



University of St.Gallen

Institute of Behavioral Science
and Technology

Annual Report

2025

Institute of
Behavioral Science
and Technology (IBT)

ibt.unisg.ch

Vision

« The Institute of Behavioral Science and Technology at the University of St.Gallen (IBT-HSG), founded in 2021, is an interdisciplinary research institute that conducts high-impact research to understand, predict, and improve the human-technology relationship. Our vision is to contribute reliable and evidence-based scientific insights on how technology intersects with how humans think, behave, and decide. Our work has a measurable impact for science, public policy, corporate action, and society at large. »



A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Emanuel de Bellis".

Emanuel de Bellis



A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Christian Hildebrand".

Christian Hildebrand



A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Clemens Stachl".

Clemens Stachl

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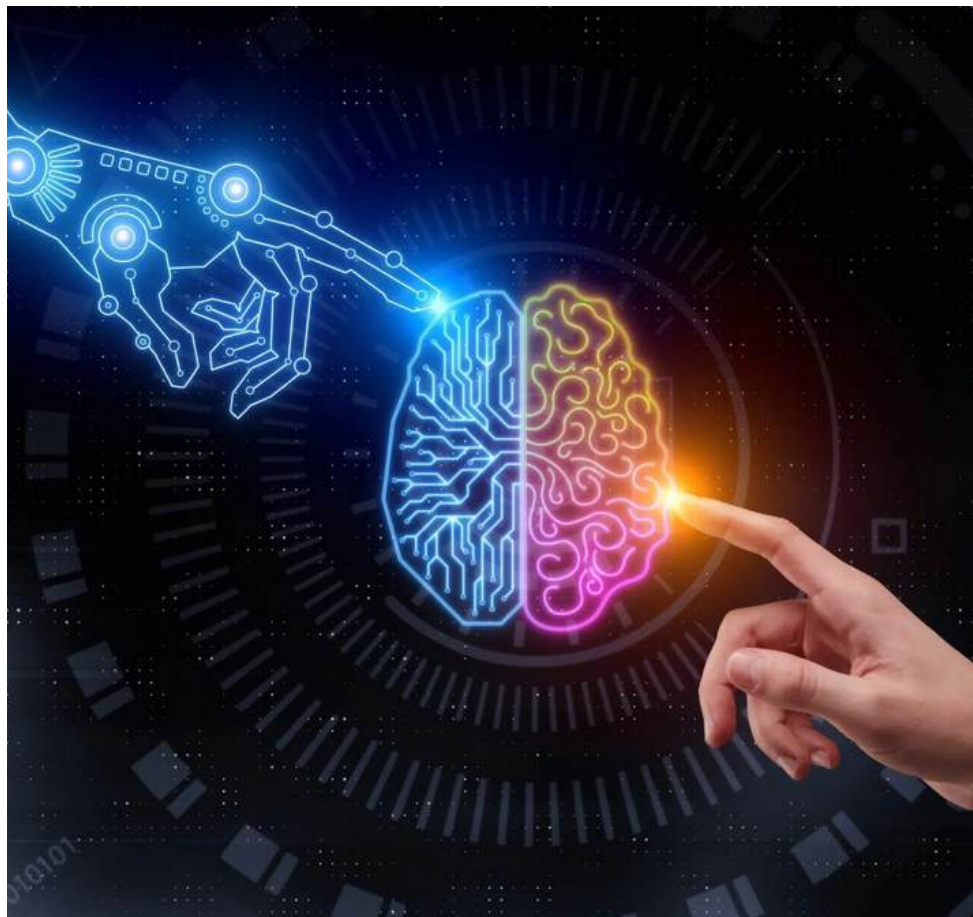
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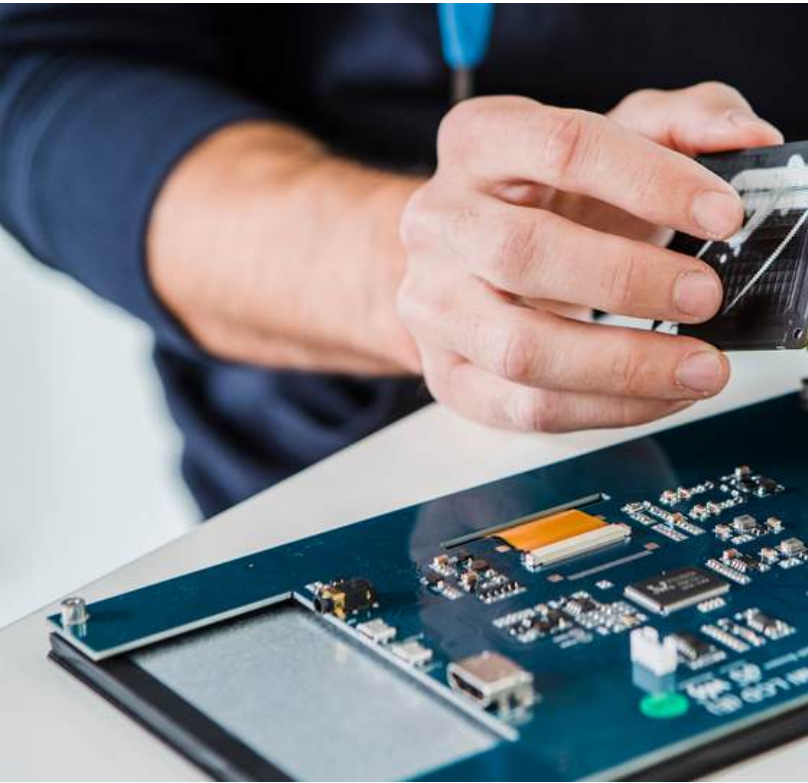
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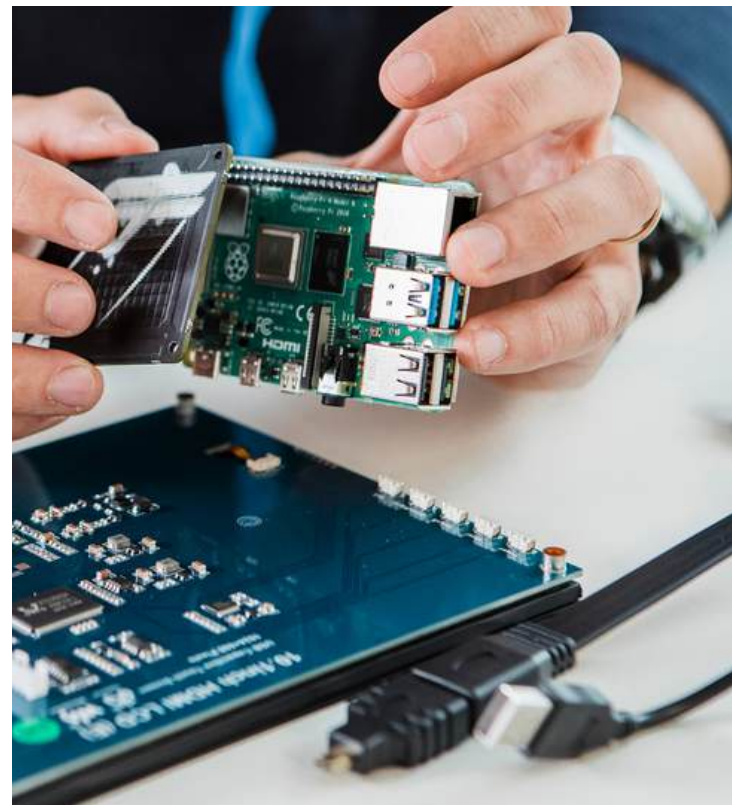
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Outlook



Preamble

In 2025, the IBT took another step forward, growing in people, in research output, and in the range of questions we're able to tackle at the intersection of human behavior and technology.

