



CEDIC

Centre for Digitalization, Culture and Society



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Findings and activities at CEDIC 2021-2025

OSLOMET

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Letter from the Directors of CEDIC



Marit Haldar, Co-Director of Cedic
Photo: Sonja Balci OsloMet



Rune Halvorsen, Co-Director of Cedic
Photo: Pål Arne Kvalnes OsloMet

We founded CEDIC as a response to the growing impact of digitalization on public services in Norway. From the beginning, our aim was to understand what digitalization means for people's everyday encounters with the welfare state – and for society more broadly.

CEDIC is a virtual centre at OsloMet. It started as part of an internal initiative to strengthen the academic expertise on digitalisation at OsloMet. Many researchers were already working on questions related to technology and digitalization from a social science perspective, but these efforts were fragmented. We wanted to bring them together to create a more coherent and visible field of expertise.

From the outset, we didn't just want to study the public sector in isolation. We were interested in how digitalization intersects with the market, civil society, and the family. Over time, we've expanded our scope to explore how these

different sectors interact and how they shape people's lives. While digital technologies are often presented as solutions to staffing shortages and efficiency challenges in the public sector, we believe it is vital to consider the risks – especially new forms of exclusion, marginalization, and inequality. The fragmented state of digitalization research in Norway was another key reason why CEDIC was needed.

CEDIC has grown considerably since we started with just four people. Over the past four years, we have built a broad network at OsloMet and extended it nationally and internationally. Today, we collaborate with municipalities, private companies, and other universities. A major priority for us has been to build long-term partnerships – with stakeholders outside the university. That long-term perspective has made it possible to pursue larger grants and more ambitious projects.

One of our biggest achievements is the DIGIT research school, which connects PhD students across disciplines and institutions. It has already supported more than 100 PhD students – despite being only halfway through its funding period. When we launched DIGIT, we worried there wouldn't be enough candidates working in this field. But the opposite happened – interest has only grown, especially with the rapid development of AI. In fact, ChatGPT was launched just as DIGIT held its first seminar – it felt like we had hit a trend at exactly the right time.

CEDIC's success also shows in the career trajectories of our colleagues. Several researchers who joined us have since achieved permanent academic positions or been promoted to professor, both at OsloMet and other universities.

One of the most rewarding aspects of our work has been building bridges between disciplines and research environments. We have encouraged collaboration instead of competition, and we believe that fostering a culture of knowledge-sharing is essential – not only within OsloMet but also in municipalities and public institutions more broadly. Norway invests heavily in societal resilience, but that only pays off when we collaborate.

Communication with stakeholders and dissemination of findings have also been a priority for us. In addition to academic publishing, we organize CEDIC Talks and conferences to make our research more accessible. We see communication and dissemination as an ongoing responsibility. It is also a way to make OsloMet's researchers more visible – both to each other and to policymakers, and practitioners.

Looking ahead, we believe that it is crucial that CEDIC explores not only the social, but also the environmental consequences of digitalization. It is not enough to ask whether digital technologies are efficient. We also need to ask whether they are sustainable, in terms of energy use and resources. The intersection between the digital and the green transformation of society will be an important area in the future.

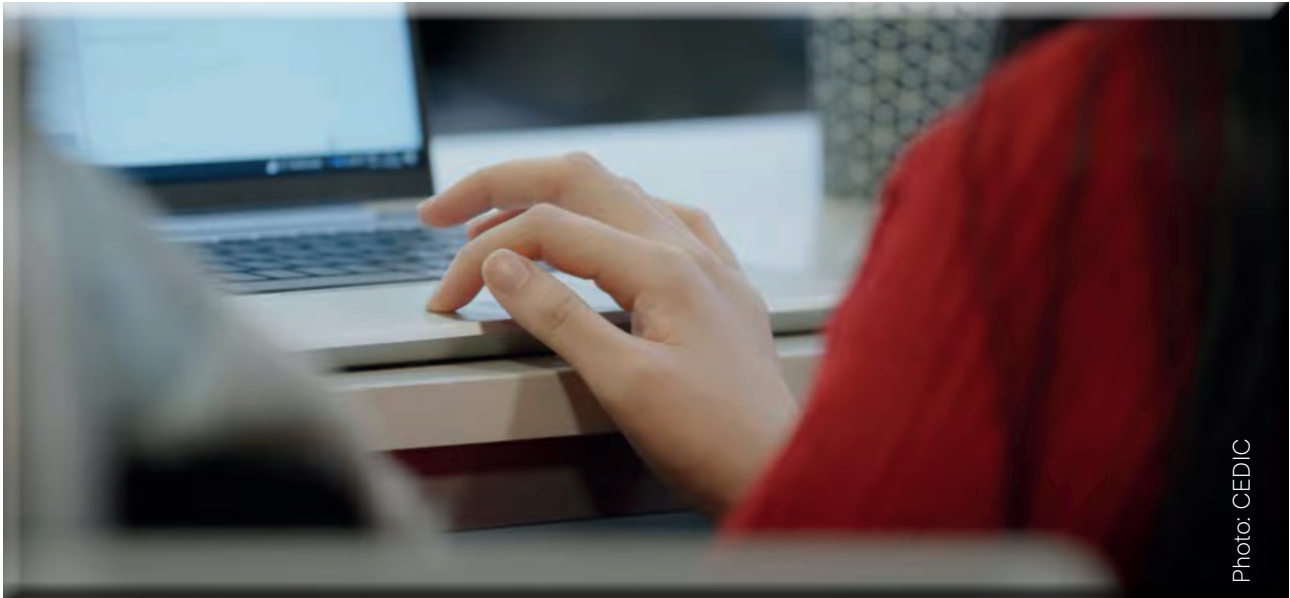
We also believe that social science and humanities perspectives are more important than ever. Our ambition for CEDIC is to contribute knowledge for a more just and inclusive society – not only a more efficient one. To achieve this, we will continue to foster collaboration across departments and disciplines at OsloMet, nationally and internationally.

