitment to do autonomous work in a multidisciplinary team, including legal scholars.
- Preferably experience with writing grant applications and project proposals.
- Preferably experience with organising workshops, lecture series, and similar events.
- Preferably experience with the supervision of students and PhD's.
- Strong communication skills.
- An excellent written and spoken command of English, as demonstrated by publications in English-language journals, and preferably knowledge skills in Dutch and German.
- A relevant PhD degree. Candidates who are due to submit their dissertation before 1 May 2015 are welcome to apply.

12. Further Information

Questions about the project content should be addressed to Professor Natali Helberger (n.helberger@uva.nl). Questions about the application procedure and other general questions should be addressed to Ms. Anja Dobbelsteen (a.g.j.m.dobbelsteen@uva.nl).

You may find the following websites useful:

- Universiteit van Amsterdam www.uva.nl
- IViR, the Institute for Information Law www.ivir.nl
- ASCoR, the Amsterdam School of Communication Research www.ascor.uva.nl

13. Appointment

The position ideally starts on 1 August 2016, and is for 4 years. Depending on your knowledge and experience, your monthly gross salary will range between 3.400-4.6543EUR according to the Collective Employment Agreement of the Dutch Universities) based on a full-time appointment.

We offer a pension scheme, a holiday allowance of 8% per year and flexible employment conditions. Conditions are based on the Collective Labour Agreement of the Dutch Universities.

14. Job Application

The deadline for applications is **15 May 2016 at 24:00 PM CET**. Please state the vacancy number in the subject line of your application. To apply for this position, please send at least the following documents **in English** by e-mail to n.helberger@uva.nl:

- Motivation letter. Please clearly indicate the position you apply for.
- Curriculum vitae and publication list.
- Proof of your PhD degree. If you have not completed your degree at the time of application, please provide a statement from your supervisor confirming the expected date of completion of your degree.

- An academic writing sample in English (e.g., journal article, PhD dissertation).

Please send all your documents in PDF or doc(x) format. Only complete applications will be considered.