Our teams published in journals including the *Journal of Consumer Research*, the *Journal of Marketing*, *PNAS*, *Nature Machine Intelligence*, and *Harvard Business Review*. We presented at over 20 conferences worldwide. Our four professors, Christian Hildebrand, Emanuel de Bellis, Tobias Ebert, and Clemens Stachl, spent research stays at Stanford and the Copenhagen Center for Social Data Science, delivered keynotes and talks at institutions from Beijing and Hong Kong to Imperial College London, co-organized the 2nd Consumers+Technology Dialogue symposium at ESADE and the 2nd Regional Cultural Differences Conference in Vancouver, led workshops at the Università di Bologna, and brought science to younger audiences through a Children's University session. Individual recognitions included the William Stern Prize, the APS Rising Star Award, and a new SNSF Spark grant. Several new doctoral researchers joined our team, and four PhD candidates successfully defended their dissertations.

Within the university, we continued to contribute through service roles on the Senate Committee, the Research Committee, and the PMA Committee, reflecting our commitment to shaping the broader academic environment at HSG.

Beyond these milestones, what matters most to us is the kind of institute we're building: one where rigorous research, thoughtful mentoring, and genuine collaboration aren't just aspirations but daily practice. We're proud of where the IBT stands, and we're looking forward to what's ahead.



Value Creation for HSG in 2025

Acquired Competitive Funding

CHF 1.6 Mio.

Key Projects

SNF

- Actwell
- Financial Inclusion
- Regional Economics and Racial Prejudice
- Autonomous Products & Well-being
- The Conversational Consumer

DFG

- Residential Choice

Key Industry Partners

Loxo. DataRobot.

Equalure. Vorwerk. Audi.

Logitech. Swiss Re.

Number of Courses

**24 Bachelor, Master,
PhD & Executive
Courses**

Ranking-Relevant Publications

Journals: 12

Conferences: 20+

Top Publications in Marketing and Behavioral Science

4 articles

Development of Young Academics

9 PhD Students

2 Post-Docs

2 Research Interns

3 Affiliated Researcher

Selected PhD Placements

ETH Zurich. KEDGE Business School.

International Scholars Visiting the IBT

- Daniel Wentzel (RWTH Aachen University)
- Kirk Kristofferson (Ivey Business School)
- Michal Kosinski (Stanford Graduate School of Business)
- Anne Kathrin Klesse (Erasmus University)
- Robin Schimmelpfennig (University of Lausanne)
- Janis Zickfeld (Aarhus University)
- Andrea Weihrauch (University of Amsterdam)
- Tommaso Ferraco (University of Padova)
- Kryštof Petr (Czech Technical University Prague)

Directorate



Christian Hildebrand
Full Professor of
Marketing Analytics



Emanuel de Bellis
Associate Professor of
Empirical Research Methods



Clemens Stachl
Associate Professor of
Behavioral Science

The IBT-HSG offers an interdisciplinary work and research environment that puts a strong emphasis on collaboration and continuous learning. We provide an inclusive environment across cultures, languages, and research traditions, employing people from multiple nationalities.



Team



Bianka Ledermann | Admin



Tobias Ebert | Assistant Prof.



Ruben Laukenmann | Dr.



Timo Koch | Dr.



Michael Ohlinger | M.Sc.



Hauke Roggenkamp | M.Sc.



Max Bergmann | M.Sc.



Jonas Goergen | M.A.



Sophia Prix | M.Sc.



Anush Sridhar | M.Sc.



Philipp Winder | M.Sc.

Team



Aita Ammann | M.Sc.



Michele Russo | M.Sc.



Sabou Stocker | M.Sc.



Daria Leus | R.A.



Livius Schoenle | R.A.

Affiliated Researcher



Jana Berkessel | Dr.



Jan Digutsch | Dr.



Anouk Bergner | Dr.

New Joiners



Ruben Laukenmann
Postdoctoral Researcher

Ruben Laukenmann is a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Behavioral Science and Technology at the University of St Gallen. His research interests combine social psychology, cognitive modeling, and geographical analysis. As such his interests span from cognitive processes underlying social behavior to differences in the composition of regional social attitudes and beliefs.

Ruben works in the SNSF-funded project: “Economic Conditions and Racial Prejudice: A Regional Perspective”, that investigates the relationship of economic conditions with regional racial prejudice by examining different levels of spatial resolution, variations across time, and underlying cognitive processes of racial prejudice expression.

New Joiners



Aita Ammann | M.Sc.
Ph.D. candidate

Aita Ammann is a Research Associate and PhD Candidate at the Institute of Behavioral Science and Technology at the University of St Gallen. Her research focuses on individual differences and intraindividual psychological processes, particularly how thoughts, emotions, and behaviors unfold in everyday life. Her work aims to integrate psychological theory with data-driven approaches to capture the complexity of human functioning.

Aita received a B.Sc. and M.Sc. in Psychology from the University of Zürich.

During her time at the IBT, she hopes to further explore how person-centered theories and data-driven approaches can be brought together to capture the complexity of human psychological functioning. Outside of work, she enjoys spending most of her time running and being outdoors.

New Joiners



Sabou Stocker | M.Sc.
Ph.D. candidate

Sabou Rani Stocker is a Research Associate and PhD candidate at the Institute of Behavioral Science and Technology at the University of St. Gallen. In her research, she is particularly interested in the models explaining human thought and behavior when interacting with technology, and how we can uncover them with statistical methods and data. Additionally, she is also interested in how we can use language as data in behavioral research.

Sabou completed a Master's degree in Psychology at the University of Zurich and has worked in different roles with a focus on data analytics and data consulting prior to joining the IBT.

Outside of work, Sabou enjoys being outdoors, baking, cooking, and knitting.

New Joiners



Daria Leus
Research Assistant

Daria is a Research Assistant at the Institute of Behavioral Science and Technology at the University of St.Gallen, working on projects for the Autonomy Lab. She is a Master's student at the University of St.Gallen in the Strategy and International Management (SIM) program, currently pursuing her CEMS double degree between the University of St.Gallen and Cornell University.

With experience in brand management, she is interested in how behavioral science can help companies make their marketing more strategic. In her freetime, Daria enjoys petting the IBT office dog, spending time in nature, and travelling.



*»Technology
shapes
and is shaped
by human
thinking,
feeling
and
behaving»*

Research

Autonomy Lab

Our lab investigates how consumers interact with and respond to autonomous technologies. At the Autonomy Lab, we study the rise of technological autonomy and the importance of preserving human autonomy in an automated world. We focus on the convergence of two transformative trends: artificial intelligence and robotics. As these fields merge, they give rise to increasingly autonomous technologies that create new opportunities but also pose fundamental challenges for consumers, organizations, and societies. Led by Professor Emanuel de Bellis, our team combines expertise in marketing, psychology, and behavioral science to explore how consumers navigate this new technological landscape.

AI Impact Lab

Our research addresses some of the most consequential questions at the intersection of AI and human behavior — from autonomous shopping agents that act on consumers' behalf, to large language models reshaping financial advisory and mental healthcare, to workplace AI transforming how people make decisions and collaborate. This work is conducted with and supported by leading organizations across consumer electronics (Logitech), financial services (Swiss Re, UBS, Julius Bär), healthcare (Roche Diagnostics), and the automotive industry (Audi, VW, Skoda, Porsche).





Computational Behavioral Science Lab

The Computational Behavioral Science Lab combines behavioral science with computational methods to quantitatively study human behavior at the intersection of technology. Led by Prof. Stachl, the lab develops machine learning and AI-based approaches to predict and explain psychological phenomena, decision-making processes, and behavioral outcomes. Our research informs applications in people analytics, system and societal design, and supports economic and consumer decision-making for both organizations and individuals.

Geographical Behavioral Science Lab

We investigate how people and places shape one another. Led by Professor Tobias Ebert, our team combines insights from multiple disciplines to understand how psychological characteristics vary across regions and how these geo-psychological differences shape both individuals and societies. Using large-scale digital and behavioral data, our research aims to uncover how regional psychological differences emerge, how they affect people's well-being and economic behavior, and how they, in turn, drive macro-level processes such as innovation and technological development.

