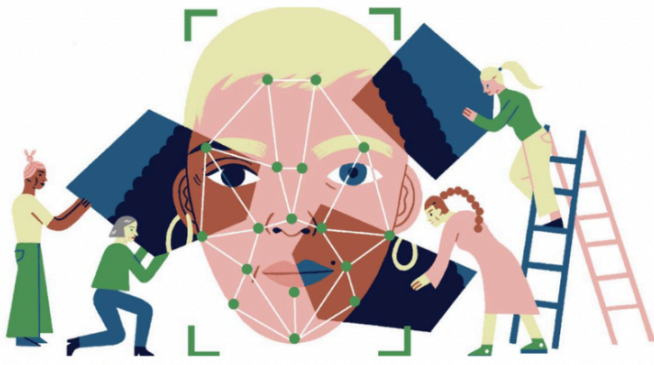




ReSocial

STAY IN THE LOOP WITH UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS!

PROJECT INFORMATION

RESOCIAL ('User vulnerabilities and Resilience on SOCIAL media platforms and the metaverse: a sociolegal and design perspective', an NWO-NWA Synergy Grant Project) seeks to identify, measure, and thereby mitigate human **vulnerabilities** on social media platforms (including the metaverse and immersive technologies), thereby fostering the **resilience** of their users.

THE PROJECT'S CO-APPLICANTS

RESOCIAL brings together an impressive team of co-applicants. This includes four members from **Leiden Law School** – Dr Michael Klos (Institute of Jurisprudence), Prof. Simone van der Hof (eLaw), Dr Carlotta Rigotti (eLaw), and Prof. Vanessa Mak (Institute of Private Law) – along with two other distinguished academics: Dr M. Birna van Riemsdijk, an Associate Professor of Intimate Computing at the **University of Twente**, and Dr Ben Wagner, an Associate Professor of Human Rights and Technology at both the **University of Delft** and **InHolland University**.



ASSOC. PROF,
GIANCLAUDIO MALGIERI
Main Applicant

Data Protection Law and
Vulnerability Theories

DR, CARLOTTA RIGOTTI

Women's Digital Rights



PROF,
VANESSA MAK

Vulnerable Consumer
Protection Law



ASSOC. PROF,
BIRNA VAN RIEMSDIJK

Intimate Computing and
Value-Sensitive Design

ASSIST. PROF,
MICHAEL KLOS

Social Media Regulation



PROF, SIMONE VAN DER
HOF

Children's Rights Online

ASSOC. PROF,
BEN WAGNER

Human Rights in Technology Policy



KICK OFF MEETING IN SEPTEMBER 2024!

On the 20th of September, Leiden University colleagues *Assoc. Prof. Gianclaudio Malgieri* (Main Applicant), *Assist. Prof. Michael Klos* (Co-Applicant), *Prof. Simone van der Hof* (Co-Applicant), Dr. Constanta Rosca, Maria-Lucia Rebrean and Maëlle Picout gladly welcomed RESOCIAL's consortium members to celebrate the project's kick-off.

In attendance, whether it be online or in-person at Leiden University's historical Law Faculty "Kamerlingh Omnes Building", were multiple partners of the project: Mieke van Heesewijk (SIDN Fonds), Dr. Janneke Schokkenbroek (TU Delft & Inholland), Dr. Yannick Vogel (Dutch DPA), Jurgen Timmerman (Dutch DPA), Douwe de Lange (Pontus Advocaten), Anne-Jel Hoelen (The Netherlands Authority for Consumers and Markets (ACM)), Dr. Ben Wagner (TU Delft & Inholland), Dr. Birna van Riemsdijk (University of Twente), Dr. Lorena Sánchez Chamarro (University of Twente), Bianca-Ioana Marcu (Future of Privacy Forum), and Maryant Fernandez (The European Consumer Organisation - BEUC).

The morning session started with a short introduction of the project's objectives with a special focus on its relevance considering social media and AI developments, where an appropriate understanding of 'vulnerability' is yet to be determined. Overall goals of the project's Work Packages (WPs) were presented, alongside the agreed timeline for completing the project's tasks and outputs.

