

Annual Research

Report 2025–2026



Content Index

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Emerging Technologies Lab

Annual Research Report
2025–2026

1

Foreword

2

Research Streams

3

Highlights from
Key Publications

4

Focus: Young
Researchers

5

Data and
Infrastructure

6

Research
Dissemination

7

Collaboration
Network

8

Looking Ahead

Foreword

Welcome to the first edition of the Emerging Technologies Lab Newsletter. This publication will be shared biannually to keep our partners, collaborators, fellow researchers, and students informed and inspired by our latest work.

At the Emerging Technologies Lab, we examine how people experience, adopt, and shape emerging technologies and broader processes of digitalization in everyday life, work, and society. Our research is grounded in interdisciplinary social science and social psychology, with a strong focus on human behaviour in evolving technological environments. We are particularly interested in how these technologies become embedded in social relationships, working life, well-being, and society more broadly.

We believe that meaningful research thrives on collaboration. Whether you are a long-time partner or a curious newcomer, we hope this newsletter sparks ideas, opens dialogue, and strengthens our shared commitment to understanding emerging technologies in a rapidly evolving world.

Let's stay connected.

Director Atte Oksanen

Professor of Social Psychology
Vice Dean for Research



Vice Director Iina Savolainen

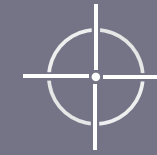
Senior Research Fellow



Research Streams

The Emerging Technologies Lab advances five major research streams analyzing how emerging technologies and digitalization shape human life and society. These streams are: 1) AI in Society, 2) Self and Technology, 3) Work and Technology, 4) Cyberhate and Cyberharassment, and 5) Technology and Addictions. Together, they examine how technological change is adopted, experienced, and embedded in everyday life, social relationships, working life, and broader societal structures. The streams provide evidence-based insights to support research, policy, organizational practices, and informed societal dialogue in an era of rapid technological change.

AI in Society



Focus: Investigating how artificial intelligence shapes social life, institutions, decision-making, and societal transformation.



Methods: Multidisciplinary research using large-scale datasets, longitudinal surveys, and experimental designs.



Impact: Provides policymakers, organizations, and industry with evidence-based insights into the societal, economic, and ethical implications of AI integration.

Self & Technology



Focus: Analyzing how emerging technologies affect self-perception, identity, self-determination, and self-verification across different societies.



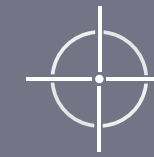
Methods: Cross-national and global survey studies grounded in social psychological theory.



Impact: Shows how technologies influence personal identity, psychological needs, and people's relationships with themselves and others.

Research Streams

Technology & Addictions



Focus: Understanding how digital technologies, platforms, and online communities are connected to addictive and excessive behaviors.



Methods: Interdisciplinary research using longitudinal and qualitative studies, digital ethnography, and analyses of online environments.



Impact: Informs prevention and intervention strategies addressing digital addictions, gambling, gaming, substance use, and related harms.

Work & Technology



Focus: Understanding how technological change transforms organizations, work practices, professional identities, and workers' everyday experiences.

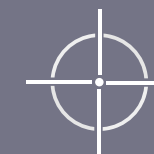


Methods: Multidisciplinary and longitudinal research, including national datasets, focus groups, and surveys in workplace contexts.



Impact: Helps identify and anticipate the organizational, social, ethical, and economic implications of emerging technologies for workplaces and the workforce.

Cyberhate & Cyberharassment



Focus: Examining online hate, harassment, victimization, extremism, and legal and institutional responses, including in workplace settings.



Methods: Cross-national surveys and longitudinal studies, complemented by legal-policy analysis and research on coping strategies.



Impact: Supports evidence-based legal frameworks, institutional responses, and organizational policies to prevent and address online hate and harassment.

Highlights from Key Publications in 2025–2026

Journal of Social and Personal Relationships



Individual and Well-Being Factors Associated with Social Chatbot Usage: a Six-Country Study

A cross-national study shows that social chatbot use as a form of friendship is already present among adults in six European countries, with prevalence ranging from about 9% to 18%. The study found that users were consistently younger than non-users, and that psychological distress was the strongest and most consistent predictor of chatbot use. In some countries, loneliness and self-esteem also played a role. The findings suggest that social chatbots may provide an additional social resource, especially for younger individuals, but their use may also reflect underlying social or emotional vulnerabilities.