Best regards,
Marit Haldar & Rune Halvorsen
Co-Directors, CEDIC



CEDIC

Why Digitalization?



Norway aims to become one of the most digitalized countries in the world by 2030. As digital technologies increasingly shape interactions between people, the shift to digital systems in public administration and everyday communication has significant societal consequences. While new digital solutions offer efficiency and accessibility, they also carry risks of exclusion, marginalization, and widening social inequalities.

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has impacted public administration, offering new possibilities for efficiency, accessibility, and responsiveness. Governments worldwide have embraced digitalization to streamline administrative processes, enhance public service delivery, and develop data-driven policy solutions. Technologies such as automated welfare services, digital identification systems, and AI-driven decision-making have become increasingly prevalent. These innovations have led to faster processing times and improved adaptability in the public sector but also raise critical challenges related to cybersecurity, digital accessibility, bias in AI systems, and ethical governance.

CEDIC's Mission

CEDIC's core mission is to develop interdisciplinary knowledge on digitalisation of society.

The centre investigates social policy development in the digital age, analysing how governments and institutions navigate digital infrastructures and their effects on governance, participation, and welfare provision. A key focus is the intersection between digitalization, ethics, and law, where human rights considerations shape the regulation and implementation of digital welfare services. CEDIC also explores how different public and private stakeholders, including technology developers, public authorities, service providers, and end users, negotiate the design and implementation of digitalized public services.

Beyond policy and governance, CEDIC examines the everyday impact of digitalization in key institutions such as schools, child welfare institutions, nursing homes, working life and the family environments. Digital tools influence professional practices, user interactions, and access to social services, making it essential to assess both intended benefits and unintended consequences.



Photo: Istock Pixabay

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Growth and Expansion

The Centre for Digitalization, Culture and Society (CEDIC) was established in 2020 to study these transformations and their impact on democracy, governance, and social rights. Since its founding, CEDIC has expanded significantly. What started as a small research initiative has grown into a research centre. As of 2025, 20 researchers, four postdoctoral fellows, and eight PhD students are associated with CEDIC. CEDIC have established collaboration with about 40 partners, including public authorities and private sector businesses.

Future Ambitions

Looking ahead, CEDIC aims to further expand its research capacity and strengthen international collaborations. CEDIC's priorities include advancing AI and data-driven public services, ensuring transparency, fairness, and accountability in digital governance, and expanding DIGIT's training programs to equip PhD students with the necessary tools to navigate the digital transition.

Additionally, the centre is engaging with policymakers, municipalities, and industry partners to co-develop innovative solutions for public services.

By integrating interdisciplinary research, public engagement, and international collaboration, CEDIC plays a key role in shaping the future of digital governance and public services.

The centre remains committed to providing knowledge that informs policy discussions and contributes to a socially sustainable digital transformation in Norway.

CEDIC Talks



The audience at CEDIC Talks on January 30, 2025, at DNV. Photo: CEDIC

CEDIC has hosted a total of 25 CEDIC Talks between 2020 and 2025. The aim of these seminars and webinars has been to disseminate knowledge and increase awareness of the social and political consequences of digitalization. The topics discussed range from digital transformation to social development, health and welfare, housing, working life, and inequality and inclusion.

Among the speakers are both Norwegian and international researchers. In addition, CEDIC has had an extensive collaboration with many non-academic partners from both the private and public sectors – many of whom have contributed to knowledge-sharing. The combination of academic and practical insights has made CEDIC Talks a unique arena for knowledge exchange and the generation of new ideas and cooperations.

Exploring the Future of Digital Norway

During the autumn and winter of 2024/2025, CEDIC organized four Talks focusing on the government's digitalization policy. We discussed the ambition to become a fully digital society by 2030, as outlined in the government's latest digitalization strategy.

But we also explored digitalization and politics in a more concrete sense. The topics included housing development and health services considering the “ageing in place” policy, and the government's goal of improving coordination across sectors and administrative levels.

Digitalization is often presented as the solution to many of the challenges we face. Through this seminar series, our network of experts from different sectors and industries has helped us understand the consequences of digitalization as a tool for social development – both intended and unintended, for better and for worse.

Welfare technology was highlighted as key to enabling more people to live at home longer and avoid hospital stays, but the consequences of home-hospital was also discussed in a broader sense. Digital platforms and shared solutions were emphasized as important tools for increasing efficiency, productivity, and collaboration in public service delivery. However, new collaborations can also lead to the cessation of other important collaborations.

An important aspect is that digitalization is one of several solutions. We therefore also discussed the role of neighbourhoods, social meeting places, and cooperation between public, private, and voluntary sectors in providing quality welfare services. In addition, digital transformation cannot succeed without attention to a wide range of non-technological factors. Throughout the Talk-series, we explored how values, resources, competence, and organizational culture shape the welfare state and the potential for successful digital transformation.

Importantly, we've tried to maintain a critical perspective on digitalization. Why is it a goal to be the most, rather than the best, digitalized society? We've addressed issues such as loneliness, unequal access to welfare services, and the ethical risks of automating decision-making processes. The future of Digital Norway is being shaped, and CEDIC will continue to follow its development.