As a follow-up to the project's presentation, an introductory round was held where each attendee presented themselves and their expectations for RESOCIAL's outcomes. Expectations of partners included, amongst others, a greater understanding of: (i) the concept of vulnerability, (ii) the interaction and protection offered by relevant EU legal provisions, as well as (iii) WPs alignment and goals.

Scope of Vulnerability	Scope of Social Media
This encompassed discussions on the layered approaches to the concept of vulnerability (e.g. universalist/post-identity, identity-based, layered). When defining the scope of 'human vulnerability', consortium members using the Miro platform, collaboratively answered the following questions: • Vulnerable to who? • Vulnerable to what? • Vulnerable when?	This discussion focused on the existence and evolution of the metaverse, and the risks presented by features of social media platforms for users. Regarding the latter, various features which present a known risk to the fundamental rights of users were identified, such as, but not limited to addictive designs, dark patterns, biased algorithms, unlawful privacy settings, and recommender systems. For determining the scope of 'social media', partners of the project provided great insights regarding the platforms that they consider 'social media', the features of social media platforms which they believe pose significant problems for users, and which of these platforms specifically warrant the project's focus.

In the afternoon a detailed presentation was given by colleague Maria-Lucia Rebrean on the project's management, upcoming deadlines and plans for communication and dissemination outputs. Finally, two active discussions were held, during which project partners collaborated on defining the scope of 'human vulnerability' and 'social media'.

After a lengthy session of collaboration and discussions, the meeting came to a natural conclusion mid-afternoon. Partners of the project voiced their eagerness to meet again in the near future to discuss project updates and achievements.

RESOCIAL PRESENTATION AT THE ELAW - CITIP (KU LEUVEN) IN PERSON EVENT

ELaw (Center for Law and Digital Technologies) colleagues had the pleasure of hosting our colleagues from the Centre for IT & IP Law (CiTiP) at KU Leuven for an in-person event focused on exploring synergies and fostering deeper collaboration between our centers.

In the first part of the event, perspectives were shared on education and research. Later in the afternoon, presentations were held on various topics linked to law and technology, such as: the failure of the DSA to protect players of online games (speaker: Martin Sas), the interaction of data protection and cybersecurity under NIS 2 (speaker: Eyup Kun), the evaluation of the compatibility model of EU data legislation (speaker: Charlotte Ducuing), defining socially assistive robots for the law (speaker: Marie Schwed Shenker), as well as accountability and AI in multi-agency public safety (speaker: Nanou van Iersel).

A highlight of the day was a great presentation by Maria-Lucia Reborean on the RESOCIAL Project. During this presentation, Maria shared insights on the project, starting with the project goals. The following goals were mentioned:

- Understanding vulnerability on social media and the metaverse
- Understanding the gaps in law for the protection of those experiencing vulnerability
- Developing Vulnerability-Sensitive Design
- Developing Codes of Conduct and Guidelines for social media platforms



Maria also provided detailed information regarding the project's timeline, by mentioning inter alia the four phases of the project and the corresponding work packages occurring during said phases. Significant focus was placed on three key questions which lie at the heart of the project's research: Who is vulnerable? Vulnerable to what? Vulnerable when?

As a preliminary response to these questions, the presenter delved into the concept of human vulnerability, considering factors such as its multidimensionality and usage within the EU digital law sphere. A couple of digital legal statistics were addressed, particularly the frequency of the term "vulnerability" in crucial legal instruments, such as the UCPD, GDPR, DSA and AI Act. Finally, the mix-method approach (which included a survey, focus groups and workshops) to be employed in the RESOCIAL project to study human vulnerability was referenced and explained to our colleagues at KU Leuven.

Meetings like these serve as a powerful reminder of the impact of collaboration and a shared vision, and we are enthusiastic about the future possibilities for both of our research centers!