[Read more](#) →

International Journal of Information Management



Technological Identity and Basic Psychological Needs in the Use of New Technologies: a Two-wave Cross-National Survey Study

In a two-wave study across six European countries, researchers examined how identifying with other users of new technologies affects people's basic psychological needs. The findings show a complex pattern: stronger identification with new technology users was linked to greater relatedness, but also to lower autonomy and competence. In other words, feeling connected to other technology users may support social belonging, while also being associated with feeling less independent or capable in technology use. The results highlight technological identity as an important factor in digital well-being.

[Read more](#) →

Highlights from Key Publications in 2025–2026

Computers in Human Behavior



Just a Few More Minutes: Longitudinal and Cross-National Perspectives on the Role of Online Identity Bubbles in Addictive Internet Use

Drawing on cross-national data from six European countries and longitudinal data from Finland, this study examined how online identity bubbles are linked to addictive internet use. The results show that stronger involvement in identity-based online communities is consistently associated with addictive internet use and can predict increases in problematic use over time. Mental distress and lower happiness were also linked to addictive internet use, while happiness appeared to buffer some negative effects. The findings underline the importance of addressing social and identity-based drivers of digital addiction.

[Read more](#) →

Digital Business



AI Transformation in Working Life: A Systematic Review of Usage and Attitudes Towards AI Among Workers

This systematic review analyzed 24 empirical studies on how workers use and perceive AI in the workplace. Focusing on the most recent research from 2020 to 2024 and covering major developments in AI, the findings reveal a mixed picture: AI tools are increasingly connected to automation, decision support, efficiency, productivity, and perceived fairness, but also to anxiety and uncertainty about role change and job security. Evidence was especially common in healthcare and education, highlighting the need for broader sectoral and regional research. The review shows that successful AI integration depends on transparent, ethical implementation, human oversight, training, and communication.

[Read more](#) →

Highlights from

Key Publications in 2025–2026

Leonardo



AI-Generated Art Perception: A Population Study

Artificial intelligence is making major advances and challenging traditional ideas of human creativity. In this Finnish population study, researchers analyzed participants' reactions to AI-generated art using experimental and longitudinal designs. The findings show that AI-art anxiety, AI-art enthusiasm, and attitudes toward AI art were shaped by participants' technology orientation, AI use, sociodemographic background, and interest in fine arts. Participants with stronger technology orientation and higher education were more positive about AI creating art together with humans. Overall, the study shows that people have mixed views on AI creating art independently.

[Read more](#) →

Behaviour & Information Technology



User Trust in AI and Major Tech Companies in Twelve Countries

This study examined trust in AI and major technology companies using data from more than 11,000 participants in twelve countries across six continents. The findings suggest that trust is shaped especially by positive attitudes toward AI and a sense of relatedness in technology use. In contrast, autonomy, competence, and AI self-efficacy played a role only in some national contexts. Trust in AI and major tech companies were also closely connected. Overall, the results suggest that trustworthy AI depends not only on technical performance, but also on people's everyday experiences with AI and the companies behind it.

[Read more](#) →

Highlights from Key Publications in 2025–2026

Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice



Cybercrime Correlates Among Adolescents in Europe and South America: A Cross-National Analysis Based on Situational Action Theory

This study analyzed data from more than 28,000 adolescents in Europe and South America to examine cybercrime involvement across countries. The research focused on image-based abuse, online hate speech, cyberfraud, and hacking among young people aged 13 to 17. Findings show variation between countries and continents: cybercrime and hacking were more common in South America, while image-based abuse was more prevalent in Europe. Cybercrime was associated with low self-control, morality, anticipated formal sanctions, and peer delinquency. The results support the need for prevention strategies that address both individual and social risk factors.

[Read more](#) →

Behaviour & Information Technology



Sense of Community, Social Support and Social Media Use in the Post-pandemic World of Work

This longitudinal study examined how remote work, sense of community, social support, and social media use are connected in the post-pandemic world of work. The findings show that remote workers, especially those working remotely at high intensity, experienced weaker workplace community and less support from colleagues. However, frequent social media communication for both work-related and informal purposes helped mitigate some of these effects. Overall, the results suggest that sustaining workplace relationships is not only about where people work, but also how they communicate, interact, and maintain social support in increasingly digital work environments.

[Read more](#) →

Focus: Young Researchers

In 2025, high-quality doctoral research was completed at ETL by early-career researchers whose dissertations demonstrated exceptional academic quality. The defenses were evaluated by opponents with leading expertise in their respective fields, reflecting the rigorous academic standards of the work.

