

The bidt at a glance

Digital technologies have an impact on everyone's day-to-day life. They not only change how we communicate and work together but also impact social interaction and the political process. For companies, technological change has far-reaching effects on their economic development and position in global competition. For employees, the digital transformation is changing which tasks need to be performed and which skills are required. Digitalisation, therefore, has a profound impact on a country's social, political and economic development and its position in global competition.

Understanding this transformation and shaping the digital future responsibly and in the public's interest are the core concerns of the Bavarian Research Institute for Digital Transformation (bidt) of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BAdW).

History of the bidt

The bidt emerged from the Munich Center for Internet Research (MCIR) at the beginning of 2019, created in the context of political efforts to institutionalise digitalisation research in Bavaria and Germany.

The MCIR was already funding research projects on digital transformation and providing insights into digital transformation. This work considerably increased the positive impetus provided by such a research and research funding organisation. Accordingly, the concept was further developed into a long-term promoted research institution in Bavaria. Following a positive decision by the Bavarian state government in June 2018, the bidt was able to start its work at the beginning of 2019.

With its understanding of digitalisation and its agile and consistently interdisciplinary, application-oriented and technically sound research focus, the bidt has unique characteristics that set it apart from other research institutes and funding bodies. The bidt understands digitalisation as a multi-layered concept: applications that people use are built on the technical infrastructure and thus influence a society's economic, legal, political and social context. As the diverse relationships and interactions between and within these three layers cannot be adequately captured in a monodisciplinary way, the bidt has focussed on interdisciplinary research from the outset. Research efforts concentrate on the technical foundations of digitalisation and, building on this, economic and legal aspects. In addition, sociological, ethical, philosophical, political science and psychological factors are also considered.

Structure of the bidt

The bidt essentially consists of three pillars.

The [Research](#) pillar bundles all activities with science as the primary target group. For example, internal projects are carried out in which scientific staff employed at the bidt investigate clearly defined research questions in interdisciplinary teams under the leadership of members of the Board of Directors, usually over a period of three years.

The Research pillar also operates various funding lines for scientists outside the bidt. These include the funding of [consortium projects](#) at Bavarian universities and non-university research institutions. Projects are selected in a competitive tendering process. Successful projects receive funding for personnel and material resources and a lump sum for infrastructure costs. Consortium projects have three academic partners from different disciplines. Thematically, all internal and external projects are bundled into three research areas: "Government, Regulation and Infrastructure", "Economy and Labour", and "Communication, Society and Participation".

In addition to project funding, there are also programmes to promote young talent. These include the [Digitalisation Labs](#) for students and the [Graduate Center for doctoral researchers](#) and for [postdocs](#). The Digitalisation Labs use various teaching and learning formats to promote a fundamental, interdisciplinary understanding of key digitalisation issues among students. Doctoral students selected for their outstanding abilities are supported with further training programmes and funding for their research activities. Postdocs can receive funding for their position to develop into excellent researchers and prepare for a professorship.

The [Think Tank](#) pillar bundles bidt's activities with the primary target groups of society, politics and business. Research activities also take place in this unit, but these are not primarily aimed at the scientific community. Rather, long-term empirical monitoring of the digital transformation is used to monitor various aspects of the digital transformation to understand developments and trends and to analyse Bavaria's and Germany's strengths and weaknesses in the digital transformation. To this end, the Think Tank collects data and facts on digital transformation from secondary studies and makes them available online in the [Indicators & Figures Monitoring](#) and [Topic Monitoring](#). On the other hand, it collects its own data as part of multifaceted, mostly quantitative surveys. The current focus is on the [bidt-Digitalbarometer](#), a large representative survey on usage behaviour, digital competencies and the digital transformation of the working environment, and an investigation into the [Prevalence and Acceptance of Home Office](#) in Germany. The Think Tank's data and analyses provide decision-makers with a sound, evidence-based foundation and thus help to shape the digital transformation responsibly.

The [Dialogue](#) pillar forms the interface between research and society. The bidt's approach of "Research in Dialogue" is characterised by open, bidirectional communication, in which research provides impetus to politics, business, civil society and the general public while at the same time takes up input from these areas of society. This constant exchange ensures the social and political relevance of the bidt's work. The guiding principle for the dialogue work is the target group and media-specific preparation of topics and the design of interactive and participatory formats. This includes events ranging from large, public evening events to exclusive discussion rounds with representatives from politics and business. Co-operation events with other institutions or participation in action days are organised as well. Dialogue also develops and operates various digital services, such as the website, monthly newsletter, and social media channels. Furthermore, the Dialogue team is responsible for publishing bidt's own publication series and [press and media](#)

[relations](#). The branding and marketing sub-areas round off Dialogue holistic, integrated communication.

There is constant dialogue and close cooperation between the three pillars. For example, Research and the Think Tank examine various related research questions jointly. The Dialogue supports them in preparing and communicating the research findings in a target group-specific manner and taking on board feedback from the target groups.

Organisation and Bodies

In organisational terms, the three pillars are each represented by a department, which is supported in its activities by the administration. The institute, therefore, consists of four organisational units that report to the bidt management.

The bidt management is overseen by the [Board of Directors](#), which comprises professors from various disciplines and institutions in Bavaria. The Board of Directors makes decisions of strategic importance and is actively involved in research projects. An Executive Committee (GLA) consisting of members of the Board of Directors prepares these decisions and ensures their implementation.

The directors of the bidt are appointed by the project advisory board at the BAdW. The [BAdW Project Advisory Board](#) also advises the Board of Directors of the bidt in fulfilling its tasks and provides suggestions for research and development projects. It is made up of professionally qualified members of the BAdW.

To achieve the broadest possible anchoring in society and networking of the bidt with its target groups, two further bodies accompany the work of the institute:

The [Board of Trustees](#) supports the bidt's networking with society. Its members include representatives from politics, university and business associations, the media, and civil society.

The [Advisory Board](#) advises the Institute on the technical content of the programme. International representatives from the worlds of business and science are involved here.