



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



This spring a significant milestone was reached in the RESOCIAL project, as the survey was officially launched. With over **500 respondents**, the survey was structured around six themes. Demographic insights, social media platform usage, various harms, including well-being, dependency, financial risks, and privacy concerns, resilience strategies both legal and non-legal, perceived vulnerability, and experiences with design patterns. These elements were designed to create a comprehensive understanding of how individuals look at social media.

Lorena Sánchez Chamorro, Constanta Rosca, Janneke Schokkenbroek, Maelle Picout and Maria-Lucia Rebrean are currently processing all of the collected data in order to extract all valuable insights. With a quarter of the processing already done, some initial observations have emerged. One such point is that the respondents' suggestion for how to improve social media align with the existing EU legal framework. This signals that stronger enforcement is needed, it also indicates a general lack of awareness on the current legal framework and the rights that users have within EU law, highlighting the importance of education and transparency on these issues.

There is a second survey specifically targeting minors between the ages of 16 and 18, which was introduced to explore the experiences of children with social media. This survey already has over 50 respondents from Italy and will be rolled out in Dutch schools in the coming months.

In the next phase RESOCIAL will process all the data collected from the survey and analyze the responses. The survey will also face broader roll out among minors.

Project progress: Survey

Goal is to generate insights on:

the ways users
**experience
vulnerability** in
relation to
engagement-
driven design
on social media
platforms

+

**mitigation
measures users
deem desirable**
that could be
translated into
platform
design/policy
recommendations
& guidelines

Focus on the core aspect of
social media platforms' business
models: **engagement.**



Engagement-driven design =
source of user harms (behavioural dependency,
decreased well-being, attention harms)

amplifier of other user harms (financial loss,
privacy loss)

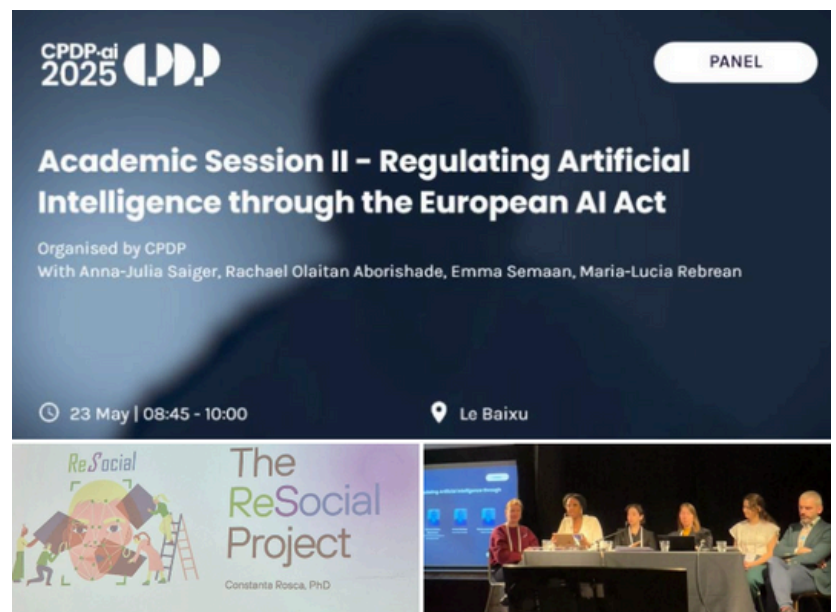
RESOCIAL AT CPDP: A RECAP

RESOCIAL attended this year's CPDP (Computers, Privacy, and Data Protection) conference, with the theme 'the world is watching'. A key event for discussing groundbreaking ideas, receiving valuable feedback, the CPDP provided an important space for exchanging views on digital governance. From May 21st to 23rd the event hosted in Brussel had 90 panels and 30 discussions, which questioned whether European standards can effectively shape global digital practices or if they risk enforcing existing power imbalances.

This year's conference was a great success, nurturing both academic conversations and more informal dialogue on the issues. RESOCIAL team members also took part in two sessions. The first was an academic session on 'Regulating Artificial Intelligence through the European AI Act', where Maria-Lucia Rebreaan and Gianclaudio Malgieri contributed to a discussion on regulating AI and its implications. The second session 'AI Vulnerability and Dependency on Social Media' was held together with VULNERA. This panel explored challenges and opportunities of addressing human vulnerability online. The session brought together academics, practitioners, and regulators for a deep dive into how technology, human rights, and vulnerability all intersect. It was a chance to openly talk about the real challenges people face online today, and to explore how we can move toward more fairness and dignity in the digital world.

The panel aimed to answer the following pressing questions:

1. Do we have enough legal and social tool to assess human vulnerability on social media, especially considering new forms of structural dependency and digital addictions?
2. How is human dependency on social media reshaping GDPR consent freedom, especially considering pay-or-consent debates?
3. How is the AI Act addressing the different nuances of human vulnerabilities enhanced by AI systems on social media?
4. Are the EU Digital Fairness Act and the DSA risk assessment enough to assess new forms of online vulnerability?