Overview of Completed CEDIC Talks

Digitalization and Boundary Work, February 2025

Speakers: Carl Christian Thodesen (OsloMet), Kjetil Rommetveit (University of Bergen), Lars Erik Lie (Ipsos), Marit Hermansen (NAV), Fredrik Gulowsen (Nyby), Anna-Stina Ferner (BoVel), Dag Erik Johnsen (Akershus County Municipality), Silje Sande and Bjørg Vainio Gjøn (Lillestrøm Municipality), Vera Hovelsen and nut Fiane (Føyen Law Firm), Sidsel Nordhagen (KS Digital), Grete Kvernland-Berg (PA Consulting), Are Vergard Haug (OsloMet) and Alexander Ruser (University of Agder)

Remote Care and Hospital Services at Home, January 2025

Speakers: Astrid Rusås Kristoffersen and Sharmini Alagaratnam (DNV), Patrick van den Boom and Andreas Thoresen (Klokkeklovnene), Trude Hartviksen (Vestvågøy Municipality), Linda Mari Tahir (District Søndre Nordstrand), Vidar Brein Karlsen (Norsk helsenett), Kristil Håland (Jodacare), Margrethe Kristiansen (WSP) and Heidi Gautun (OsloMet)

The Future of Digital Norway, December 2024

Speakers: Christen Krogh and Tereza Østbø Kuldova (OsloMet), Asbjørn Finstad (KS), Bjørn Vatne (The Norwegian Authors' Union), Jonas Rusten Wang (Agenda Kaupang), Øyvind Henriksen (Nordre Follo Municipality) and Arvid Ellingsen (LO)

Future Housing Solutions, October 2024

Speakers: Stian Myhre (Fredensborg bolig), Gunn Cecilie Ringdal (Hjort Law Firm) and Gro Sandkjær Hanssen (OsloMet)

Digitalisation and perceived job insecurity: A machine learning study in Norway, April 2024

Speaker: Nan Zou Bakkeli (OsloMet)

Media Poverty: Media Use and Citizenship in Conditions of Deprivation, February 2024

Speaker: Torgeir Uberg Nærland (Norce)

Digital consultations (video, email) in general practice in Denmark, January 2024

Speaker: Anette Grønning (University of Southern Denmark)

Social Policy: A Critical and Intersectinal Analysis, September 2023

Speaker: Fiona Williams (University of Leeds)

Digitalization in Disability Organizations: Legal, Moral, and Organizational Challenges, August 2023

Speakers: Jens Ineland (University of Umeå) and Camilla Eriksson (Mälardalen University)

Statistical profiling of the unemployed: a literature review and the case of Denmark, May 2023

Speakers: Magnus Paulsen Hansen and Kristian Bloch Haug (Roskilde University)

Smart Home Technologies, May 2023

Speaker: Emma Louise Slade (University of Bristol Business School)

Web Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities, March 2023

Speaker: Peter Blanck (Syracuse University)

Technological Change as Social Practice – the Case of Video Consultations, February 2023
Speaker: Gemma Hughes (University of Oxford)

The Future of Work and Welfare in the Digital Economy: New Risk of Poverty and Social Exclusion, January 2023
Presented by: The Horizon 2020 research projects Euroship, EuSocialCit and WorkP

How to Facilitate Digital Transformation in the Public Sector? October 2022
Speaker: Markus Michaelsen Bugge (University of Oslo)

Hva er status for tilgjengelighetsdirektivene til EU – og hva fører de til i Norge? September 2022
Speakers: Rudolf Brynn (Norsk Helsenett SF) og Sigbjørn Råsberg (UUtilsynet)

Sustainable Work Inclusion, September 2022
Speaker: Janine Leschke (Copenhagen Business School)

Inequality and Marginalization in Digital Welfare States, August 2022
Speaker: Minna van Gerven (Tampere University)

Extracting Users: Regimes of Engagement in Norwegian Smart Electricity Transition, June 2022
Speaker: Kjetil Rommetveit (University of Bergen)

Presentations from Partners in DIGIT Research School, May 2022
Speakers: Liv Anna Lindman (LO), Trond Berge- ne (Spekter), Heidrun Åm, Aksel Tjora og Petter Grytten Almklov (NTNU) and Kjetil Rom- metveit (University of Bergen)

The Concept of Digitalization: How Can We Articulate It? April 2022
Speaker: Roger A. Søraa (NTNU)

Presentations from Partners in DIGIT Research School, February 2022
Speakers: Anne-Jorun Berg (Nord University), Kari Steen-Johnsen, Janis Umblijs and Ines Wagner (Institute for Social Research)

and Hilde Eide and Etty Nilsen (University of South-Eastern Norway)

Presentations from Partners in DIGIT Research School, January 2022
Speakers: Tone Bringedal (the Norwegian Digi- talisation Agency), Susanne Bauer (University of Oslo) and Lars Johannessen and Erik Børve Ras- mussen (OsloMet)

Digitalization and the Public, March 2021
Speakers: Kari Steen-Johnsen and Bernard En- jolras (Institute for Social Research)

Technology, Ethics, and (Human) Care, February 2021
Speaker: Hilde Thygesen (OsloMet)

The Philosophical-Historical Develop- ment of the Concept of Innovation – From Private to Public Initiative, January 2021
Speaker: Alexander Myklebust fra NTNU

Privacy Protection and Consequences of Digitalization, Mai 2020
Speaker: Julia Köhler-Olsen (OsloMet)



Rector Christen Krogh speaking at CEDIC Talks on December 5, 2024, at Fyrhuset. Photo: CEDIC



The Norwegian Research School on Digitalization, Culture and Society

What is DIGIT?

A key aspect of CEDIC's growth is its role as the host institution and coordinator of DIGIT: The Norwegian Research School on Digitalization, Culture, and Society.

This is a PhD training program funded by the Research Council of Norway (2022-2030). The school was established to enhance doctoral education by providing interdisciplinary training, access to a diverse network of fellow researchers studying digitalization and its societal effects and actors from public and private sectors. By supplementing existing PhD programs, DIGIT aims to bridge knowledge gaps and create a strong academic community that engages with important questions related to digital transformation.

DIGIT welcomed its first class in the autumn of 2022, and will continue to admit new PhD candidates and postdoctoral fellows annually until 2028. Each year, up to thirty participants from academic institutions across Norway are selected to join the program, gaining access to specialized training and networking opportunities.

The school is a collaboration between seven Norwegian universities, one research institute, and several public and private sector partners: OsloMet, University of Oslo, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, University of Oslo, University of Bergen, University of Agder, Nord University, University of South Eastern Norway, Institute for Social Research, the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), Spekter, Norwegian

Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV), the Norwegian Digitalization Agency (Digdir), The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) and No Isolation AS.

