

Title: Engaging with the Digital World: the effects for society, places and individuals

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The benefits and importance of digital technologies for national economic performance are well documented. However, although empirical research has linked digital infrastructure and economic growth, there are still questions around socio-economic performance (e.g. the productivity paradox) and how the adoption of digital technologies can influence it. The importance of Digital Economy in today's world is also present in policy initiatives not only at the European but also at national and regional levels. For this reason, during the last years, many institutions such as the European Commission have developed a set of indicators to monitor, evaluate and compare the development of the Digital Agenda in Europe (e.g. the Digital Economy and Society Index DESI).

It is recently becoming more evident that time, space and individual attributes can mediate the different socio-economic impacts of engaging with the Digital Economy. Thus, it is increasingly being realised that there is a path creation/dependency and hysteresis element in adopting digital technologies as well as that space and individuals (whether persons or firms) differ on the extent to which they can benefit from such engagement. Moreover, digital technologies and, more specifically, the internet have led to drastic changes in production models: from the widespread use of platforms and new market-spaces to online retail activities and the role of data as a direct production input.

At the same time, advancements in computation capabilities and the availability of micro-data enable us to add quality aspects to Digital Economy metrics and identify the level of engagement with the digital world beyond broadband adoption and performance measures. Understanding these new dimensions and utilising new data sources allows us to better refine and understand the potential impacts of Digital Economy on different places and communities and can help us design better policies in harnessing emerging opportunities for all.

This special session aims to bring together cross-disciplinary research on the Digital Economy at a sub-national scale by bringing together research on:

- The effects of Digital Economy adoption on regional economic performance
- The socio-economic effects of engaging with the Digital Economy at the micro level (citizens, workers and firms)
- New metrics on identifying digital economic activity, its spatial footprint and its evolution

The selection of papers will follow the procedures set by the ERSA Organizing Committee.