INSIGHTFUL PERSPECTIVES ON VULNERABILITY AND CONSUMER LAW – HANS MICKLITZ

RESOCIAL team members were ecstatic to be present for Prof. Hans Micklitz presentation on Consumer Law at Leiden University in October! During this session Micklitz shared insightful perspectives on the topic of vulnerability, emphasizing the need to explore it through a legal and historical lens. He suggested that vulnerability should be studied in stages: from its integration in UN policy, to its inclusion in consumer law, and finally its role in the digital EU legal framework.



Prof. Micklitz raised crucial questions that remain for discussion:

- *What rules are necessary to protect vulnerable groups?*
- *How do we identify and address economic vulnerabilities?*
- *Who should be responsible for providing these protections?*

At RESOCIAL Project, we are eager to delve deeper into these questions, especially in the context of the EU digital law acquis. We aim to explore how key regulations like the DSA, UCPD, GDPR, and AIA interact to shape the protection of vulnerable individuals and groups.

RESOCIAL CONSORTIUM MEETUP IN LEIDEN – 28.10.24

Once again, the RESOCIAL team gathered at Leiden Law School in October to dive into key project milestones and assess our current progress. Our agenda focused on defining our research scope, refining our methodologies, and mapping out the next steps to drive the project forward. It was a productive day full of collaborative energy and forward-looking discussions!

Highlights of the meeting



Highlights included planning for our upcoming survey, workshop preparation, and finalizing the report (report consisting of three smaller reports on: T.1.1. The state of the art study; T.2.1. Gap analysis in the Law; T.3.1. Desk Research) due in November. After our main session, a smaller team took to the whiteboard to strategize the survey design, diving into essential questions and logistics to ensure a strong approach.

DATA, PRIVACY & CONSUMER PROTECTION LEAD OF OPEN AI, RAFAELA NICOLAZZI IN LEIDEN!

On the 14th of November, we had the pleasure of hosting **Rafaela Nicolazzi** from **OpenAI** at Leiden University for an engaging discussion on the future of AI, its privacy implications, and its impact on fundamental rights. Rafaela shared valuable insights into the societal benefits of AI and explored the integration of GPT across various applications and tools.

At RESOCIAL, we're deeply focused on understanding how AI systems, particularly those used in social media platforms (like recommender systems), can align with EU legal frameworks. Our work examines how instruments such as the GDPR, DSA, and DMA can drive responsible and compliant innovation in the AI landscape.



RESOCIAL TEAM AT THE 2024 DIGITAL LEGAL TALKS CONFERENCE



The RESOCIAL team engaged in dynamic discussions around the AI Act, Digital Services Act (DSA), autonomy, manipulation, and more at the Digital Legal Talks in Utrecht!

This engaging session, which took place on the 28th and 29th of November 2024, is the fifth edition of the annual conference hosted by the Digital Legal Lab. The conference fostered *“interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration, addressing critical issues such as responsible data sharing, AI regulation, the digitalization of justice systems, and the role of digital platforms in enforcing public interests”*.

With so many inspiring papers and presentations on the agenda, RESOCIAL team members Gianclaudio Malgieri and Maria-Lucia Rebreaan dove into the latest insights and connected with the incredible minds driving the future of digital law and ethics. Wonderful feedback was received on their draft paper exploring the meaning of vulnerability in the AI Act.

Vulnerability is a pivotal concept in the AI Act, embedded across its framework-spanning prohibitions, high-risk AI, GPAI, and codes of conduct. Given its prevalence, RESOCIAL team members proposed that vulnerability should be seen as a dynamic and fluid concept, focusing on:

- ◆ Risk-to-rights,
- ◆ The interrelations between parties, and
- ◆ Individual resilience.

On the second day of the conference, the program included diverse and insightful panels exploring algorithmic decision-making, AI deployment, and transparency. Maria-Lucia Rebreaun represented RESOCIAL Project in the final panel, sharing insights on transparency and vulnerability. In line with the RESOCIAL philosophy, Maria highlighted that transparency-oriented measures must be tailored not only to the specific technology (e.g., social media) but also to the context in which it operates—whether in the public or private sector.

The panel's key takeaway? Transparency is an adaptive, multi-faceted concept, with varying applications and interpretations in legal frameworks.

COMING SOON : RESOCIAL'S PROJECT WEBSITE!