This structure ensures that DIGIT remains a multi-institutional and interdisciplinary effort, supporting researchers from diverse fields including sociology, law, media studies, anthropology, political science, and informatics.



Tina Svingerud, administrative coordinator for DIGIT research school
Photo: Pål Arne Kvalnes/OsloMet

Purpose

The idea of establishing a national research school on digitalization emerged in response to the increasing role of digital technologies in shaping social, economic, and political life. The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated digital transformations, highlighting both the benefits and challenges of digital infrastructures. As digitalization continues to reshape governance, work, education, and public services, there is a growing need for interdisciplinary research that critically examines these changes.

DIGIT was created to address the fragmentation of digitalization research in Norway. While many scholars work on related topics, their efforts have often been isolated within specific disciplines. By fostering collaboration between humanities, social sciences, and industry stakeholders, DIGIT aims to encourage interdisciplinary dialogue on digitalization's societal implications, support PhD candidates and postdocs in developing innovative research approaches and strengthen Norway's research capacity in digital studies.

For more information about DIGIT, visit www.digitresearchschool.no.



Participants from the DIGIT research school and OsloMet visiting the European Parliament in Brussels. Photo: DIGIT

Courses and Training



DIGIT Research School's first kick-off in 2022. Photo: Kim Krohn Berle

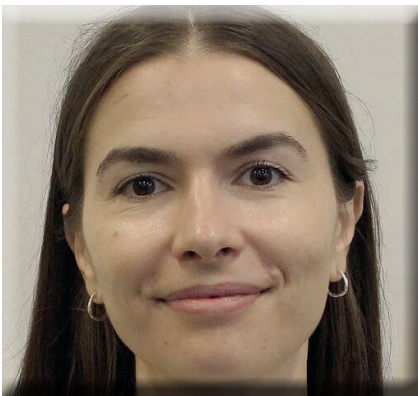
DIGIT provides a two-year structured training program designed to complement the participants' existing studies. The program includes joint seminars with leading experts, PhD-level courses on digitalization, technology and society, scientific writing work-shops, training in science communication, research dissemination, career planning and more.

The program also provides networking opportunities and secondments, enabling participants to connect with international research communities, industry professionals, and policymakers. Importantly, the research school can offer seminars and PhD-level courses that individual institutions and doctoral programmes may not be able to provide on their own. One example is the biennial seminar in Brussels, where participants gain insight into the European Union and its institutions, explore funding opportunities through EU research programmes, and learn about the EU's digitalization strategies and policies, including their implications for Norway.

Interviews with CEDIC's PhD and Postdoctoral Researchers

Olga Gheorghiev (Postdoc)

Olga Gheorghiev joined CEDIC in August 2024 after moving from the Czech Republic to Norway for a two-year postdoctoral fellowship funded by Horizon 2020 through a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship.



Olga Gheorghiev, Postdoc at CEDIC.
Photo: Private

–“Attending DIGIT research school’s two-day seminar on digitalization and labour markets before my fieldwork was tremendously helpful. I received feedback on my framework that guided my approach”.

Robotization and migrant workers

–“I have been focusing on migration and labour markets specifically, and in this project, I want to investigate how digitalization, algorithmic management, robotization, and automation affect labour markets, particularly migrant workers”.

Her project uses both quantitative and qualitative methods, including fieldwork, interviews, and case studies in production sites in different countries.

Automation and migrant employment

Gheorghiev explores whether the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the use of robotics to reduce dependency on migrant labour.

–“My initial hypothesis was that the pandemic led to an acceleration in robotics to decrease reliance on mobile migrant labour”, she explains. She also examines how policymakers perceive these changes and what strategies they implement to address the impacts on labour markets.

Preliminary findings suggest that, while robotization has accelerated, it has not reduced migrant employment.

–“In sectors reliant on migrant labour, we see increased employment alongside higher automation. This challenges the assumption that automation always displaces workers, highlighting a more complex relationship between technology and labour”.

Important support from CEDIC

CEDIC’s support has been invaluable, Olga says, particularly its seminars, which provided early feedback that shaped her project.

As a newcomer to Norway, Olga sought to expand her academic network.

–“For someone new to Norway, it was invaluable to build these connections early on”.

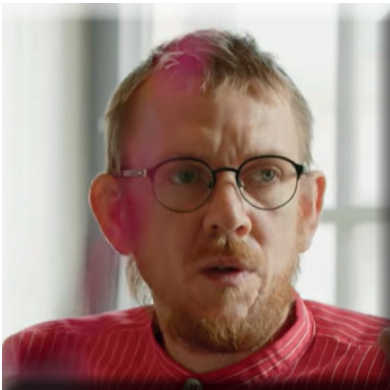
Clemet Askheim (PhD)

For Clemet Askheim, the path to CEDIC went through German forest management in the 18th century.

The Concept of Sustainability as a Starting Point

–“I am most interested in theory, concepts and more philosophical things”, says Clemet.

While he has been affiliated with CEDIC, the concept of sustainability has been his focal point. “Sustainability is a term often used in connection with the welfare state, as illustrated by debates on social security, pensions, and immigration. In these debates, the recurring theme is how to manage scarce welfare resources”, he points out.



Clemet Askheim, PhD-candidate at CEDIC, Photo: DIGIT

–“It is interesting to meet people from public administration, who can talk about the various challenges that arise when ideas or technologies are implemented. The structural, political, or regulatory aspects become much clearer when talking to people who have experienced the challenges firsthand”.

From Forest Management to the Welfare State

When he first began looking at the concept of sustainability, he learned that it originated from forest management in the German kingdoms in the 18th century. The logic was simple, he explains.

–“You cannot cut down more trees than the forest can regrow. In other words, there was a management logic at play”.

A logic he believes can be found in today’s discussions about welfare state sustainability.

