

# Studying AI with AI in academia

## *Using AI to understand AI in academia: Exploring AI practices in and AI experiences of academics with Furhat*

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### **Introduction**

The overall aim of this research project is to further our knowledge of AI technologies in academic practices. More specifically, we aim to gain a more profound understanding of:

- (1) The (possible) use of AI in academic practices of research and teaching; and
- (2) The AI experiences of academic professionals in using AI in these research and teaching practices.

We focus both on the actual use and possible uses of AI technologies in academic practices. Exploring the possible use of AI in the academic practices of research and teaching means that we not only focus on the possibilities and threats of working with the technology, like its advantages, disadvantages, challenges and/or improvements but more importantly, on the changes in the research and teaching practices resulting from working with the AI technology. Regarding AI experiences, we are interested in the attitudes and perceptions of academics towards working with AI in academia. Exploring the possible uses of AI technologies in academic practices enriches both our insight in the possibilities for AI technologies in academic practices, and the perceptions and attitudes of prospective AI users in academia.

To gain this knowledge we use Furhat as an AI interview technology. In an experimental setting, Furhat conducts semi-structured open-ended interviews with academic professionals, which means that this research is experimental and qualitative in nature. After this interview, we evaluate the interview experience of the academic professional with Furhat together with the interviewee.

At the same time in this qualitative interview experiment, Furhat is an AI technology that becomes part of our research practices. This enables us, as qualitative social science researchers, to explore the possibilities of an AI technology as an alternative innovative methodological tool for doing qualitative social science research. By so doing, we also aim to gain a more profound understanding of:

- (3) AI as an alternative innovative methodological tool for doing qualitative research, compared to other interview research methods in social sciences;

- (4) Necessary improvements of the AI interview technology that enhance social science researchers' methodological interview practices.

Conducting interviews with Furhat as an innovative interview technology enables us to compare our findings with existing commonly used interview methods in the social sciences, analyse advantages, and disadvantages, outline conditions and specific characteristics necessary to perform such a method, and provide points for improvements of the AI technology for becoming a successful interview tool for social science researchers.

Taken into integration, this research project consists of two integrated sub projects (1) Focus on AI practices and experiences of academic professionals in working with AI technologies in their research and teaching practices, and (possible) changes thereof; and (2) Experimenting working with an AI interview technology – Furhat – in the academic practice of doing research as researchers. By so doing, we thus aim to enrich our knowledge of AI in academia.

### **Some practical information:**

#### **Interviews:**

- The interview sessions will last for about 30 minutes:
  - o Interviews with Furhat will last for about 15 minutes
  - o Evaluation of the interview together with the researchers will last for about 10-15 minutes
- The interviews will be organised on the 6<sup>th</sup> until the 9<sup>th</sup> of June.
- The interviews will take place in a room in the Ravelijn Building (Behavioural, Management, and Social sciences). The room will be announced later.
- The interviews will be both audio and video recorded (for facial expressions).
- Before the interview, an informed consent form must be signed. We will inform you about the aims, activities, burdens and risks of the research before you decide whether to take part in the research. The interviews will be anonymised.

Please use the following link for signing up:

<https://datumprikker.nl/pzxxrugwnrrm88ke>

After the experiment, interviews will be transcribed and analysed to produce our first interpretations. We will organise a workshop session in which we discuss our findings with participants. Based on this workshop we will adjust our interpretations and write a research report, which we also share with the participants.

Are you interested or do you want to know more? Please contact us:

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