

Conf-IRM 2026

25-27 May 2026

Estonian Business School, Tallinn, Estonia

Track 1: Responsible Digital Futures (Main Track)

Scope and Motivation

We stand at a critical juncture where digital technologies—from generative AI and the metaverse to quantum computing and pervasive IoT—are reshaping every facet of human existence. While these advancements promise solutions to global challenges, they simultaneously amplify profound risks: algorithmic bias, ecological damage, privacy erosion, democratic instability, and the deepening of socio-economic divides. The discourse has urgently moved beyond abstract ethics to a multi-stakeholder imperative for responsibility—foresightful, inclusive, and actionable stewardship of our digital trajectory.

This track serves as a premier interdisciplinary forum for researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and community advocates to critically examine, define, and enact the principles of responsibility. We seek contributions that not only diagnose problems but also propose robust, implementable, and evaluable frameworks for creating equitable, sustainable, and just digital futures.

Thematic Focus: A Scoping Review

The field is rapidly evolving from high-level principles to tangible practice. Recent literature highlights a critical gap: the operationalization of responsibility. The enactment of the EU AI Act establishes a landmark legal framework for risk-based AI governance, while the NIST AI RMF provides a voluntary resource for managing AI risks. However, the challenge of translating these into auditable, day-to-day processes, especially for opaque foundation models, remains significant.

Concurrently, the environmental impact of digital systems—the energy consumption of massive AI training runs and data centers—is a growing concern, pushing the concept of "digital sobriety" and sustainable IT to the forefront of research. Furthermore, the critique of extractive data-economic models underscores the need to transition from platform capitalism towards structures that ensure data dignity and distributive justice, such as data cooperatives and trusts.

This year, we place a special emphasis on this redesign of Digital Economies and the operationalization of governance. Educational challenges brought about by the new digital systems encourage submissions for Scholarship of Teaching and Learning studies. We seek research that moves beyond diagnosis to deliver concrete tools, methods, and policies for a responsible digital transition.

List of Topics

We invite submissions on topics including, but not limited to:

Governance, Policy, and Economics:

- Novel AI audit frameworks and standardizable impact assessments
- Policy implementation studies and international regulatory alignment/conflict
- Data governance models (e.g., data trusts, cooperatives, sovereignty)
- Antitrust and competition policy in digital markets
- Ethical digital market design and the future of digital currency

Sustainability and Justice:

- Carbon-aware computing, frugal AI, and lifecycle analysis

- Policies for circular digital economies and degrowth in tech
- Bias mitigation, algorithmic recourse, and equity-centered design
- Decolonial and global south critiques of digital futures
- Participatory design methods with marginalized communities

Human Agency and Society:

- Ethical algorithmic management and the future of work (e.g., UBI, portable benefits)
- Safeguarding mental health, digital well-being, and democratic integrity
- Combating misinformation and synthetic media
- Privacy-enhancing technologies (PETs) and sovereign digital identity
- Speculative design, critical futures, and long-term societal risk forecasting

Education and Capacity Building (SoTL):

- Curriculum development for responsible technology
- Pedagogical innovations in teaching ethics and critical thinking
- Assessing ethical reasoning and responsible design skills
- Critical examinations of educational technology itself.

Track Co-Chairs

Jukka Veikko Mäkinen, Estonian Business School, Estonia, jukka.makinen@ebs.ee

Malcolm Garbutt, University of Western Cape, South Africa, mgarbutt@uwc.ac.za