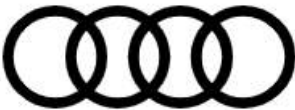


Research Collaboration & Project Funding

Public Funding Sources



Private Funding Sources



Research Collaboration

Universities



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA



Selected Project Funding

ACTWELL: Activities, Contexts, and Traits in Well-Being in Everyday Life Longitudinally



The Conversational Consumer: Mapping Voice Interaction Patterns Across Contexts & Time to Enhance AI-Mediated Consumer Touchpoints



Autonomous Products and Consumer Well-Being



The AI Assessment Effect: How AI-based Assessment Changes Human Behavior



Economic Conditions and Racial Prejudice: A Regional Perspective



Personality and Residential Choice

Towards Inclusive AI: Leveraging Conversational AI to Reduce Risk Exposure of Marginalized Consumers



Publications in 2025

Bemmann, F., Koch, T. K., Bergmann, M., Stachl, C., Buschek, D., Schoedel, R., & Mayer, S. (2025). Contextualizing smartphone-typed language with user input intention. *Proceedings of the Mensch und Computer 2025 (MuC '25)*, 520–526. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3743049.3748537>

Debelak, R., Koch, T. K., Aßenmacher, M., & Stachl, C. (2025). From embeddings to explainability: A tutorial on large-language-model-based text analysis for behavioral scientists. *Advances in Methods and Practices in Psychological Science*, 8(3), 25152459251351285. <https://doi.org/10.1177/25152459251351285>

Goergen, J., de Bellis, E., & Klesse, A.-K. (2025). AI assessment changes human behavior. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 122(25), e2425439122. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2425439122>

Goergen, J., de Bellis, E., & Klesse, A.-K. (2025). How AI assessment tools affect job candidates' behavior. *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2025/07/how-ai-assessment-tools-affect-job-candidates-behavior>

Grunenberg, E., Stachl, C., Breil, S. M., Schäpers, P., & Back, M. D. (2025). Predicting and explaining assessment center judgments: A cross-validated behavioral approach to performance judgments in interpersonal assessment center exercises. *Human Resource Management*, 64(2), 423–445. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.22252>

Hampton, W., & Hildebrand, C. (2025). Haptic rewards: How mobile vibrations shape reward response and consumer choice. *Journal of Consumer Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucaf025>

Hildebrand, C. (2025). Consumer AI interactions. In H. Sridhar (Ed.), *Oxford Bibliographies*. (Forthcoming)

Hildebrand, C., & Valenzuela, A. (2025). AI-mediated consumer–firm interactions: A framework and policy implications for increasingly automated marketplaces. In *Handbook of Marketing and Public Policy*. (Forthcoming)

Hildebrand, C., & Bergner, A. (2025). From tasks to partnerships: A typology of consumer–bot experiences. In K. Quinn & E. Spangenberg (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Psychology & Consumer Behaviour*. (Forthcoming)

Hostettler, D., Mayer, S., Albert, J. L., Jenss, K. E., & Hildebrand, C. (2025). Real-time adaptive industrial robots: Improving safety and comfort in human–robot collaboration. *Proceedings of the ACM CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. (Forthcoming)

Publications in 2025

Ilievski, F., Hammer, B., van Harmelen, F., Paassen, B., Saralajew, S., Schmid, U., Biehl, M., Bolognesi, M., Dong, X. L., Gashteovski, K., Hitzler, P., Marra, G., Minervini, P., Mundt, M., Ngomo, A.-C. N., Oltramari, A., Pasi, G., Saribatur, Z. G., Serafini, L., ... Villmann, T. (2025). Aligning generalization between humans and machines. *Nature Machine Intelligence*, 1–12.

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s42256-025-01109-4>

Obschonka, M., Kautonen, T., Ebert, T., & Götz, F. M. (2025). Entrepreneurial deviance as bright and dark character virtues: The Harry Potter study. *Small Business Economics*.

Roggenkamp, H., Boegershausen, J., & Hildebrand, C. (2025). DICE: Advancing social media research through digital-in-context experiments. *Journal of Marketing*.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/00222429251371702>

Russo, M., Prix, S., Goergen, J., & de Bellis, E. (2025). The 3 types of customers who buy smart products—and how to market to them. *Harvard Business Review*.

<https://hbr.org/2025/11/the-3-types-of-customers-who-buy-smart-products-and-how-to-market-to-them>

Wilson, L., Hartmann, R., Klauer, K. C., Laukenmann, R., & Calanchini, J. (2025). A tutorial on response-time extended multinomial processing tree models in social cognition. *Social Cognition*, 43(5), 425–451.

Winder, P., Hildebrand, C., & Hartmann, J. (2025). Biased echoes: Generative AI models reinforce investment biases and increase portfolio risks of private investors. *PLOS ONE*. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.032545>

Xu, L., Götz, F. M., Ebert, T., Silm, S., Vainik, U., Johnson, W., & Möttus, R. (2025). Does a small country have meaningful regional personality differences? The case of Estonia. *Journal of Personality*, 94(1), 13–28.

Zehnle, M., Hildebrand, C., & Valenzuela, A. (2025). Not all AI is created equal: A meta-analysis revealing drivers of AI resistance across markets, methods, and time. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijresmar.2025.02.005>

Selected Academic Presentations:

Bergmann, M. (2025, April 17). Investigating situations via smartphones: Bridging perception and reality with machine learning [Invited talk]. Stanford University, Stanford, USA.

Bergmann, M. (2025, May 19). The psychology of predictability: Investigating heterogeneity in smartphone-based well-being prediction and its association with person characteristics [Invited talk]. University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland.

Bergmann, M. (2025, December 8). From digital traces to behavioral insights: Investigating individual differences through smartphones and computational methods [Invited talk]. University of Münster, Münster, Germany.

Bergmann, M., Müller, S. M., Schoedel, R., & Stachl, C. (2025, July 21–24). Digital traces of well-being: Satisfaction with life manifests in everyday physical activity captured with smartphones [Poster presentation]. International Conference on Computational Social Science, Norrköping, Sweden.

Bergmann, M., Müller, S. M., Schoedel, R., & Stachl, C. (2025, September 21–24). Satisfaction with life manifests in everyday physical activity captured with smartphones [Conference presentation]. Arbeitstagung der Fachgruppe Differentielle Psychologie, Persönlichkeitspsychologie und Psychologische Diagnostik, Kassel, Germany.

Clegg, M., Hofstetter, R., de Bellis, E., & Schmitt, B. (2025). The rise of AI agents: Consumer reactions towards self-programming agents. Special session talk at the European Marketing Academy (EMAC) Conference, Madrid, Spain.

Clegg, M., Hofstetter, R., de Bellis, E., & Schmitt, B. (2025). The rise of AI agents: Consumer reactions towards self-programming agents. Special session talk at the Association for Consumer Research (ACR) Conference, Washington, DC, USA.

de Bellis, E., & Valenzuela, A. (2025). A conversation with Bernd Schmitt about consumers and technology. Moderated discussion at the Consumers + Technology Dialogue (CTD) Symposium, Barcelona, Spain.

Digutsch, J., Sust, L., Schoedel, R., Buehner, M., Koch, T., Bergmann, M., Aluffi, P. A., Racek, D., & Stachl, C. (2025, February 21). Digital footprints from smartphones predict life outcomes [Conference presentation]. Society for Personality and Social Psychology Annual Convention, Denver, CO, United States.

Digutsch, J., Sust, L., Schoedel, R., Buehner, M., Koch, T., Bergmann, M., Aluffi, P. A., Racek, D., & Stachl, C. (2025, September 23). Behavior speaks for itself? Smartphone behaviors predict life outcomes [Conference presentation]. Arbeitstagung der Fachgruppe Differentielle Psychologie, Persönlichkeitspsychologie und Psychologische Diagnostik, Kassel, Germany.

Selected Academic Presentations:

Ebert, T. (2025, April). Geographical personality differences [Lecture]. University of Padova, Italy.

Ebert, T. (2025, September). Spatial insights for personality psychology: New data, new directions [Keynote]. Conference on Personality and Psychological Assessment (DPPD), Kassel, Germany.

Ebert, T. (2025, December). The legacies of the dead: Using gravestones to study the causes and consequences of religiosity [Seminar]. University of Lausanne, Switzerland.