Another key highlight from the conference was Constanta Rosca's presentation, where she shared some of the preliminary findings from the RESOCIAL survey. This provided new insights into vulnerability online. RESOCIAL also took the opportunity to present its unique approach to vulnerability for the first time.

Overall, the conference was an immense success, and the RESOCIAL team is already looking forward to returning next year!

PANEL DISCUSSION LED BY GIANCLAUDIO MALGIERI

As part of the CPDP conference, Gianclaudio Malgieri also moderated a panel discussion exploring how legal frameworks can adapt to technological disruption.

He was joined by several experts, Mireille Hildebrandt (FBA, VUB), Helen Nissenbaum (Cornell Tech), Cornelia Kutterer (MIAI – Université Grenoble Alpes), and Bart Jacobs (Radboud University). In the room with over 160 people they engaged in a discussion from AI geopolitics to the risk of AGI theories and from contextual integrity to the EU AI regulatory efforts.



JANNEKE SCHOKKENBROEK MEDIA APPEARANCES

Following the launch of 'Appily Ever After', Janneke has been making waves across various media platforms, sharing insights from her book and her research on love in the digital age.

She sat down for an interview with De Morgen, where she shared her findings from her book and discussed how relationships are shaped by technology.

Janneke also appeared on NPO Radio 1 during the night of NTR Wetenschap and Nieuws BV. Here she had thoughtful conversations on the complexities of modern dating, tackling topics also discussed in her book such as catfishing and other dating challenges in the digital age.



Released on the very fitting date of February 14th 2025, this book is a must-read for anyone looking to better understand love and technology.

[Order your copy now on Bol.com](https://www.bol.com) to discover how to navigate the digital world of modern relationships.

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

As part of RESOCIAL a key member of the project, Lorena Sánchez Chamorro, will lead two workshops, on June 20th and July 4th. These workshops will help advance the project's objectives, particularly within workpackage three, which focusses on engaging end users and representatives in meaningful discussion. Additionally, some elements from workpackage two will be incorporated through a session on policy.

The workshops will be a way to provide a space to discuss the diverse experiences of users on social media. Participants will work together to formulate concrete design solutions and policy interventions to address online vulnerability. These varied perspectives will help influence design. Through these workshops Lorena emphasises user experiences in social media.



Vulnerability on Social Media Workshops

Are you working with, helping, or defending populations in situations of **#vulnerability** (e.g. underprivileged communities, users at a higher risk in the online domain, marginalised communities)? Then this is for you!

[Register Now](#)

**Two dates**
June 20th and/or July 4th

**Time:**
10am - 4pm

**Location:**
Leiden Law School

WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

- exchange and discuss experiences of users in situations of vulnerability on social media
- formulate potential design solutions and policy interventions to tackle this vulnerability



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[More information](#)
<https://resocialproject.nl/>

SOCIAL MEDIA USE STUDY

As an important part of her research Lorena Sánchez Chamorro will be doing several interviews with social media users in order to focus on their personal experiences with social media platforms. These conversations will take place in June and mark the initial phase of Lorena's study after which several workshops will take place.

The study will have two sections, the first being the interview with the participants on their own experiences with social media use, the second will be a group session focusing on designing a digital space.

GIANCLAUDIO ON THE DATA IN THE CITY PODCAST

During the CPDP event Gianclaudio Malgeiri was invited to speak on the Data in the city podcast. In this discussion Gianclaudio laid out the RESOCIAL project by explaining key terms such as vulnerability, breaking down the various aspects which together make vulnerability and their implications.



**Episode 7: Runway to Rave:
Data After Dark**
open.spotify.com



“

An exploitation of vulnerability is also a matter of collective right and of democracy in general, because if you exploit vulnerabilities, if you exploit loneliness, it is a matter of social health but also a matter of participation in the electoral process, participation in the public debate, pluralism of media in general and democracy. So, I think we should stop thinking vulnerability is a micro topic; vulnerability is something affecting democracy, and it is getting more and more significant with this bigger power imbalance with big tech and greater dependence, psychological and structural dependence.



The conversation also touched on the application of vulnerability theories in AI models, such as with chatbots and their role in loneliness. Other issues such as consumer vulnerability with customer service chatbots were also briefly touched on. This conversation raised important questions on transparency and its limits. The importance of AI education was also highlighted, as not just technological understanding is needed, but emotional understanding is key as well.

This conversation highlighted the growing impact of digital vulnerability and the need for a smarter, more thoughtful approach to how we interact with AI and online platforms.

PAPER PRESENTATIONS AT THE ACM FACCT CONFERENCE

The RESOCIAL team attended this year's ACM FAccT conference in Athens Greece from June 23rd to June 26th. The ACM conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency brings to gather experts from many disciplines to examine the impact of algorithmic systems and the societal challenges they pose.

