



Postdoc Position (100%) in the Research Group of Professor Karsten Donnay

The Department of Political Science at the University of Zurich invites applications for a 4-year postdoc position in the research group “Political Behavior and Digital Media” (Prof. Karsten Donnay) starting on October 1, 2024, or later by agreement.

This position is part of a joint research project funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation involving Prof. Karsten Donnay and Prof. Fabrizio Gilardi at the Department of Political Science as well as Prof. Dominik Hangartner at ETH Zurich and Prof. Gloria Gennaro at University College London. The postdoc will be based in the team of Prof. Donnay but will work very closely with Prof. Gilardi and his team as well as the other two collaborating research teams.

Your responsibilities

This position is part of a large-scale, collaborative research project that investigates ways in which the quality of online public discourse can be improved. The project will develop computational methods for the semi-automatic detection of both toxic and constructive content and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions against toxicity and for promoting constructive dialogue.

This postdoc position will take the lead on all NLP and machine learning-related aspects of the project, in particular with regard to detection and measurement of toxic/constructive discourse (80%). We expect candidates to have a very strong background in computational social science, in particular in NLP and state-of-the-art machine learning.

Moreover, this position will support the computational infrastructure used in the project, hosted on the Science Cloud of the University of Zurich (20%). This includes server management, database administration, maintaining and running data collection and processing pipelines as well as deploying and maintaining model APIs.

This position is fully funded by a research grant from the Swiss National Science Foundation for a duration of up to four years. The position comes with no teaching obligations but the postdoc will contribute to advising BA/MA/PhD students and to some administrative tasks. A strong collaborative mentality and proven experience working in large research teams is essential for this position.



Your profile

- PhD in political science, computational social science or in a closely related discipline
- Substantive interest in political behavior and the impact of digitalization on politics is an asset
- Strong background in computational social science, NLP/ML in particular
- Proficiency in server management, database administration (PostgreSQL and Elasticsearch), and data collection processes using bash, Python, and R
- Experience with Docker for containerization and deployment of model APIs
- Familiarity with essential Python packages (PyTorch, scikit-learn, pandas, numpy) and R packages (tidyverse, ggplot2, dplyr, tidyr)
- Experience with additional frameworks such as TensorFlow, spaCy, Apache Spark is a plus
- Ability to work both independently and in a team
- Strong command of English
- Creativity, open-mindedness and curiosity

What we offer

- Integration in a leading department with highly motivated and engaged colleagues
- Involvement in a high-profile multi-institutional research collaboration
- Financial and academic support from the research group and department
- Funding is guaranteed for up to four years at 100% employment rate
- Salary is according to cantonal guidelines and approximately 101'844 CHF per year (gross salary)

Place of work: Zurich

Start of employment: October 1, 2024 (or later by agreement)

Closing date for applications: June 30, 2024

Further information:

Further inquiries can be directed to Karsten Donnay (donnay@ipz.uzh.ch).

The department aims to increase the diversity of its members and thus explicitly invites applications from women and other traditionally underrepresented groups.

Please apply directly through the department's application portal using the following link:

<https://www.ipz.uzh.ch/de/ueber-uns/offene-stellen/2024-Postdoc-Donnay.html>

In addition to filling out the application form you will be asked to provide a current CV, motivation letter, a writing sample (e.g. paper, PhD thesis), and the contact details of two people willing to serve as a reference.