Gaerth, M., Roggenkamp, H., Hildebrand, C., & Jiang, Z. (2025). Using voice data to measure and predict consumer preferences. Special session at the Association for Consumer Research (ACR).

Goergen, J., de Bellis, E., & Klesse, A.-K. (2025). AI-based assessment changes consumer behavior. Talk at the La Londe Marketing Conference, Porquerolles Island, France.

Goergen, J., de Bellis, E., & Nyilasy, G. (2025). The zero-sum autonomy mindset: Why autonomy of new technologies can backfire. Special session talk at the European Marketing Academy (EMAC) Conference, Madrid, Spain.

Goergen, J., de Bellis, E., & Nyilasy, G. (2025). The zero-sum autonomy mindset: Why autonomy of new technologies can backfire. Special session talk at the Association for Consumer Research (ACR) Conference, Washington, DC, USA.

Hajighasemi, M., Sepeheri, A., Hildebrand, C., & Lamberton, C. (2025). Cuddly, not creepy: Zoomorphic AI companions deepen emotional connection and enhance user engagement. Special session at the Association for Consumer Research (ACR).

Koch, T. K., Eichstaedt, J., Schoedel, R., Bemann, F., Buehner, M., & Stachl, C. (2025, September 23). Associations of affective well-being and everyday language depend on context [Conference presentation]. Arbeitstagung der Fachgruppe Differentielle Psychologie, Persönlichkeitspsychologie und Psychologische Diagnostik, Kassel, Germany.

Koch, T. K., Talaifar, S., Racek, D., Digutsch, J., Aluffi, P., Schoedel, R., & Stachl, C. (2025, July 24). The digital authoritarian: Everyday behavioral patterns collected with smartphones predict authoritarianism [Conference presentation]. International Conference on Computational Social Science, Norrköping, Sweden.

Selected Academic Presentations:

Leung, E., Urminsky, O., Gai, P., de Bellis, E., Klesse, A.-K., Morewedge, C., Schmitt, B., Valenzuela, A., Cian, L., De Freitas, J., Puntoni, S., & Schroeder, J. (2025). Consumer reactions to artificial intelligence: From adoption to interaction. Roundtable at the Association for Consumer Research (ACR) Conference, Washington, DC, USA.

Roggenkamp, H., Boegershausen, J., & Hildebrand, C. (2025). Digital in-context experiments. La Londe Conference.

Sridhar, A., Ebert, T., de Bellis, E., & Puntoni, S. (2025). Analyzing perceived threats of artificial intelligence over time. Talk at the Consumers + Technology Dialogue (CTD) Symposium, Barcelona, Spain.

Sridhar, A., Ebert, T., de Bellis, E., & Puntoni, S. (2025). Analyzing perceived threats of artificial intelligence over time. Special session talk at the Association for Consumer Research (ACR) Conference, Washington, DC, USA.

Stachl, C. (2025, January). Behavioral metrics of individual differences: Combining smartphone sensing with machine learning [Invited talk]. Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin, Germany.

Stachl, C. (2025, February). Investigating psychological characteristics with mobile technologies and machine learning [Invited online talk]. University of Trier, Germany.

Stachl, C. (2025, February). Predicting psychological individual differences from mobile sensing data [Invited online talk]. ECNP – Get Digital.

Stachl, C. (2025, April). Understanding humans through technology and AI [Keynote]. University of Innsbruck, Austria.

Stachl, C. (2025, July). Mobile psychological assessments with smartphones and machine learning [Keynote]. ICCPAE 2025, Beijing, China.
Stachl, C. (2025, September). Real-world insights: Using mobile sensing and machine learning to predict psychological traits [Presentation]. Swiss Psychological Society Conference, Crans-Montana, Switzerland.

Stachl, C. (2025, October). Beyond the lab: Predicting behavior, traits, and cognition through mobile sensing and predictive modeling [Invited online talk]. University of California, Davis, USA.

Stachl, C. (2025, November). Transforming psychological research: Integrating mobile sensing with machine learning for behavioral insights [Invited talk]. University of Basel, Switzerland.

Selected Academic Presentations:

Valenzuela, A., de Bellis, E., & Klesse, A.-K. (2025). The past and future of AI: Threats, value, and the path to appreciation. Special session at the Association for Consumer Research (ACR) Conference, Washington, DC, USA.

Zimmermann, J., de Bellis, E., Hofstetter, R., & Puntoni, S. (2025). Toward customer-centric motion design: How regular motion paths increase liking. Special session talk at the European Marketing Academy (EMAC) Conference, Madrid, Spain.

Editorships:

Emanuel de Bellis

- Journal of Interactive Marketing (Associate Editor)
- Journal of Marketing and Technology (Editor)

Tobias Ebert

- Frontiers in Social Psychology - Computational Social Psychology (Associate Editor, Head Editor: Michal Kosinski)

Editorial Review Boards:

Christian Hildebrand

- Journal of Consumer Research (*JCR*)
- International Journal of Research in Marketing (*IJRM*)

Emanuel de Bellis

- Journal of Consumer Research (*JCR*)
- Journal of Political Marketing (*JPM*)
- International Journal of Research in Marketing (*IJRM*)

Clemens Stachl

- Psychological Science
-



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THE PERSONALITY PUZZLE

Blackwell

Modern Psychometrics

Cambridge

SMARTPHONES WITHIN PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE

ELLIS

Shmueli • Bruce
Stephens • Patel

DATA MINING FOR BUSINESS ANALYTICS

WILEY

jmp

Building Better Models with JMP® Pro

Grayson • Gardner • Stephens

jmp

Fundamentals of Predictive Analytics with JMP®

Klimberg
McCullough

THIRD
EDITION

MULTIVARIATE DATA ANALYSIS with Readings

Hair • Anderson • Tatham • Black

MACMILLAN

Multivariate Data Analysis

Hair / Anderson / Tatham

Second Edition

MACMILLAN

FOX

APPLIED REGRESSION ANALYSIS
and GENERALIZED LINEAR MODELS

SECOND
EDITION

SAE

Long

Regression Models for Categorical and Limited Dependent Variables

WILEY

How to Measure Anything

PEARSON

STATISTICS WITH JMP

STATISTICS WITH JMP

PEARSON

Teaching

With more than twenty courses and numerous contributions to programs across the University of St. Gallen, we aim to equip learners at all levels with the skills to understand human behavior in an increasingly technology-driven world. Our teaching is people-centered, interactive, and strongly application-oriented, combining behavioral science with emerging technologies such as AI and data-driven methods. Students consistently describe our courses as demanding yet highly rewarding, as they foster critical thinking, methodological rigor, and real-world problem-solving skills.

Bachelor Courses

- Methods: Empirical Social Research (de Bellis)
- Sustainable Minds: Personality Insights for Effective Climate Action (Ebert)

Master Courses

- Artificial Intelligence and Behavioral Science (CEMS; de Bellis, Ebert, Jonassen)
- Behavioral Science and Technology (MiMM; de Bellis, Stachl)
- Biostatistics (JMM; de Bellis)
- Consumer Behaviour and Methods (MiMM; Hildebrand, Stachl, Scharfenberger)
- Exkursionsseminar - Wirtschaftscluster als Treiber von Innovation und Wachstum: (Free Elective: Ebert)
- Introduction to Machine Learning in R (CEMS elective; Stachl)
- Machine Learning for Marketers (MiMM; Hildebrand)
- Marketing Functions (MiMM; Stachl, Amstutz, Eggenschwiler, Hofstetter)
- Marketing Analytics and Behavioral Insights (MCS; Hildebrand)
- Mobile Sensing and Behavioral Metrics (MBI; Stachl)
- Turning Geographic Information into Business Insights (MBI; Ebert)

PhD Courses

- Basics in Experimental Research (PMA; de Bellis, Sirén)
- Research Seminar on Marketing & Behavioral Science (PMA; de Bellis, Hildebrand, Ebert, Stachl)
- Statistics with R (PMA; Hildebrand)
- Writing Excellent Dissertations in Marketing (PMA; Hildebrand)

Executive Courses

- A/B Tests and Experiments in Practice (EMBA; de Bellis)
- Analytics (EMBAX; de Bellis)
- Analytics for Managers (Hildebrand)
- Customer Excellence in the Age of Data (Hildebrand)
- Digitalization & Smart Data Analytics (Hildebrand)
- Modern Marketing: From Funnels to Dynamic Sales Loops (Hildebrand)
- AI for Insurance Leaders (Hildebrand)



Ongoing Dissertations

Michael Ohlinger is a Ph.D. candidate at the Institute of Behavioral Science and Technology at the University of St.Gallen. His research interests combine personality psychology and geographical psychology with social data science. He is also interested in the assessment of psychological variables from text.