The dissertations focused on gambling, gaming, escapism, and addictive behaviors as phenomena increasingly shaped by digital environments. Online contexts can differ significantly from traditional offline settings, creating new forms of risk, participation, and behavior. Together, these dissertations show how excessive behaviors are evolving and how these developments can be better understood and addressed.

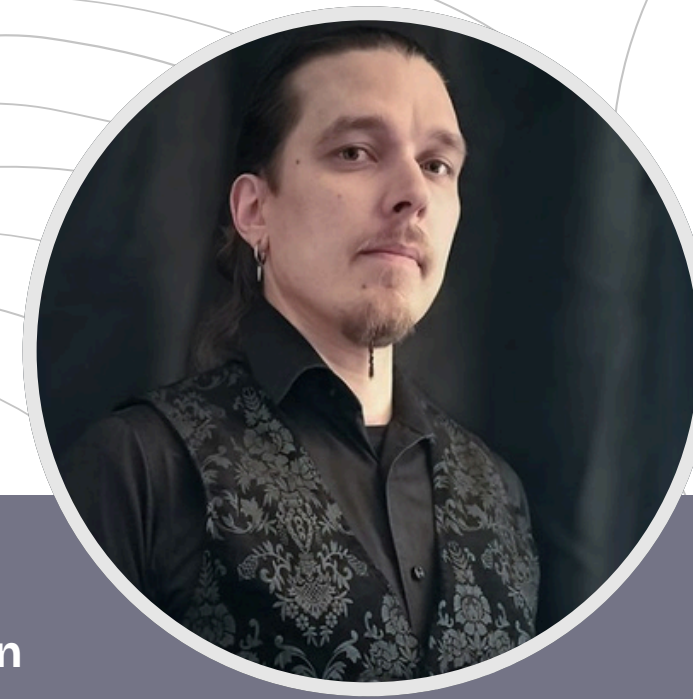


Photo by Linda Sirkkola

Ilkka Vuorinen

Problems Beyond Gambling and Gaming: A social psychological approach to excessive behaviors

Ilkka Vuorinen's dissertation examines gambling and gaming problems as part of broader psychosocial difficulties, rather than simply as individual habits gone wrong. Using survey data from Finland, the United States, South Korea, and Spain, as well as longitudinal Finnish data, the dissertation shows that loneliness, psychological distress, stress, low sense of mastery, and frustrated basic psychological needs are linked to more severe gambling and gaming problems. Materialistic values and mental health problems also played a role in gambling risk. The key message is that preventing excessive behaviors requires looking beyond gambling and gaming themselves and paying closer attention to the wider social, emotional, and well-being contexts in which these problems emerge.



[Read dissertation here](#)



Photo by Jonne Renvall

Hannu Jouhki

The Easy Way Out: Escapism as a Central Motive for Addictions

Hannu Jouhki's dissertation analyzes escapism (i.e. the tendency to seek relief from reality or difficult life circumstances) as a central motive behind addictions and addictive behaviors. Drawing on Finnish population-based and longitudinal datasets, the dissertation shows that escapism is linked to alcohol use, smoking, drug use, and excessive online behaviors such as gambling, gaming, and internet use. The research also finds that escapism is more common among people with impulsive or open personalities and among those experiencing lower autonomy, competence, or life satisfaction. The dissertation offers a valuable lens for understanding why addictive behaviors develop and how their underlying causes might be addressed.



[Read dissertation here](#)



Photo by Aleksii Hupli

Heli Hagfors

Why Do We Gamble? An Integrative Approach to Gambling Motives and Problem Gambling

Heli Hagfors' dissertation examines why people gamble and how different motives are linked to gambling participation and problem gambling. Among Finnish adults, the most common motives were winning money and positive feelings, such as excitement and pleasure. However, gambling to escape difficult emotions and thoughts, as well as gambling for money, were especially strongly connected to gambling problems. Longitudinal results show that escape, money, and competition motives can predict later gambling problems, particularly when basic psychological needs are frustrated. Understanding motives and unmet psychological needs is therefore important for prevention and intervention.



[Read dissertation here](#)

Data and Infrastructure

The Emerging Technologies Lab has built a broad data infrastructure to support rigorous, longitudinal, and comparative research on emerging technologies and society. Our work draws on large-scale survey datasets, experimental designs, social media data, and qualitative approaches. Current longitudinal datasets cover themes such as social media at work, gambling in the digital age, AI in society, self and technology, and AI in working life. These resources make it possible to examine technological change over time and across different social contexts. To support cumulative and transparent research, several ETL datasets have also been archived in the Finnish Social Science Data Archive, including data on cyberhate, human–robot interaction, workplace social media, and youth gambling and digital behaviors.



