

Call for Papers: Special Issue in *Social Science Computer Review*

“Integrating Survey Data and Digital Trace Data”

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Focus

Computer-mediated activities have become deeply ingrained in everyday life. People use digital technologies for the consumption of news and entertainment, political and civic participation, health-related purposes, self-expression, communication, and the fostering of social relationships. The measurement and analysis of these activities pose considerable challenges for researchers since they are distributed across multiple channels and platforms, intertwined, and ephemeral. The social sciences typically study these phenomena using survey methods that, however, suffer from the unreliability of self-reported media use. Studies in computational social science, on the other hand, collect digital traces of human behavior in a non-intrusive way. At the same time, these approaches oftentimes do not collect the necessary attributes of research subjects (e.g., sociodemographic or personality characteristics) and outcome variables (e.g., voting) to answer questions about determinants of specific human behavior.

This special issue aims at synthesizing these two paradigms as they have the potential to compensate for their respective weaknesses when combined in a systematic way. The special issue will feature papers that integrate and jointly analyze survey data and digital trace data, e.g. from websites, social media, smartphone apps or sensors. Contributions should be empirical or methodological, but can also address theoretical and conceptual aspects. Relevant questions include but are not limited to:

- How can survey data and digital trace data be combined (methodologically and conceptually)?
- What types of substantive or methodological questions can be answered by combining survey data and digital trace data? How can such research designs improve the measurement of human behavior?
- How can a combination of survey data and digital trace data improve research in fields such as social network analysis, social media studies, political participation, social and personality psychology, interpersonal communication or health studies?
- How can participants be motivated and/or incentivized to participate in research projects combining survey data and digital trace data? What are the limits of such research designs in terms of representativeness, generalizability and replicability?
- Which ethical and legal aspects need to be considered? How can integrated datasets be anonymized, archived, and made available for reproduction, replication, and secondary research?

Timeline

September 2017: Call for papers published

31 January 2018: Extended abstracts due (2 pages)

31 May 2018: Full papers due. Submissions have to follow the journal guidelines (<https://faculty.chass.ncsu.edu/garson/SSCORE/library.htm>) and will be subject to peer-review. Please send submissions and any questions to si-sscore@gesis.org