Michael received a B.Sc. in Psychology and a M.Sc. in Clinical and Cognitive Psychology at the University of Mannheim.



Michael Ohlinger | M.Sc.

Sophia Prix is a Research Associate and PhD Candidate at the Institute of Behavioral Science and Technology at the University of St. Gallen. Her main research area lies in how new technologies can be leveraged to better understand and predict human behavior and psychological functioning. She is currently working on how human relationships can be transferred to autonomous products to increase performance and collaboration. Likewise, she is interested in how behavioral interventions potentially affect decision-making and consumer behavior, but also compliance and action-taking regarding sustainability.

Sophia received a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Strasbourg. After that she completed a Master of Science in Psychology with a specialization in Social, Economic, and Decision-making Psychology at the University of Basel.



Sophia Prix | M.Sc.

Ongoing Dissertations

Anush Sridhar is a Research Associate and PhD Candidate at the Institute of Behavioral Science and Technology at the University of St Gallen. His research interests include human-technology relationship and financial decision-making. Anush's current research projects involve exploring the behavioral consequences of owning unique NFTs, and investigating the perception and adoption of technologies over time.

Anush received his B.A. (Honours) in Economics from Christ University. Following that, he completed his M.Sc. in Behavioural and Economic Science from the University of Warwick.



Anush Sridhar | M.Sc.

Michele Russo holds a Double Degree from Università Bocconi and the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore (PGP - MBA). He's currently an Academic Fellow at SDA Bocconi, where he conducts empirical research and teaches topics such as Business Statistics, AI & Machine Learning, and Market Research at both undergraduate and graduate levels.

Michele's research interests lie at the intersection of Natural Language Processing, Generative AI, and consumer behavior. At the IBT, he aims to deepen his understanding of using large language models to emulate human behavior.



Michele Russo | M.Sc.

Defended Dissertations

Hauke Roggenkamp has successfully defended his dissertation at the Institute of Behavioral Science and Technology, University of St. Gallen. His research examined the intersection of experimental economics, behavioral science, and marketing, with a particular focus on how digital environments—such as voice technologies and social media—shape pro-social behavior and decision-making.

Following the completion of his PhD, Hauke joined ETH Zurich as a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Chair of Technology Marketing, where he continues his work on technology-driven behavioral research.



Hauke Roggenkamp | Dr.

Maximilian Bergmann has successfully defended his dissertation at the Institute of Behavioral Science and Technology, University of St. Gallen. His doctoral research focused on leveraging computational methods and AI to better understand and predict human behavior, cognitive factors, and individual differences from digital footprints such as mobile sensing data.

Following the completion of his PhD, Maximilian continues his academic and research career, further exploring the intersection of human cognition, technology, and data-driven behavioral modeling.



Max Bergmann | Dr.

Defended Dissertations

Jonas Goergen has successfully defended his dissertation at the Institute of Behavioral Science and Technology, University of St. Gallen. His doctoral research focused on how emerging technologies—particularly AI-based assessments and smart products—shape consumer behavior, autonomy perceptions, and decision-making.

Following the completion of his PhD, Jonas joined KEDGE Business School as an Assistant Professor of Data Marketing and Artificial Intelligence, where he continues to study the impact of new technologies on consumers and organizations.



Jonas Goergen | Dr.

Philipp Winder has successfully defended his dissertation at the Institute of Behavioral Science and Technology, University of St. Gallen. His research focused on behavioral and digital finance, investigating how emerging technologies such as deepfakes, cryptocurrencies, and digital footprints influence consumer financial decision-making.

Following the completion of his PhD, Philipp joined a family-owned bank in Liechtenstein, specializing in blockchain banking and tailored services for financial intermediaries, fintechs, and professional clients.



Philipp Winder | Dr.

IBT Highlights throughout the year

1 - IBT Research Seminar Series with Anne Klesse

As part of the IBT Research Seminar Series, we welcomed Anne-Kathrin Klesse (Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University) for a talk on consumer interactions with artificial intelligence. Her presentation focused on algorithmic recommender systems and introduced the concept of “preference filtering,” describing how consumers selectively disclose core preferences when interacting with AI systems to avoid misclassification.

Drawing on multiple studies across eight product domains, the research highlighted important implications for recommendation quality and user experience, as well as for the broader understanding of human-AI interaction.



2 - EPoS Summer Summit 2025

IBT contributed to the EPoS Summer Summit 2025 at the University of Innsbruck, an interdisciplinary event bringing together researchers from psychology, AI, and related fields to discuss the transformative role of artificial intelligence in science and society. Clemens Stachl delivered a keynote on how mobile sensing and AI can be used to predict psychological traits and decision-making. His presentation highlighted both the potential of smartphone-based behavioral data for scalable psychological assessment and the limitations and challenges of AI-driven approaches. The summit provided a valuable platform for interdisciplinary exchange and critical reflection on the future of behavioral science in an increasingly data-driven world.



3 - Smart Products Report 2025

In 2025, IBT published the third edition of the Smart Products Report, providing insights into how Swiss consumers perceive and use smart technologies and AI. Based on a representative survey of 1,062 participants, the report highlights key trends such as time savings through smart products, concerns about skill loss, generational differences in AI adoption, and perceived trade-offs between automation and autonomy.

The findings also point to increasing personification of smart devices, underlining the evolving relationship between consumers and technology.



4 - Invited Talk at the University of Padova

Tobias Ebert was invited to present his research at the Università degli Studi di Padova, one of Europe's oldest academic institutions.

His presentation focused on regional psychological differences and their implications for both macroeconomic outcomes and individual well-being. In particular, he discussed how such differences contribute to variations in the adoption of disruptive innovations, as well as disparities in longevity and quality of life across regions.

We gratefully acknowledge Tommaso Feraco for the invitation and for fostering an engaging and intellectually stimulating exchange.



5 - IBT Research Seminar Series with Janik Zickfeld

As part of the IBT Research Talk Series, we welcomed Janis Zickfeld (Aarhus University). His presentation examined emotional crying in the workplace, drawing on studies from the UK and Germany. The findings highlighted that emotional expression at work is relatively common, often linked to stress-related factors, yet frequently perceived negatively and associated with a lack of support.



The talk sparked an engaging discussion on the role of emotions in professional environments.

6 - Consumers+Technology Dialogue 2025

Emanuel de Bellis co-organized the second edition of the CTD, held at ESADE Barcelona, which brought together an international group of scholars and practitioners.

The dialogue provided a platform for engaging discussions on current developments and future directions of artificial intelligence research in marketing and psychology. Contributions from leading researchers, including Emanuel de Bellis, enriched the exchange and fostered a highly collaborative atmosphere.

The next CTD will take place in Switzerland in 2026, with preparations already underway.



7 - Symposium on Research with Geographic Data

In May 2025, IBT hosted a symposium on research with geographic data at the University of St. Gallen, organized by Tobias Ebert. The event brought together researchers from across HSG as well as external experts from academia and industry.

Contributions highlighted the potential of spatial data to advance research on society, the economy, the environment, and human behavior, covering topics such as mobility analytics, sustainability, and AI-driven applications.



8 - Research Stay at Stanford University

Christian Hildebrand kicked off his research semester at Stanford University in spring and completed ongoing research with Prof. Jonathan Levav on how gestural interfaces impact the consumer experience and choice in large scale field settings and in the lab. The proximity to innovative technology companies in Silicon Valley and excellent researchers at Stanford University helped to advance an ongoing revision at the *Journal of Consumer Research* and to initiate new projects with colleagues at the business school.