Theme:
Addictive technologies



12 waves



~2500 respondents



Theme:
Digital identity



12 countries



~17 700 respondents

Gambling in the Digital Age

A longitudinal dataset from Finland (2021–) focusing on gambling, gaming, online shopping, and internet use. The survey uses validated measures on excessive gambling, gaming, online shopping, and internet use, as well as questions on different forms of gambling and gaming. It also includes measures on social ties and well-being.

Self & Technology

A five-time-point survey from Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, and Poland (2022–), complemented by a global cross-sectional dataset from Australia, Brazil, Japan, Portugal, South Africa, and the US. The survey focuses on self and identity in technologized environments, using social psychological measures.

Data and Infrastructure



Theme:

AI disruption at work



4 waves



~2100 respondents

AI at Work

A four-time-point longitudinal dataset from Finland (2024–), collected from workers. The survey examines AI in the workplace, focusing on workers' user experiences with AI, attitudes and expectations regarding its use, and its impact on work habits and roles. It also includes measures of workplace well-being.



Theme:

Digital worklife



14 waves



~1800 respondents

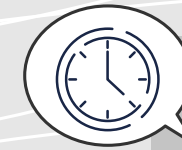
Social Media at Work

A longitudinal dataset from Finland (2019–) focusing on well-being at work, technology use and attitudes, and communication. The survey includes a variety of validated measures and follows Finnish workers across 14 time points.



Theme:

Everyday AI



4 waves



~1200 respondents

AI in Society

A four-time-point dataset from Finland (2021–2024) focusing on technology use in living environments. The survey includes measures on technology use and attitudes, local community, living environment, and social ties. It also includes experiments at different time points.

Research Dissemination

In 2025–2026, the Emerging Technologies Lab disseminated its research through peer-reviewed publications, doctoral dissertations, conferences, and media appearances. ETL researchers presented their work at international conferences and workshops across several countries, contributing to scholarly discussions on emerging technologies, human behavior, and society. At the same time, ETL's research reached wider audiences through media interviews, news articles, and public commentary. Together, these activities highlight the ETL research center's commitment to high-quality research, international visibility, and active engagement in public debate on technological change.



Media Appearances

WIRED

Gizmodo

NATIONAL
THE TRIBUNE



SCIENCE & VIE

PHYS.ORG

IT BOLTWISE

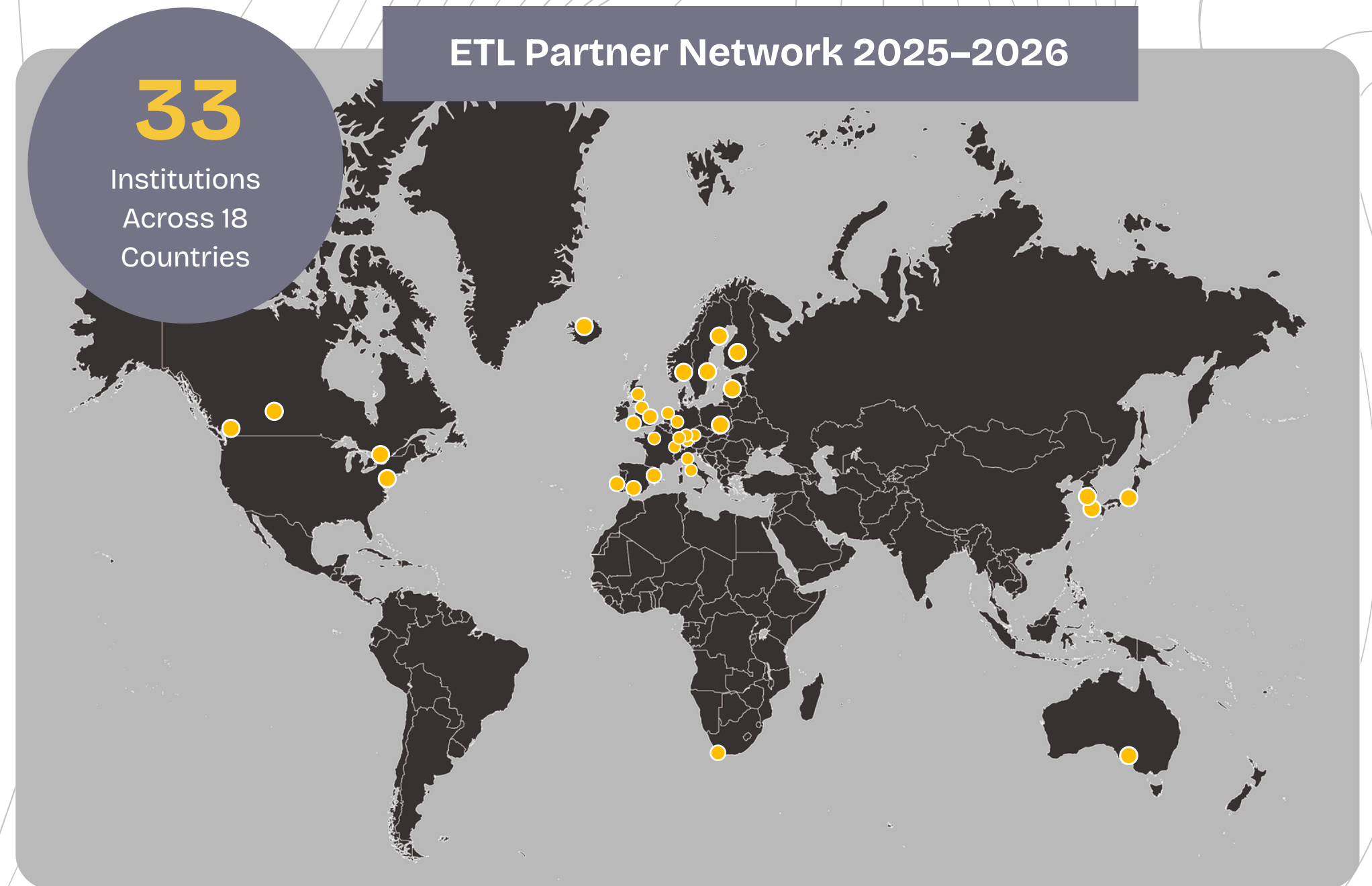
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HELSINGIN SANOMAT