Dialogue with Public Administration

Clemet believes that research stemming from societal problems must relate to the world outside academia. And it is precisely the dialogue with such actors he highlights as an important experience from both CEDIC and DIGIT research school.

Interdisciplinary Translation and Support

Clemet also appreciates the opportunity CEDIC and DIGIT research school provide to meet researchers from other fields. This forces him to think differently and to translate what he does so it makes sense to others, and to try and make sense of what they are doing.

–“I think it is easier for me now to explain the more general relevance of my work”, he says.

He also highlights the friendly and supportive environment CEDIC, with respect for differences and diverging views.

Elia Eve Jentoft (Postdoc)

Elia's research interests are broad and inter-disciplinary, spanning socio-cultural aspects of technology, policy, and mental health. With an academic background that started in anthropology, through psychology, international community health, and eventually into social work and social policy, Elia has engaged with multiple perspectives on digitalization and social welfare.

–“I wouldn't say I have one specific research interest. I have worked in many different fields, and I think that's what makes this project exciting”.



Elia Eve Jentoft, Postdoc at CEDIC
Photo: CF-Wesenberg/ kolonihaven.no

“The study is done with focus groups and interviews with participants in each country. The plan is to follow them over six months to see how their experiences change, particularly in their interactions with welfare workers”.

Welfare Services and Interacting with digital platforms

Elia is currently part of a large-scale international study exploring welfare systems across five countries: Norway, Spain, UK, Estonia, and Hungary. The research focuses on welfare recipients' experiences, particularly the emotional aspects of navigating welfare services and interacting with digital platforms.

One innovative aspect of this research is its digital methodology.

–“We are using multimedia responses in an app to capture people's experiences. There haven't been many studies using this kind of digital methods approach, so it's interesting to see how it plays out”, Elia says.

Detachment from Welfare Workers

Early findings from the Norwegian data highlight how the physical layout of NAV offices impacts welfare recipients' experiences. –“It was surprising to see how much the physical space influenced people's sense of security and privacy during their meetings with NAV”, Elia says. Elia's research aligns closely with CEDIC's focus.

One of the core aspects of the study is examining how different degrees of digitalization impact welfare recipients' experiences.

–“In some cases, digital tools can be helpful”, Elia notes. “For example, some participants who struggle with Norwegian have used ChatGPT to help them communicate with welfare offices. But in other cases, digitalization can make people feel more disconnected and create a sense of detachment from welfare workers”.

–“A lot of interactions happen through 'My NAV', and some participants described feeling like they don't really have a personal contact anymore, Elia explains. “It's more of a system than a relationship”.

Drawn to CEDIC's interdisciplinary approach Elia says they were really drawn to CEDIC because of the interdisciplinary approach to studying digitalization. Their experience at CEDIC has been positive, particularly the CEDIC Talks and research seminars.

“What's great about CEDIC is that you can just drop in on a talk if the topic interests you. This kind of openness makes it a great place to exchange ideas and learn from different perspectives”.

Belma Kozica (PhD)

Belma Kozica wants to use her research to put important issues in social work on the agenda and to strengthen students entering the workforce.

Background as a Social Worker in NAV

Belma is a trained social worker and has worked with follow-up of users receiving unemployment benefits and work assessment allowance in NAV. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many things changed for her and the other counsellors.

–“What fascinated me was both how quickly the digital development progressed and how people adapted to it”, she explains. This experience led her to begin a dissertation on NAV counsellors’ use of digital tools in user follow-up.



Belma Kozica, PhD-candidate at CEDIC
Photo: Private

–“Some train to become social workers to contribute to changes through practice. Others, like me, feel that they can contribute to changes in social work in a different way, through research and education”.

Positive Attitudes Towards Digital Follow-Up

Belma has previously surveyed NAV employees’ experiences with digital tools. The results showed that most counsellors had positive attitudes towards digital follow-up, and that the tools enabled them to be more efficient and accessible.

Although video meetings were highlighted as particularly useful in contact with certain user groups, several supervisors were also concerned about technical challenges and how well video works in practice. Belma therefore now examines the use of video in follow-up work – a topic that has been little researched in a Norwegian context.

Professional Community and Social Support with CEDIC

Belma says being part of CEDIC and DIGIT research school has given her access to a professional community with experienced

researchers and other PhD candidates who may have similar challenges or thoughts.

–“This makes it possible to discuss various issues, learn from each other, and develop the project further”.

In addition to a professional community, she highlights networking, visibility, and social support as advantages of being part of an interdisciplinary environment.

Development of Social Work Through Research and Education

When asked what she wants to use her research skills for in the future, she replies:

Besides working on her dissertation, Belma also teaches a skills training course, where students practice communicating with different users. “I find this an exciting and important part of social work – how to be a social worker in the field and meet people”.

Marijke Roosen (Postdoc)

Marijke Roosen has a background in criminology and completed her PhD at the University of Brussels, where she focused on electronic monitoring of offenders.

The Digital Welfare State

"I was very interested in penal surveillance. Surveillance studies is a very interesting field, and while I was progressing as a researcher, I discovered this whole literature on digitalization, automation, datafication, and the digital welfare state. I thought it would be interesting to open my perspective to include a more nuanced idea of what it means to monitor citizens".



Marijke Roosen, Postdoc at CEDIC
Photo: Private

–“It’s about datafication and digitalization of welfare services, she says. It’s about the relationship between the state and its citizens, how the state constructs welfare subjectivities, and how it uses digital tools to do that”.

Can Data Usage in Welfare Services Become Punitive?

Marijke’s current project investigates surveillance in the digital welfare state, focusing on how welfare systems use data-driven technologies and whether these systems punish and control citizens.

–“How do we think about people and their relations to society? How do we think data and technology can help us get towards a collectively held idea of a desirable future?” she asks.

A key part of her research explores how data usage in welfare services can become punitive, drawing from criminology to compare unemployment benefit recipients with offenders under electronic monitoring.

–“There’s literature on how we punish the poor, and the distinction between deserving and undeserving”, she explains. Marijke also aims to develop a normative framework for ethical data use in welfare services.