9 - European Marketing Academy (EMAC) Conference 2025

IBT researchers contributed to the European Marketing Academy (EMAC) Conference 2025, whose theme “Human and Smart Marketing: Understanding and Enhancing Our Future” closely aligns with IBT’s research on consumer-technology interactions.

IBT faculty co-chaired two sessions and presented four research projects. Jonas Görgen, together with Emanuel de Bellis and Greg Nyilasy, presented work on the “zero-sum autonomy mindset,” showing how increasing technological autonomy can reduce adoption when perceived as threatening consumers’ own autonomy. Jenny Zimmermann, with Emanuel de Bellis, Reto Hofstetter, and Stefano Puntoni, presented research on customer-centric motion design, demonstrating how regular motion paths in self-moving products can enhance consumer responses.

Hauke Roggenkamp, together with Johannes Boegershausen and Christian Hildebrand, introduced “DICE,” a methodological approach to conducting ecologically valid social media experiments while maintaining experimental control. Melanie Clegg, with Emanuel de Bellis, Reto Hofstetter, and Bernd Schmitt, presented research on consumer reactions to agentic AI, highlighting how preferences depend on the level of self-programming capabilities.

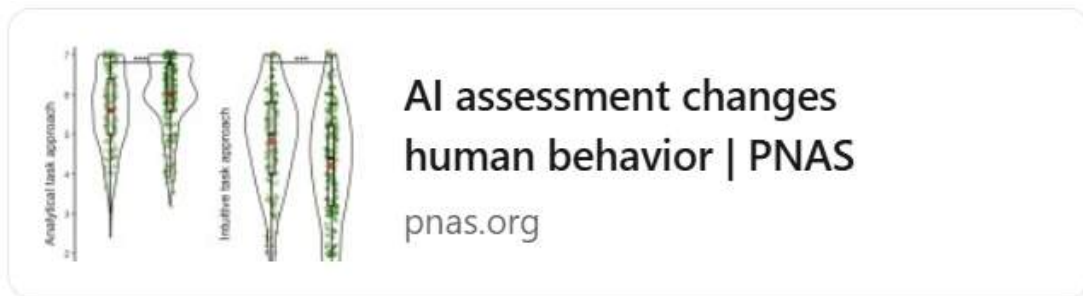
Overall, the contributions underline IBT’s role in advancing research on how consumers interact with emerging technologies and in developing innovative methods to study these phenomena.

10 - AI Assessment Effect Published in PNAS

In 2025, research by Jonas Goergen and Emanuel de Bellis (IBT-HSG), together with Anne-Kathrin Klesse, was published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS).

The paper introduces the concept of the “AI assessment effect,” demonstrating that individuals systematically adjust their self-presentation when they believe they are evaluated by artificial intelligence rather than by humans. Across 12 studies, the authors show that individuals tend to present themselves as more analytical and less intuitive, aligning their behavior with perceived algorithmic preferences.

This work highlights important implications for the growing use of AI in evaluation contexts, including hiring and performance assessments.



11 - Recognition: Top 40 Under 40

Tobias Ebert, Assistant Professor for Behavioral Science & Technology at IBT-HSG, was named to the Top 40 under 40 list by Capital magazine. The annual ranking recognizes outstanding young leaders across business, politics, academia, and society in Germany, based on their achievements, engagement, and future potential.

Ebert’s research focuses on regional psychological differences and their implications for individual behavior and macroeconomic development.



12 - Team Retreat 2025

Our annual hiking retreat in the Alpstein has become a valued IBT tradition. In 2025, we continued this tradition with a two-day retreat, including an overnight stay in the mountains.

The retreat offered a valuable opportunity to spend extended time together beyond everyday work, enjoy the natural surroundings, and strengthen team spirit. The combination of hiking, informal conversations, and shared experiences made it a memorable time for everyone involved.



13 - Research Featured in Harvard Business Review

In 2025, research by Emanuel de Bellis on the impact of artificial intelligence in hiring processes, was featured in the Harvard Business Review.

The work highlights how the use of AI in candidate evaluation can systematically influence applicant behavior. In particular, candidates tend to emphasize analytical traits while downplaying qualities such as creativity, empathy, and intuition when they know they are being assessed by AI.

These findings point to important implications for organizations adopting AI-based hiring tools. While such systems are often intended to reduce bias, they may also introduce new forms of distortion by shaping how candidates present themselves.



14 - Keynote at ICCPAE 2025

Clemens Stachl delivered a keynote at the International Conference on Cognitive & Psychological Assessment & Enhancement (ICCPAE 2025) in Beijing. His presentation focused on the use of mobile sensing for psychological assessment, demonstrating how everyday smartphone behavior can serve as a scalable and dynamic source for measuring personality and other psychological characteristics.

The conference brought together researchers and practitioners from psychology, AI, and neuroscience, providing a valuable platform for interdisciplinary exchange and collaboration.



15 - Journal of Interactive Marketing – Best Paper (Finalist / Honorable Mention)

The paper “The Power of AI-Generated Voices: How Digital Vocal Tract Length Shapes Product Congruency and Ad Performance” by Christian Hildebrand and Emanuel de Bellis, published in the Journal of Interactive Marketing, received an Honorable Mention for Best Paper Award (2025). The research provides novel insights into how AI-generated voice characteristics influence consumer perception and marketing effectiveness.



16 - Research Seminar: AI Anthropomorphism and User Trust

We welcomed Robin Schimmelpfennig. His talk examined whether making AI systems more human-like influences user trust and engagement.

Drawing on large-scale, cross-national studies involving real-time interactions with language models, the findings show that while anthropomorphic design increases perceptions of human-likeness, it does not necessarily enhance trust or user engagement. The results challenge common assumptions in AI design and highlight the importance of context- and culture-specific approaches to developing responsible AI systems.

2nd Regional Cultural Differences Conference

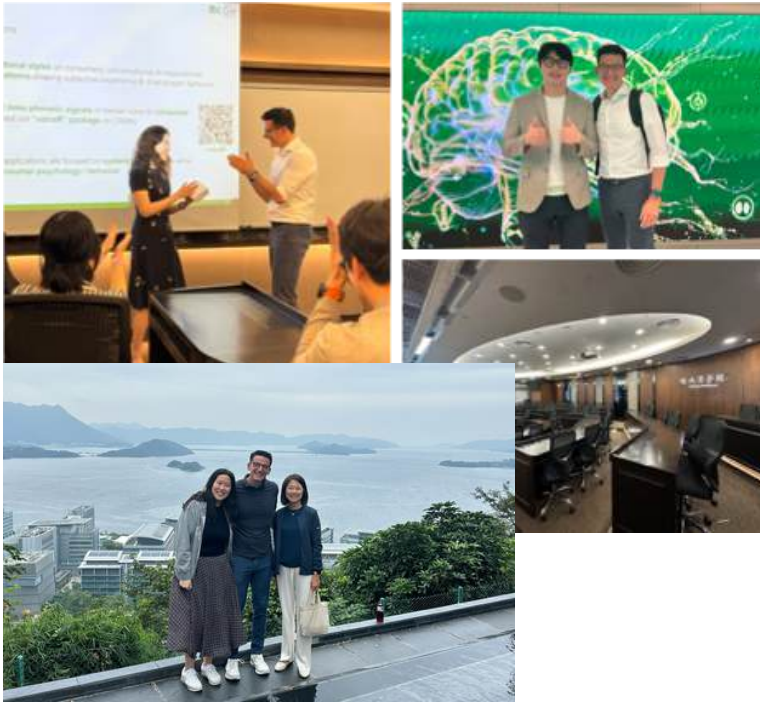
17 - Research Initiative: Regional Cultural Differences

IBT research, led by Tobias Ebert, advances a novel interdisciplinary approach to studying regional cultural differences within countries. This line of work examines how variations in cultural norms and behaviors across regions can help explain differences in economic development and societal outcomes.