PsyPost

Collaboration Network

ETL's partner network brings together universities, research institutes, visiting scholars, and industry partners across countries and disciplines. In 2025–2026, ETL continued to strengthen its international collaboration through joint research, researcher mobility, visiting scholars, and shared projects. These partnerships support ETL's research streams on AI in society, self and technology, work and technology, cyberhate and cyberharassment, and technology and addictions. Collaboration with organizations and industry partners also helps ensure that ETL's research remains connected to current real-world challenges and contributes to socially relevant, evidence-based knowledge on emerging technologies.



Our Global Network of Collaborators 2025–2026

Australia

- Flinders University

Canada

- University of British Columbia
- University of Saskatchewan
- University of Toronto

France

- Ensta Paris

Germany

- Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich
- University of Duisburg-Essen
- University of Konstanz

Iceland

- University of Akureyri

Italy

- Mercatorum University
- University of Florence

Japan

- Institute of Science Tokyo

Latvia

- Rīga Stradiņš University

Netherlands

- Utrecht University

Norway

- Institute for Social Research

Poland

- Jagiellonian University

Portugal

- ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon

South Africa

- University of Cape Town

South Korea

- Hanyang University
- Jeju National University

Spain

- Barcelona Supercomputing Center
- University of Córdoba

Sweden

- Umeå University
- Uppsala University

Switzerland

- University of Lausanne

United Kingdom

- Brunel University London
- Durham University
- Kingston University London
- University College London
- University of Bath
- University of Bristol
- University of Sheffield

United States of America

- University of Pennsylvania

Director Atte Oksanen

Professor of Social Psychology

Vice Dean for Research

Looking Ahead

The rapid transformation of AI technologies is creating major disruption across everyday life, work, organizations, and society. As research in this area develops quickly, the Emerging Technologies Lab will continue to focus on high-quality, theoretically grounded, and methodologically rigorous research on emerging technologies and their societal implications.

We will also continue expanding our internationally unique longitudinal datasets, which make it possible to examine technological change over time and across different social contexts. At the same time, ETL will keep exploring new methodological solutions, combining surveys, experiments, computational approaches, physiological measurements, and innovative research designs to analyze complex technology-related phenomena.

Looking ahead, we will further strengthen our international research collaborations and partnerships with organizations, companies, and societal stakeholders. ETL is also growing as a research community and research center with a sustained impact in both research and education. This is an exciting time to study emerging technologies, and ETL is well positioned to contribute new ideas, rigorous evidence, and meaningful collaborations to this rapidly evolving field.