Rather than relying on top-down policies, she seeks to incorporate the perspectives of those directly affected by digital welfare systems.

Exchange of Expertise

Roosen’s research is closely aligned with CEDIC’s focus.

Her decision to join CEDIC was based on its interdisciplinary environment and openness to participatory methods.

–“The profiles of the people working here are very social work and social policy-oriented, while my background is in criminology. I thought this would be an interesting exchange of expertise. I can reflect on these issues from a sociology of punishment perspective, and they can help me understand the welfare state and social policy better”.

Although she has only been at CEDIC for a short time, she has found it to be a welcoming and supportive environment.

–“I’m learning a lot about the Nordic welfare state, which was something I didn’t know much about before”, she says.

Key Contributions

Research Projects

CEDIC has actively contributed to the academic literature and public discourse on digitalization through a range of projects, publications, and dissemination activities.

Researchers at the centre have published widely in journals, authored reports, and participated in national and international conferences on digitalization. Below is a selection of research projects, publications, and activities that CEDIC members have contributed to over the past five years.



Erik Børve Rasmussen, head of research of the BoVel project and CEDIC team member
Photo: OsloMet

1. BoVEL: Live Longer at Home with Social Welfare Technology

BoVEL is a research and innovation project where OsloMet researchers join forces with public health care agencies and a private tech company to facilitate digital social contact for home dwelling older adults. In 2022, the project embarked on an extensive field trial using “Komp”, a “one button” communication device designed specifically for older adults who are unfamiliar with or struggle to use conventional digital technologies such as smart phones, computers, or tablets.

Combining qualitative and quantitative methods and data, the project aims to uncover the effects of increased social contact with family and care services via Komp. Specifically, we hope to learn if users of Komp 1) can live longer at home than nonusers, 2) have lesser need of home care services, and 3) are happier, safer, and feel more socially connected.

- Project period: 2022-2025
- Head of research: Erik Børve Rasmussen (OsloMet)
- Financing: The Research Council of Norway

2. Crossbow: Crossing and Managing Boundaries between Work and Non-Work – Co-creating Healthy Teleworking

The project aims to map and explore features and challenges of telework, with the goal of improving organizational preparedness for healthy, sustainable, and productive telework. Findings show that

- a) telework challenges employees' work-life/family balancing practices,
- b) many employees end up working during evenings and in the weekend, and
- c) telework both can contribute to employees' workability (making it possible to stay in employment for a longer time), but that many employees also find themselves working even if they are at home because of illness.

- Project period: 2021-2026
- Head of research: Wendy Nilsen, Cathrine Egeland and Siri Yde Aksnes (OsloMet)
- Financing: The Research Council of Norway

3. DISCo: Digital infrastructures for sustainable consumption: Redirecting, reorganizing, reducing and reimagining consumption

The project investigates how digital technologies can transform consumption habits in food and mobility to promote sustainability. Focusing on food (local food platforms) and mobility (car and bike sharing) – two high-emission and high-consumption sectors – the project reveals that few platforms promote sustainable solutions as part of their business model. Most are profit-oriented and target individual consumers or households, which highlights the commercial viability of sustainable consumption. Consumers often choose these platforms for convenience and cost savings rather than sustainability. Food platforms tend to complement, rather than replace, other (non-sustainable) food practices. Lastly, inconveniences were a key barrier to broader platform adoption.

- Project period: 2023–2025
- Head of research: Arne Dulsrud (OsloMet)
- Financing: Belmont Forum

4. EUROSHIP: Closing Gaps in Social Citizenship. New Tools to Foster Social Resilience in Europe

EUROSHIP has examined how social policies of European welfare states condition the social citizenship of persons at risk of poverty and social exclusion, and to which extent European welfare states capacitate or constrain the nature of social citizenship for these individuals. The digital transformation of work and welfare has been a major policy concern in relation to the quality of new forms of employment, access to jobs and their impact on social protection. With an initial empirical and policy focus, Jacqueline O'Reilly and Rachel Verdin have initiated novel research to understand how the digital transformation of work and welfare services has been evolving in Europe, its effects on social exclusion and opportunities to participate in the digital economy. The empirical evidence indicated that some countries leading these developments included Norway, Estonia and Spain; countries not far behind were

the UK, with Germany making much slower progress, with Hungary making some improvements and Italy very far behind. EUROSHIP has contributed new theorisation to explain the regional inequalities in the evolution of innovation systems in Europe and beyond.

- Project period: 2020–2023
- Scientific coordinator: Rune Halvorsen (OsloMet)
- Funding: Horizon 2020

5. PÅDIGVEL: Reliable digital welfare administration

The main aim of the project is to assess if, and how, the consideration for a trustworthy digital administration is upheld in the development of digital solutions in NAV. One finding is that the organization is moving towards a more continuous approach and alignment of views among central actors on the digitalization of legal case management. Similarly, efforts are being made to integrate agile development and legal method into the organization's digitalization process, thereby becoming a laboratory for developing adjusted or new methods to digitize law. The rule of law is partly safeguarded by thorough legal interpretation of the norms in the Norwegian Insurance Act. Legal interpretation of these norms informs what data is needed, what level of data quality is required, and discussions on what types of digital solutions—i.e., fully or partly automated, human oversight when and where—are preferably chosen.

Another finding is that compliance requirements with public administration, privacy, and data protection laws exists. However, a stringent system to follow up on these compliance requirements has not been visible to the project's researchers. Lastly, decisions about which social benefits and services that could and/or should be digitalized, and in which way, have similar features to legislation. To uphold democracy, these decisions must be based on central values and principles of the rule of law.

