

Press release

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The digital transformation of the economy: 1.5 million euros in federal funding for research project 'Digivation'.

Digital transformation is the growth and innovation engine par excellence. Nevertheless, German SMEs have only partly begun to exploit the potentials that digitalisation offers. For this reason the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is funding the Digivation project of the universities of Passau and Paderborn and the Institute for Industrial Management (FIR) of RWTH Aachen under the research programme 'Innovationen für die Arbeit von morgen – Forschung für Produktion und Dienstleistung der Zukunft' ('innovations for tomorrow's manufacturing, services and workplaces'). Digivation combines digital process innovation with novel concepts for the development of digital services; the intention behind this is to facilitate and quicken the digital transformation of business enterprises.

Small and medium-sized enterprises increasingly have to ask themselves how they can deploy digital processes within their value chains to ensure that they can continue to meet the growing and changing demands of their customers. Global competitive pressure and new business models are what drives the digital transformation. 'Digital services become widely accepted when companies integrate their customers in the innovation process and adapt their services to the identified customer needs. Digital services offer a particularly strong potential for offering tailored offers to different customer groups', explained Professor Jan H. Schumann of the Chair of Marketing and Innovation, University of Passau. 'The Digivation project has at its aim the development of general and actionable policy recommendations concerning successful customer integration, the development of new digital services and their subsequent individualisation.'

Over a period of three years, the project will generate specific findings on the relationship between digital service innovation and digitalisation of companies and society in general as well as the preconditions that must exist for this relationship to exist. The outcome of this will be hands-on recommendations for the implementation of digital transformation and policy recommendations for decision-makers in politics, businesses and society.

In a sub-project the Passau team – consisting of Professor Schumann, Franziska M. Bongers and Corinna Winkler – will develop a construction kit of methods which can be used to involve the customer base in the development of digital services; furthermore, the team will provide a decision-making tool for the customisation of digital services.

Digivation supports and links up with more than 20 consortium projects from the BMBF's funding line 'Dienstleistungsinnovation durch Digitalisierung' ('service innovation through digitalisation'); the project unites the research perspectives of marketing, information systems and engineering. Moreover, Digivation is carried out in co-operation with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Lower Bavaria, Unity AG, CrowdConsultants 360 GmbH and MHP GmbH to ensure that this new research is readily usable by SMEs.

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