The initiative brings together an international network of researchers, including Friedrich Götz and Eric Hehman (McGill University), as well as collaborators such as Thomas Talhelm, Martin Obschonka, Ruben Laukenmann, Michele Gelfand, and Sandra Matz.

A dedicated conference on regional cultural differences further strengthened this growing research community and facilitated exchange across disciplines.





18 - Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) & City University of Hong Kong (CityU)

Christian Hildebrand was invited by the Departments of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) and City University of Hong Kong (CityU) and gave talks on the use of voice and audio analytics methods in marketing and behavioral science, with a particular emphasis on digital finance applications and new frameworks for data collection.

The visit provided an opportunity to further strengthen the visibility of IBT-HSG's research activities in Asia and to identify new avenues for collaboration. Particular emphasis was placed on fostering core research areas at the intersection of finance and marketing in technology-driven environments such as Hong Kong.



19 - University of Bologna

At the invitation of Prof. Francisco Villarroel, Christian Hildebrand conducted a multi-day workshop on language and voice analysis. During the visit, he also presented recent research on systematic biases that may arise from the use of large language models (LLMs) in financial advisory. The presentation generated strong interest among faculty members and led to the initiation of a new collaborative research project as well as the co-supervision of a doctoral dissertation.

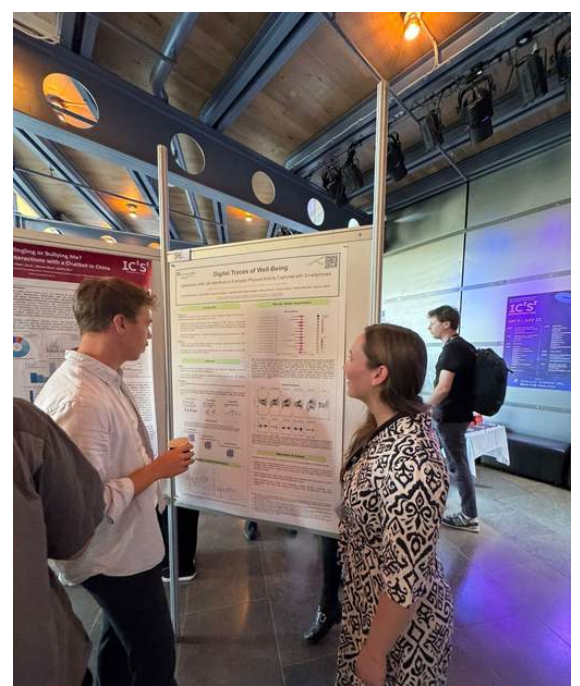
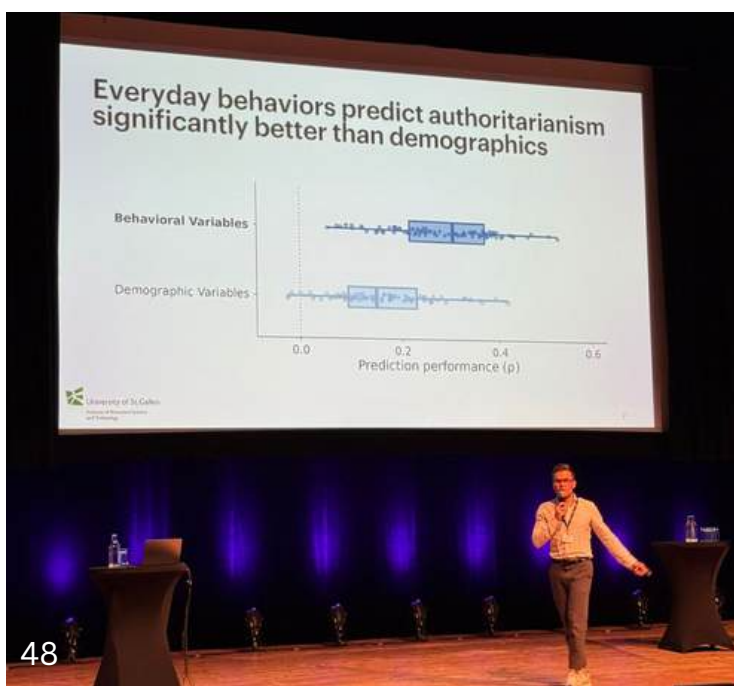


20 - CBS Lab at IC²S² 2025

IBT researchers participated in the 11th International Conference on Computational Social Science (IC²S²) in Norrköping, Sweden, a leading interdisciplinary forum bringing together scholars from sociology, psychology, computer science, economics, and related fields to study human behavior using computational approaches.

Timo Koch and Maximilian Bergmann presented their latest research and engaged with an international audience. Timo Koch shared findings on predicting authoritarian attitudes from smartphone data in a blitz talk and accompanying poster presentation. Maximilian Bergmann presented research on life satisfaction and its relationship with smartphone-based physical activity patterns.

The conference provided valuable opportunities for interdisciplinary exchange, feedback, and networking, contributing to the further development of IBT's research at the intersection of behavioral science and technology.



21 - University College Dublin (UCD)

Christian Hildebrand was an invited speaker of the UCD camp and presented recent work on conversational AI and the impact for consumer decision-making. The visit provided valuable opportunities for academic exchange and networking, as well as for supporting early-career researchers through an ideation workshop with leading scholars from Europe and the United States.



22 - Research Seminar: Magical Experiences and Consumer Response

IBT welcomed Daniel Wentzel (RWTH Aachen University). His talk explored how magical experiences influence consumer responses, drawing on qualitative interviews, physiological measures, and experimental studies.

The findings showed that seemingly inexplicable experiences can evoke strong emotional and physiological reactions, which are attributed to positive interpretations and result in highly enjoyable consumer experiences. The research provides valuable insights for understanding and designing engaging customer experiences.



IBT Research Talk Series with Daniel Wentzel:
Pure magic:
How magicians create and how consumers respond to magical experiences

From insight
to impact.

23 - IBT at DPPD 2025

IBT-HSG researchers participated in the bi-annual meeting of the German Psychological Society's DPPD section in Kassel, centered on "Individual Differences in the Digital Age". Tobias Ebert delivered a keynote on spatial data in personality psychology, highlighting new opportunities to study behavior and well-being in context.

IBT researchers further contributed to symposia on geo-spatial and smartphone-based data, covering topics such as residential choice, language use, life outcomes, and physical activity. In addition, a workshop on machine learning in psychological research facilitated exchange on methods and applications.

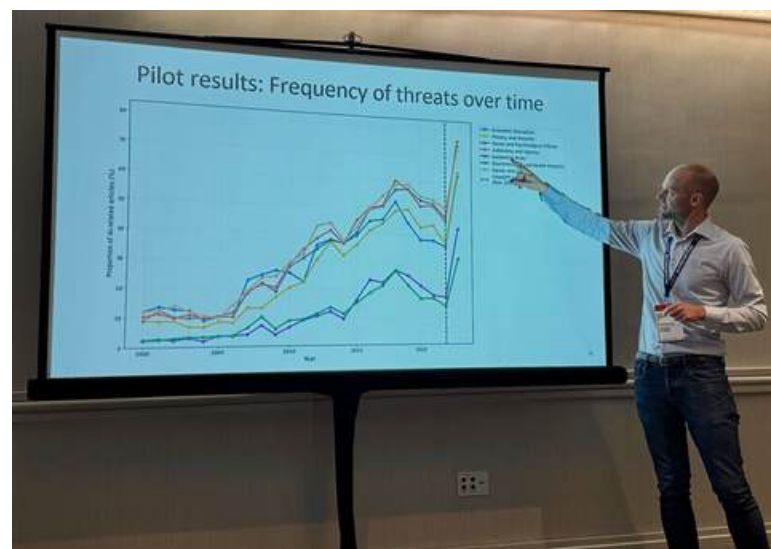
The conference offered a valuable platform for collaboration and highlighted IBT's focus on digital behavioral data.



24 - Association for Consumer Research

At the Association for Consumer Research (ACR) Conference, Emanuel de Bellis presented joint research with Stefano Puntoni, Anush Sridhar, and Tobias Ebert on how media discourse around threats from artificial intelligence has evolved over time.