- Project period: 2022–2024
- Head of research: Julia Köhler-Olsen (OsloMet)
- Financing: NAV

6. REFLEX: Revising work time flexibility policies to promote work inclusion

The project investigates the relationship between work-time flexibility made possible by new communication technologies and work inclusion with a point of departure in teachers' work life. Teachers are expected to have more flexibility and autonomy than many other occupations. At the same time the number of teachers giving up being teachers is record high. REFLEX explores the context, conditions and experiences of teachers' work life including how it is impacted on by the flexibility emerging with digitalization and new technology, and whether regulations or policies like a right to disconnect would be a meaningful response to some of the challenges teachers face.

- Project period: 2023–2027
- Head of research: Haraldsdottir Nordberg, and Cathrine Egeland (OsloMet)
- Financing: The Research Council of Norway

7. Relinking the weak link. Building resilient digital households through interdisciplinary and multilevel exploration and intervention

The project RELINK aims to understand how Norwegian households experience living with technologies in the digitally connected home, and to devise tools and strategies for addressing the risks and vulnerabilities related to the use of these technologies. The project has adopted a multidisciplinary mixed-method approach using ethnography, surveys, data analytics, visualization, and co-design methods. RELINK has made a significant contribution to knowledge and public discourse on digitally connected households in Norway and abroad through publications, public engagement, and education.

- Project period: 2019–2023
- Head of research: Henry Mainsah (OsloMet)
- Financing: The Research Council of Norway

8. Virtual Presence: A Cultural Analysis of the Emergence of 'Telepresence Technologies' as a Solution to Loneliness

The project provides a cultural analysis of how loneliness is perceived and represented in relation to the emerging phenomenon of loneliness technologies. For young people, technology's role in loneliness was debated – some saw it as isolating, while for disabled youth, it was often viewed as a vital tool for social inclusion. Similar ambivalence was found in discussions with older adults – technology was viewed as both enabling social inclusion and as something they struggle to use. Care technologies were often proposed as a means for both reducing loneliness and easing pressure on the welfare state.

Our qualitative research found that older adults experienced digital communication tools like Komp as helpful for maintaining family contact – when aligned with their expectations and social norms. We also studied the AV1 robot for chronically ill children, revealing positive responses from most children, but mixed reactions from teachers, ranging from usefulness to concerns about surveillance.

Overall, we challenge the idea that face-to-face interactions are always superior. In conclusion, we argue for a broader understanding of digital presence to better address loneliness in a digital society.

- Project period: 2020–2024
- Head of research: Marit Haldar (OsloMet)
- Financing: The Research Council of Norway



Marit Haldar at Oslo Rådhus: Innovation seminar for Oslo municipality Photo: CEDIC

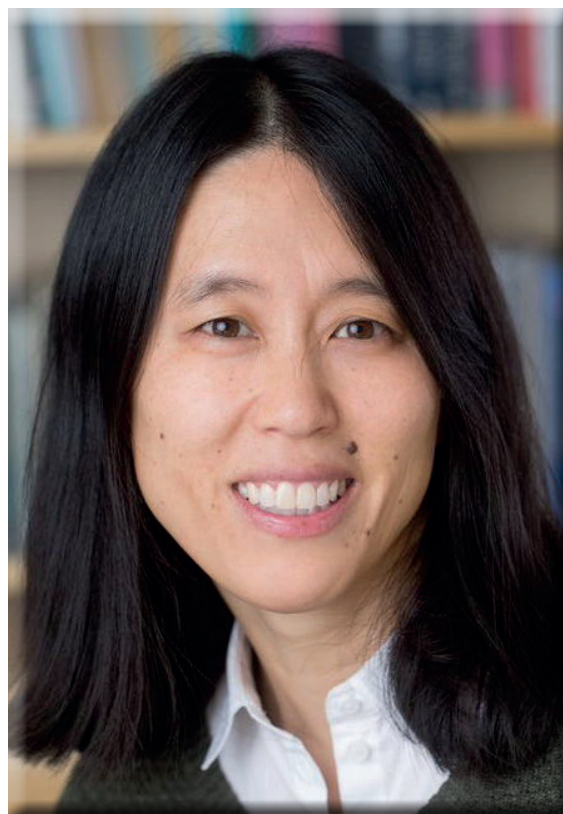
9. Sustainable wellbeing through investment in social services (SWINS)

Sustainable wellbeing through investment in social services (SWINS) will develop and test a policy-oriented toolbox for assessing the economic and social returns of investments in social services over the life course.

The researchers will explore the impacts of different social policy scenarios, from maternal care and early childhood education and care, to education and active labour market policies, up to long-term care, focusing on income, employment, and growth.

OsloMet researchers associated with CEDIC will among others examine how the digital transformation affects the service provision. SWINS is coordinated by the Autonomous University of Barcelona, Spain and PIN Foundation, Italy.

- Project period: 2025-2027
- Head of research: Rune Halvorsen, PI Norway (OsloMet)
- Funding: Horizon Europe



Mi Ah Schøyen, project participant SWINS
Photo: OsloMet

Dissemination and Activities



Julia Köhler-Olsen at NAV's Experience Conference 2023. Photo: Pål Arne Kvalnes / OsloMet

Members of the CEDIC team have reached a wider audience through a broad range of dissemination activities. They have served as debate moderators, participated as panellists, and written opinion pieces for both academic journals and newspapers. They have also given presentations at conferences and workshops, both in Norway and abroad, across academia, the public, voluntary and private sectors. Additionally, several members have been interviewed by national and international media, including newspapers, television, and radio. Below are some key events and activities involving CEDIC members.

Contribution to the evaluation of the “Bo trygt hjemme” (live safely at home) reform

The Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) at OsloMet has been awarded the Norwegian Directorate of Health's contract to carry out a follow-up and results evaluation of the “Bo trygt hjemme” reform. Marit Haldar from CEDIC will lead several workshops in one of the work packages, and CEDIC's network will be invited to serve as an expert advisory group.

Workshop at the University of Sussex (US), December 2024

From December 16–17, CEDIC organized a workshop on digital ecosystems in collaboration with Professor Jacqueline O'Reilly, CEDIC associate from the University of Sussex. The workshop was hosted at the Digital Futures at Work Research Centre at US and focused on the digitalization of work and the welfare state across 15 different countries. The workshop was a follow-up from our early analysis in the EUROSHIP project, which interrogates the implications of introducing digital technologies to deliver social protection systems.



