

# Preface

“Trust dies but mistrust blossoms.” (Sophocles)

Often, not until times of crisis do we realize how fragile trust relations are. Normally, we experience a state of intimacy or familiarity with partners and friends, but also vis-à-vis organizations and institutions. We do not realize, however, that the banking and financial system are fraught with risk. As regards science, we do not expect scientific misconduct. Moreover, before the revelations by Edward Snowden, it seemed impossible that intelligence services would spy on the phone and mail traffic of private people and politicians. Finally and most recently, a respectable German automobile manufacturer has been caught manipulating emission tests, thereby destroying its customers’ trust. While living and acting within an environment of trustworthiness vis-à-vis people, organizations, and institutions, only crises reveal the risks entailed. That is when intimacy and familiarity—conditions that neglect risk—turn into trust, and risk is perceived as a central element to this relation. Thus, trust constitutes a relationship shaped by risk, in which the person who trusts makes him- or herself dependent on the person he or she trusts.

Without trust, societies, organizations, and individuals cannot act. Trust functions as a social glue. It creates options for decision making and actions. In previous years, academia has given more attention to trust as a scientific category. It has been a focus of research in management studies, psychology, and sociology, as well as in communication and media studies, sports sciences, law, political studies, history, religious studies, and information science. Depending on the perspective, trust is conceptualized as a quality inherent to relationships, a state, or an individual disposition.

The influence of digitization on personal relationships, on the actions of organizations, and on society as a whole is unparalleled in recent years. The Internet has transformed work processes within the economic system along with the relation between media and their audience and the notions of privacy in our network society—to name just a few examples.

Digitization transforms the conditions for creating and maintaining trust. Manipulations within the financial sector, the surveillance of data traffic, or revelations of plagiarism and forgery in science are closely related to digitization. On the one hand, the Internet provides new opportunities for manipulation, enhancing breaches of trust. On the other hand, it facilitates access to knowledge and experience. Drawing on the evaluations and comments of others—be they laypeople or experts—reduces the amount of risk inherent in trust-based social actions.

The contributions to this book examine how trust is built and maintained under the conditions of digitization. The chapters revolve around media, sports, science, and the economy as four prototypical fields of research, accompanied by the aspect of social relations. The contributors focus less on presenting empirical findings from trust research in the abovementioned areas. Rather, the authors draw upon models and concepts derived from their analyses of trust in their fields of interest. Digitization challenges trust research to reconsider its conceptualizations of trust, trustworthiness, and trust relations. This book presents insights into this.

Although numerous trust crises illustrate that trust relations have become more fragile in a digitized world, several contributions give evidence that the Internet provides options for enhancing trust. What is more, the Internet has developed equivalent means that have the potential to replace trust. Thus, when it comes to trust relationships, digitization involves not only the question of risk but also of opportunities. Further, the chapters provide insights into the role of antecedents and moderating influences when people evaluate trustworthiness. They reveal which factors influence trust building in personal relationships, within organizations, and within social systems.

*Bernd Blöbaum's* contribution systematizes—by no means exhaustively—factors on behalf of both trustor and trustee that influence their trust relationship. He distinguishes between various trust objects and factors that have an impact on the evaluation of trustworthiness. Mostly through the example of mass media, the author further reflects upon how digitization is transforming trust relationships and the elements affected by this process. *Anil Kunnel* and *Thorsten Quandt* elaborate on the concepts of relational trust and distrust. Whereas relational trust encourages interactions and helps build relationships, the function of relational distrust is to prevent hazardous relationships. Kunnel and Quandt's model of relational trust and distrust in social relations discloses those elements that contribute to a shared identity and strength of ties—especially under the conditions of network technology.

The chapter by *Katherine Grosser*, *Valerie Hase*, and *Bernd Blöbaum* focuses on online journalism as a specific field of interest. The authors present a model that takes into account changes with regard to both journalism and recipients. They underline how, as a result of digitization, new elements related to journalistic research and presentation become more important for the recipients' evaluation of journalism's trustworthiness. In general, though, online journalism struggles to prove its trustworthiness. The contribution by *Florian Winterlin* and *Bernd Blöbaum* is also located within the field of journalism research. The scholars

examine how newsrooms and journalists check the trustworthiness of digital sources. To present valid information, media rely on credible sources. By means of digitization, many sources have not just become more easily accessible; newsrooms also receive vast amounts of information whose origin remains unclear. The authors present a model that systematizes journalism's trust in (digital) sources and its antecedences. Taking a sociological approach, *Christian Wiencierz* and *Ulrike Röttger* analyze trust in organizations. With the example of political parties and nongovernmental organizations, they demonstrate which factors influence the trustworthiness of organizations, as well as the implications of these results for organizations' day-to-day business. *Sarah Westphal* and *Bernd Blöbaum* conceptualize trust as a form of social action that only comes into effect under specific circumstances. According to their argumentation, trust in online information sources is not an omnipresent phenomenon, but is rather a special type of relationship limited to one individual source and, overall, a rare occurrence in this context.