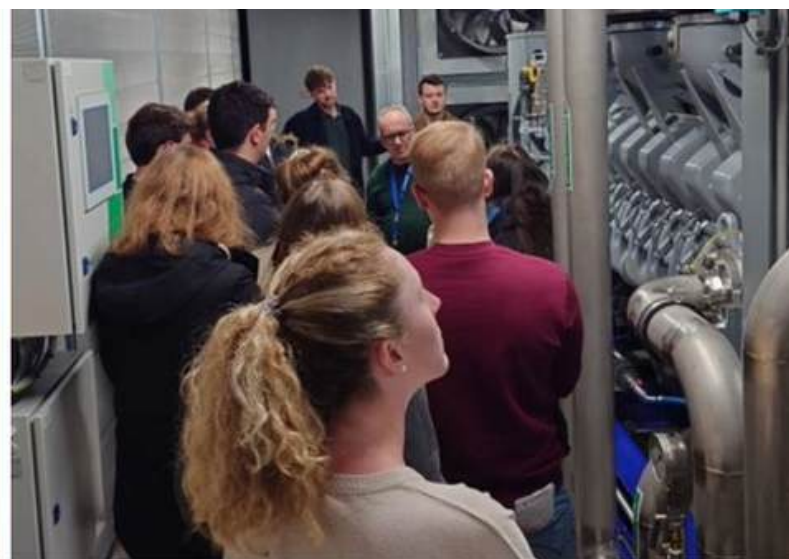
The study examines changes in the prevalence and nature of perceived AI-related threats, highlighting a significant increase in media attention following the release of ChatGPT. By analyzing large-scale textual data, the project contributes to a better understanding of how public narratives around AI risks emerge and develop.



25 - Study Trip: New Teaching Initiative

Under the leadership of Tobias Ebert, a group of 20 students from the University of St. Gallen participated in a study trip on “Economic Clusters as Drivers of Innovation and Growth” from October 27–29, 2025.

The excursion explored how regional clusters contribute to innovation and economic success, with a focus on examples such as the life sciences hub in Basel and the multifaceted economic ecosystem of Frankfurt. Through site visits and discussions, students gained insights into the role of networks, location strategies, and policy in shaping competitive business environments.





26 - CHI 2025 – Honorable Mention Best Paper

The paper “Real-Time Adaptive Industrial Robots: Improving Safety and Comfort in Human-Robot Collaboration” by Christian Hildebrand (with D. Hostettler, S. Mayer, J. L. Albert, and K. E. Jenss) received an Honorable Mention for the Best Paper Award at *CHI 2025*, one of the leading international conferences in human-computer interaction. The recognition places the work among the top contributions in the field and underscores its relevance for advancing human-technology interaction.



Honorable Mention Best Paper Award (Top ~5%)

27 - Wiley Top Cited Article – MindMiner

The paper “MindMiner: Uncovering Linguistic Markers of Mind Perception as a New Lens to Understand Consumer-Smart Object Relationships” by Christian Hildebrand (with A. Bergner and J. Hartmann), published in the *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, was recognized as a Wiley Top Cited Article (2025). This distinction highlights the paper’s strong academic impact and its contribution to understanding how consumers perceive and interact with intelligent technologies.



28 - Smart Products Research Featured in Harvard Business Review

Research by Emanuel de Bellis and three current or former PhD students (Michele Russo, Sophia Prix, Jonas Goergen) was featured in the Harvard Business Review.

The study shows that customers do not value “smartness” per se, but rather how smart products address specific needs. It identifies three distinct customer segments—comfort-seekers, purpose-seekers, and efficiency-seekers—highlighting fundamentally different ways individuals derive value from technology.

The findings underscore that successful marketing of smart products depends less on technological sophistication and more on aligning product benefits with customer-relevant use cases.





29 - EDHEC Business School, Nice

At the invitation of EDHEC Business School, Christian Hildebrand participated in this year's Marketing Camp focused on the future of generative AI in marketing. The event brought together leading scholars and editors of major marketing journals, including Colin Campbell (*Journal of Advertising*), Martin Wetzels (*Journal of Service Research*), and Dipayan Biswas (*Journal of Business Research*).

As part of a roundtable discussion, participants explored the growing integration of academic research and managerial practice, alongside broader developments in AI-driven marketing. The exchange with international colleagues, including Wolfgang Ulaga (INSEAD), provided valuable insights into emerging research directions, the role of AI in marketing scholarship, and strategic challenges for business schools.

The event offered important impulses for the strategic positioning of IBT-HSG and strengthened connections with the international marketing research community, particularly through direct engagement with journal editors.

30 - ESADE Business School, Barcelona

At the invitation of Ana Valenzuela, Christian Hildebrand visited ESADE Business School. The visit enabled an intensive exchange with a long-standing research collaborator and contributed to the advancement of several joint projects. These included a meta-analysis on AI resistance (forthcoming in the *International Journal of Research in Marketing*) as well as a handbook chapter with Martin Mende and Maura Scott (Arizona State University).

In addition, the visit provided insights into ESADE's state-of-the-art film studio used for executive education. These impressions offered valuable inspiration for the further development of digital teaching and executive education formats at the University of St. Gallen.



31 - Behavioral Science at the Children's University

Emanuel de Bellis introduced more than 500 children to behavioral science and experimentation at the Universität St.Gallen's Children's University.

Through interactive demonstrations, participants explored key concepts such as selective attention, anchoring, and embodied cognition. The session also introduced fundamental principles of scientific thinking, including the importance of experimentation, precise measurement, and critical reasoning.

The initiative highlights IBT's commitment to science outreach and fostering early interest in behavioral research.



32 - IBT Research Seminar Series with Andrea Weihrauch



As part of the IBT Research Seminar Series, we welcomed Andrea Weihrauch (University of Amsterdam). Her talk examined how service robots can be designed to signal racial inclusivity and the potential trade-offs associated with such approaches.

The findings show that while racialized robot designs can enhance perceptions of inclusiveness, they may simultaneously reduce perceived warmth, competence, and overall acceptance. The research provides important insights into how organizations can balance inclusivity signaling with positive consumer responses in the design of AI-driven technologies.

33 - AI and Human Generalization – published in Nature Machine Intelligence

The paper (with Clemens Stachl) addresses a fundamental challenge in human–AI collaboration: humans and AI systems generalize knowledge in fundamentally different ways. While humans form abstract concepts, AI relies on statistical patterns, programmed rules, or hybrid approaches. The research combines insights from cognitive science and AI to map these differences across how generalization is defined, achieved, and evaluated. Understanding these gaps is essential for developing AI systems that align with human reasoning and values, enabling more effective human–AI teams in scientific discovery and decision-making contexts. The work identifies key interdisciplinary research challenges that must be addressed to achieve cognitively supported AI alignment.

nature machine intelligence

Outlook

As we look toward 2026, the IBT enters a new phase shaped by both continuity and deliberate reinvention. Our research agenda has never been more coherent or more timely. Across our research groups, flagship projects are scaling up: the ACTWELL program continues its longitudinal investigation of well-being in everyday life; the newly funded SNF Conversational Consumer project maps voice interaction patterns across time and context; and a growing portfolio of collaborations with Swiss Re, Kärcher, Vorwerk, and others. These projects anchor our research in the practical realities of organizations navigating technological change.

New research directions initiated during the 2025 research semester are beginning to take shape as full projects. The growing network of international partners, from ESADE to Bologna to City University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, creates the scaffolding for multi-site research designs that are increasingly necessary to understand human-AI interaction across cultures and markets.

On the teaching front, we remain committed to delivering rigorous, practice-relevant education across all levels of the HSG curriculum. We will continue to develop and refine our executive and doctoral formats, drawing on the insights gathered from ESADE's approach to digital executive education and our own ongoing experimentation with how to make behavioral science accessible to non-specialist audiences.

The IBT was founded with the idea that behavioral science and technology, taken together, offer one of the most powerful lenses to understand and improve human life. That conviction has only deepened this year and we look forward to shaping 2026.



Impressum

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From insight
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