Julia Köhler-Olsen and Marit Haldar
Photo: CEDIC



Group photo from Sussex with Rune Halvorsen bottom left. Photo: CEDIC

Nordic ESPAnet–ReNEW Workshop, November 2024

Together with the University of Bergen and the Institute for Social Research, CEDIC organized the Nordic ESPAnet (European Network for Social Policy Analysis) workshop for doctoral students and early career researchers in Bergen from November 7–8. The overarching theme of the workshop was life course transitions within Nordic welfare states, with a focus on how welfare states and public policies interact with key transitions throughout the individuals' lives and contribute to shaping societal outcomes.

The RC19 Conference, September 2024

CEDIC hosted the RC19 Poverty and Social Policy Conference of the International Sociological Association at OsloMet from September 3–6, bringing together 110 scholars. The conference's topic was "Sustainable welfare in global context: responding to societal and environmental transformations". The seminar featured keynotes, plenary panels, and parallel sessions exploring the fiscal, political, social, moral, and environmental dimensions of sustainable welfare.

Centre for Research-Based Innovation (SFI) Application, September 2024

Throughout 2024, CEDIC was heavily engaged in the application process to the Research Council of Norway to become a Centre for Research-Based Innovation. Through the application for the proposed Centre for Innovation in Welfare, CEDIC established partnerships with a wide range of actors from both the public and private sectors. The application was submitted on September 18, but did not make the final selection. However, the process opened many new doors for collaboration, and numerous smaller project applications will be submitted based on this initiative in the future.



Marit Haldar, co-director CEDIC
Photo: CEDIC



Meeting at CEDIC spring 2024. Photo: CEDIC

Sino-Nordic Workshop at the Nordic Centre, Fudan University, December 2023

CEDIC organized the Sino-Nordic workshop on digitalization of welfare at the Nordic Centre at Fudan University in Shanghai.

The workshop brought together professors, postdoctoral researchers, and PhD students from 12 universities across China, Estonia, Finland, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The participants presented and discussed digital transformation from various disciplinary perspectives, including anthropology, political science, social policy, and sociology.



Visit to Fudan University 2023. Photo: CEDIC

CEDIC conference, June 2023

CEDIC hosted a one day seminar at OsloMet, bringing together researchers from all departments at the Faculty of Social Sciences, as well as researchers from the Centre for Welfare and Labour Research and the Centre for the Study of Professions. The event featured presentations on topics such as crime prevention in the age of algorithmic governance, artificial intelligence in peer review, and children and youth's digital everyday lives.



From the CEDIC conference, 2023. Photo: CEDIC.



Visit to Japan, 2023. Photo: private

Seminar in Japan, September 2023

CEDIC and the research school DIGIT organized a seminar in Japan in collaboration with NTNU and KS. The trip to Japan included visits to Ochanomizu University, the Yukiwari Center for Disabled Individuals, Tokyo Institute of Technology, and the Kawasaki Welfare Technology Lab. Additionally, CEDIC participated in the project kick-off for SOMAT, an INTPART project exploring sociomaterial transformations in Norway and East Asia.

Promising Researcher of the Year, November 2023

In November, Lars E. F. Johannessen received OsloMet's Promising Researcher of the Year award for 2023. Johannessen has been affiliated with CEDIC since its inception and is today a professor at the Centre for the Study of Professions at OsloMet. The jury's statement highlighted that "the winner's research is characterized by a combination of high ambitions – reflected in an exceptionally high number of publications and citations – and a strong foundation in relevance and local and national contexts."

New Master's Course: Digital Revolution?

CEDIC has contributed to education at OsloMet through a new cross-faculty master's course developed by Erik Børve Rasmussen and Marit Haldar. The course is titled Digital Revolution? Social Science Perspectives on Technology in the Health and Social Care Sector and has been offered every autumn since the 2023/2024 academic year.

The course provides students with insights into how technology and digitalization both shape and are shaped by social conditions. It focuses on the digital transformation of the welfare state's health and social care services, with particular attention to service providers and recipients. The course also highlights how technological development takes place within a historical and societal context.

For a more detailed course description, see:
<https://student.oslomet.no/en/studier/-/studie-info/emne/SFV5100/2024/H%C3%98ST>



Lars E. F. Johannessen receives diploma.
Photo: Benjamin A. Ward / OsloMet

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About CEDIC

Centre for Digitalization, Culture and Society

CEDIC produces new knowledge about how digitalization both shapes and is shaped by culture and society. The centre brings together researchers working on digitalization in areas such as working life, the welfare state, consumption, social movements, and the family.

The Centre work extensively with partners from the private sector, public administration, and civil society organizations. Current partners include: Agenda Kaupang, WSP, PA Consulting, Fredrikstad Medtech, Ipsos, Det Norske Veritas, Hjort Law Firm, Kompany, Møller Eiendom, No Isolation AS, Nyby, Føyen Law Firm, Jodatech, Daxap, Fredensborg bolig, The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO), The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV), Digi Møre og Romsdal, The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS), The Employers' Association Spekter, The Norwegian Digitalisation Agency (DigDir), Asker Municipality, Lillestrøm Municipality, Kåfjord Municipality, Vestvågøy Municipality, Haram Municipality, Melhus Municipality, Nordre Follo Municipality, Bjerke District, St. Hanshaugen District, and Søndre Nordstrand District.

CEDIC hosts the Norwegian Research School on Digitalization, Culture and Society (DIGIT). CEDIC regularly organizes CEDIC Talks, a meeting place for knowledge exchange and idea development between academia, the public sector, and private enterprises.

The Centre is led by sociologists Marit Haldar and Rune Halvorsen from the Department of Social Work, Child Welfare and Social Policy at OsloMet.

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