Doping represents a major challenge for the development of trust within the field of sports. *Dennis Dreiskämper*, *Katharina Pöppel*, *Daniel Westmattmann*, *Gerhard Schewe*, and *Bernd Strauss* disclose that doping constitutes a serious problem for trust relations with regard to sports—for athletes and sports associations as well as for their audiences and supporters. The contributors present a model including both the antecedents of trust in high-performance sports and a description of the particular risks for athletes, associations, and audiences. Special emphasis is placed on discussing the effects of digitization and mediatization on the process of trust building.

As with other areas of society, science depends on trust. This includes both trust in science and trust within the system of science. *Friederike Hendriks*, *Dorothe Kienhues*, and *Rainer Bromme* introduce the concept of epistemic trust as a means to overcome uncertainty. Referring to the digitized knowledge society, they discuss antecedents of trust in the relationship between experts and laypersons.

How does digitization change trust relationships with regard to the economic sphere? In their contribution, *Philipp Romeike*, *Christina Wohlers*, *Guido Hertel*, and *Gerhard Schewe* analyze how trust building is transformed within work processes based on digital communication. They disclose how in order to overcome temporal and spatial distances, electronic performance monitoring—if enacted properly—may supplement and support mutual trust between supervisors and employees. In that regard, what matters is the employees' subjective perception that such control is appropriate or legitimate. The authors outline a clear agenda for supervisors in modern workplaces to work upon maximizing such perceptions on the side of their employees. Analyzing only those factors relevant for trust relations between supervisors and employees, the authors define implications for trust-enhancing leadership in working relations. *Jens Mazei* and *Guido Hertel* refer to a different context in which trust is relevant. They take into consideration the increasing use of digital communication in negotiation processes, thereby focusing on both the antecedents and the consequences of trust in electronic negotiations. The scholars illustrate which

psychological negotiation strategies result in an increase of trust and also illustrate potential benefits of digital as compared to face-to-face negotiation. The question which skills promote trust in working relations takes center stage in *Jens Kanthak* and *Guido Hertel*'s contribution. Their research revolves around virtual teams working in different time zones at separate locations and getting in touch with each other only via digital means of communication. Bearing in mind the asynchronicity of this communication, Kanthak and Hertel's model reveals those factors that are fundamental in creating trust within virtual teams. *Ayten Öksüz*, *Nicolai Walter*, *Bettina Distel*, *Michael Räckers*, and *Jörg Becker*'s chapter focuses on modern information technologies and discusses their usage within the discipline of information systems. The authors disclose an openness toward the question of trust within this field of research. Rather than concentrating merely on the aspect of trust in technology, the discipline further analyzes which factors contribute to building trust by means of information technology, particularly when dealing with issues of risk.

Social media in particular are responsible for transforming communication between individuals and within groups. There remain numerous challenges regarding trust building and the relationship between privacy and the public sphere. *Regina Jucks*, *Gesa Linnemann*, *Franziska Thon*, and *Maria Zimmermann* examine how people build and perceive trust through language, e.g., the specific words used in the digital environment. While some expressions are related to self-disclosure and empathy, others, e.g., technical jargon, point to competence of the speaker. *Ricarda Moll* and *Stephanie Pieschl* refer to the term "collective privacy" in order to describe a central trust phenomenon of communication within online social networks. The contributors argue that social media users may be willing to reveal private information because they assume that against the backdrop of collective privacy their disclosures will be hardly acknowledged by other users.

The numerous contributions are the result of an intensive, interdisciplinary cooperation stretching over several years—a cooperation that still remains a rare phenomenon within academia. Scholars of various disciplines from the University of Münster such as communication and media studies, psychology, economics, sport science, and information science examined the effects of digitization on trust building in more than 20 research projects. The findings presented in this volume represent merely a segment of our joint research (for further publications, see [www.uni-muenster.de/GK-Vertrauen-Kommunikation/publikationen/publikationenindex.html](http://www.uni-muenster.de/GK-Vertrauen-Kommunikation/publikationen/publikationenindex.html).) The studies are part of the Research Training Group "Trust and Communication in a Digitized World," financed by the German Research Foundation (DFG), a cooperation of doctoral students, postdoctoral researchers, and professors from five disciplines. Each doctoral thesis is supervised by a team of supervisors from two academic fields and, usually, further supported by international mentors. With this volume, the authors hope to contribute to a more thorough understanding of trust in the age of the Internet. However, at the same time, the chapters uncover major research gaps and show the need for further research.

The publication of this volume was possible only due to the great support of many. Alongside the contributing authors, I would like to thank in particular Franziska Rohde and Stephan Völlmicke from the Research Training Group, who were deeply involved in the management of the publication. Also, a very special thanks to the Alfred Krupp Wissenschaftskolleg Greifswald for providing the editor with a trusting environment in which to prepare this publication.

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Trust and Communication in a Digitized World

Models and Concepts of Trust Research

Blöbaum, B. (Ed.)

2016, XII, 251 p. 21 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-28057-8