Team member Maëlle Picout has undertaken the task of creating our very own project website. For now it is still in the works, but stay tuned as we might launch it very soon!

For now here is a sneak peak... ⌚





Michael Klos becomes the New Programme Director for bachelor's in Law and first-year legal programmes!

Dr. Michael Klos, Assistant Professor at the Department of Jurisprudence (Leiden University), has been appointed in October as the new Programme Director for the bachelor's degree programme in Law and the first-year legal programmes.



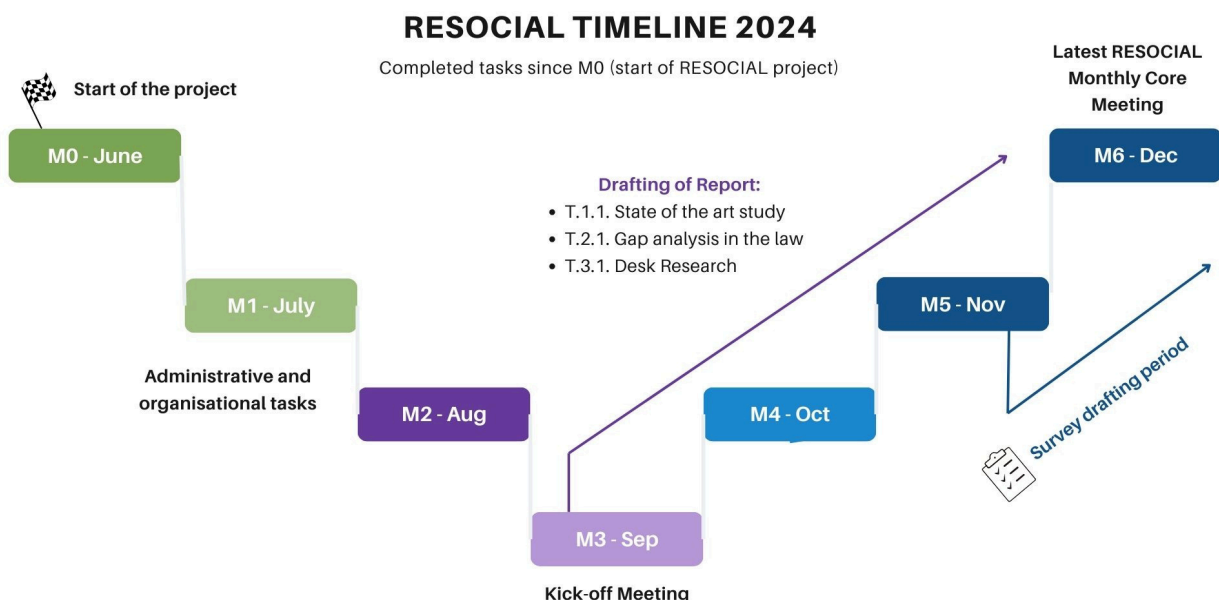
Lorena Sánchez Chamorro successfully defends her PhD thesis!

End of November, RESOCIAL team member successfully defended her doctoral thesis at the University of Luxembourg, with a nomination for the Excellent Thesis Award: Disentangling Vulnerability to Manipulative Designs. An experiential perspective to rethink resistance strategies.



Constanta Rosca is now a Dr., after defending her PhD thesis at her alma mater!

Proud to announce that our eLaw colleague Dr. Constanta Rosca successfully defended her PhD thesis "Digital Arms for Digital Consumer Harms: Mapping Legal and Technical Solutions for Dark Patterns in EU Consumer Law" on Monday 2 December 2024 at Maastricht University Faculty of Law!



Future work in 2025



- The survey will run until around end February.
- Review will of survey will take place between March-April in order to draft the survey results report.
- End of April/beginning of May: year report preparations for RESOCIAL.
- Followed by the development of the draft vulnerability guidelines and the preparation of the focus groups/workshops.



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The RESOCIAL Project

User Vulnerabilities and Resilience on SOCIAL
Media Platforms and the Metaverse: a Sociolegal
and Design Perspective

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