At the conference two papers were presented, the first co-authored by Gianclaudio Malgieri and Maria-Lucia Rebrean "Vulnerability in the EU AI Act: Building an Interpretation". This paper tackles the ambiguity of the concept of vulnerability in the AI Act. It offers a legal interpretation grounded in EU law and proposes a more flexible definition that accounts for identity, context and power imbalances. The first paper was presented in person by Rebrean herself, while a second paper, "Scalable Fairness - The Legal Tool Against Power," was delivered online by Malgieri.

ACM FAccT

ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency

A computer science conference with a cross-disciplinary focus that brings together researchers and practitioners interested in fairness, accountability, and transparency in socio-technical systems.

With summer break just around the corner we have put together a reading list for those long rides or lazy afternoons by the beach.



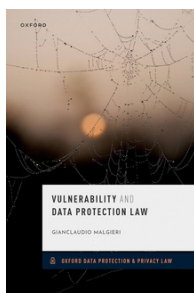
'Appily Ever After' – Janneke Schokkenbroek

Curious about love in the digital age? Appily Ever After explores the world of online romance, from catfishing to navigating relationships in the digital world. This book is packed full of meaningful insights alongside practical advice, making this book especially helpful for those of us figuring out the world of online dating ourselves.



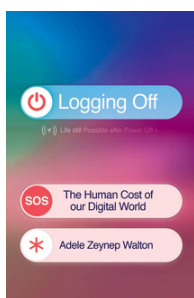
'Digital Arms for Digital Consumer Harms' – Constanta Rosca

Dark patterns and manipulative online practices pose serious risks to consumers. This book, based on Rosca's doctoral research at the University of Maastricht, examines why more technology-specific regulation may be the best path forward under the Digital Fairness Act.



'Vulnerability and Data Protection Law' – Gianclaudio Malgieri

Malgieri reconceptualizes vulnerability in digital spaces, offering a rare analysis of the 'data subject' under the GDPR. The book investigates how personal conditions influence data protection and explores new definitions to address challenges posed by AI.



'Logging Off' – Adele Zeynep

Zeynep gives a sharp critique on social media's impact, calling for a reclamation of our digital world. The book includes clear influences of Zeynep's own experience as part of gen Z and argues that the digital landscape is failing users urging for a more humane future for the online world.

More of a podcast person? Don't worry there is still enough to listen to during the break.

Gianclaudio Malgieri on Data & the City episode 7 – Runway to Rave: Data after Dark.

Malgieri dives into vulnerability on social media, power imbalance and the emotional side of data.



Episode 7: Runway to Rave: Data After Dark

open.spotify.com

A heartfelt 'thank you' goes out to our student research assistants who have contributed to the Resocial project this year. Keep an eye out for the publication of their blogs on the Resocial Website.



Nienke Staal

"What I find especially interesting about the RESOCIAL project is its intersectional take on vulnerability, that it looks not just at the individual and takes power balances and other factors into account as well."

BLOG

Coming soon: How the online world is reshaping our understanding of identity.

Trends like the 'clean girl' or 'it girl' on TikTok show how people today are crafting their identities in ways that feel very different from how identity used to be formed in the past.



Ernesto Villarreal

"RESOCIAL research is appealing and important since social media is fertile ground for the exploitation of human vulnerabilities in ways we have never seen before, which may not only affect individuals in particular but also society in general; thus, finding measures of a legal, design, and business nature to mitigate such vulnerabilities is not only valuable but necessary"

BLOG

Coming soon...

The proliferation of cryptocurrencies is a phenomenon which has attracted a lot of attention in the last couple of years, with discourse tending to highlight financial gains despite a volatile market, the positive aspects of blockchain technology, as well as purported societal benefits such as financial inclusion. However, participating in the market that has emerged around such phenomenon also carries substantial financial risks and drawbacks, particularly for people in a financially vulnerable position, which may not only lead to economic loss but may also exacerbate existing vulnerabilities



Rodrigo Glasmeyer

"I find RESOCIAL's approach for strengthening fundamental rights through vulnerability-sensitive design particularly interesting, as I believe design itself is often a key driver of the exploitation of vulnerabilities and therefore holds great potential as a proactive tool for protecting and promoting rights."

BLOG

Coming soon: The Myth of the 'Average' Data Subject.

Most digital platforms are designed for a fictional "average" user, overlooking the diverse cognitive, social, and economic vulnerabilities of real people. This post examines how interface design and default settings could exclude less empowered users from exercising control over their personal data, leading to unequal protection under the law.

&

Coming soon: Doom-Scrolling by Design

Algorithms on platforms like TikTok and YouTube often interpret emotional engagement such as pausing on a war-related video as a cue to recommend even more distressing content. This post explores how such feedback loops manipulate users' emotional states, particularly among already vulnerable groups, and why this practice challenges both the fairness principle under the GDPR and the ethical boundaries of recommender system design.

When do you feel vulnerable on social media?



Whether it's navigating privacy concerns, encountering harmful design patterns, or feeling the pressure of constant online engagement, **we'd love to hear your story.**

Your story might even be featured in our newsletter in order to highlight real issues.

Send your submissions to: resocialproject@law.leidenuniv.nl



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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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