Vera Schmitt | Curriculum Vitae

Email: vera.schmitt@tu-berlin.de
Founder and Head of XplaiNLP Group TU Berlin: https://xplainlp.github.io/
Personal webpage: https://veraschmitt.github.io/
Google Scholar: https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=pKbJC10AAAAJ&hl=en
Born in Überlingen am Bodensee on July 03, 1990. Nationality: German

Professional Experience

Since 12/2024	Member of the Center for European Research in Trusted AI (CERTAIN)
Since 10/2024	Member and Mentor of AI Grid
Since 09/2024	Granted the right to independently supervise and confer doctoral degrees (*Promotionsrecht*) with the BMBF research group funding (*VeraXtract*) following the successful defense of my PhD
Since 04/2024	Associated member of AI4Media EU Network
Since 08/2023	Expert Committee DIN Norm, Bedarf 01-15: Standardisierung von Language Technology und NLP APIs
09/2022-12/2022	Research stay in Israel at the Department of Industrial Engineering at the Tel Aviv University; collaboration with Prof. Joachim Meyer and Prof. Eran Toch
Since 04/2022	Founder and head of the XplaiNLP group at Quality and Usability Lab at TUB, at the intersection of NLP/LLM applications, XAI and HCI for high-stake decision making
Since 06/2021	Member of the Ethics Committee of Faculty IV of Technische Universität Berlin
Since 02/2020	Researcher at Technische Universität Berlin
Since 05/2017	Member of the international ChangemakerXchange network (Robert Bosch Foundation) for startups worldwide
07/2015-10/2017	Co-founder and deputy chairwoman of CorrelAid
05/2017- 10/2019	Research assistant at Max-Planck Institute for Meteorology in Hamburg (machine learning for weather forecasts), and Hapag-Lloyd GmbH in the machine learning group

Education

02/2020 - 05/2024	Technische Universität Berlin: PhD student in the Quality and Usability Lab of Prof. Möller **Topic**: *Monetary Valuation of Privacy: Analyzing the Consistency of Valuation Methods and Their Influencing Factors* **Grade**: defended with ***summa cum laude*** (1.0/1.0) **PhD Committee**: Prof. Dr.-Ing. Möller, Prof. Dr. Meyer, Prof. Dr.-Ing. Siegert, Prof. Dr. Schiering
10/2016 - 11/2019	M.Sc. Data Science; focus: machine learning; Leuphana University Lüneburg
10/2012 - 06/2016	B.A. in Politics and Public Administration; focus: Survey Science and Statistics; University of Konstanz Erasmus semester in Prague (08/2014 - 03/2015)
01/2012 – 07/2012	Basic Military Training in Seeth and Mountain Infantry in Füssen

Awards and Honors

06/2024	Best Innovative Idea Award at International Conference on Quality of Multimedia Experience (QoMEX)
06/2023	Diversity and Societal Impact Award at International Conference on Quality of Multimedia Experience (QoMEX)
09/2022-12/2022	DAAD Scholarship for research stay at the Tel Aviv University
08/2014-03/2015	Scholarship, Erasmus Programme for studying abroad

Grants and Other Funding

Overall funding raised by me: 4.068.066,98 € (total project funding volume 21.016.395 €)

EU Marie-Curie 03/2025 - 02/2028	**PSST -** *Privacy for Smart Speech Technology* **Partners**: TUB, AALTO University, EURECOM GIE, INESC ID, Stichting Radboud University, Insitut National De Recherche, Ruhr-Universität Bochum **Role**: Contributor (2 funded PhD students) **Raised funds**: **521.078,40 €** (total funding: 4.067.942,4 €)
BMBF- Research Group Funding 09/2024 - 08/2027	**Research Group Funding - VeraXtract -** *Verification and Extraction of Disinformation Narratives with Individualized Explanations* (ID: 01IS24066) **Associated partners**: TUB, DFKI (Dr. Schmeier), TUB (Prof. Beck), Tel Aviv University (Prof. Meyer), Deutsche Welle (DW), Deutsche Presse-Agentur (dpa), nyonic GmbH (Vanessa Cann), Ubermetrics Technology GmbH, delphai GmbH, Crowdee GmbH **Role**: PI (1 funded research group leader - me, 3 funded PhD students, 2 student researchers) **Raised funds**: **1.403.742,00 €**
BMBF 05/2023 - 04/2026	**news-polygraph -** *Multimodal Orchestration for Media-Content Verification,* **RUBIN -** *Verbundvorhaben* (ID: 03RU2U151C) **Partners**: TUB, DW, rbb, DFKI, Fraunhofer IDMT, Ubermetrics, delphai, Crowdee, neurocat, Transfermedia **Role**: PI/project lead (1 funded project lead position, 2 PhD students, 4 student workers) **Raised funds**: **1.492.547,71 €** (total funding: 13.216.784,8 €)
BMBF 05/2023 - 12/2026	**VERANDA -** *Trustworthy Anonymization of Sensitive Patient Data for Remote Consultation* (ID: 16KIS2047) **Partners**: TUB, Charité BIH and IfSS, DFKI SLT, Fraunhofer AISEC **Role**: PI/project lead (1 funded PhD student, one student worker) **Raised funds**: **321.598,51 €** (total funding: 1.998.825)
BIFOLD Agility Project 07/2024 - 06/2027	**FakeXplain – Development of transparent and meaningful explanations in the context of disinformation detection** **Partners**: Prof. Riek (TUB), Prof. Samek (Fraunhofer HHI), Prof. Meyer (Tel Aviv University) **Role**: PI/ project lead (1 funded PostDoc) **Raised funds**: **269.100,36 €**

Two proposals currently under review:

BMBF	**Fake-O-Meter:** *Multimodal AI-based disinformation assistant for education and resilience in dealing with media disinformation* **Partners**: TUB (XplaiNLP Group), DFKI (SLT), Otto-von-Guericke Universität Magdeburg, DW, dpa, rbb **Role**: PI
DFG - German-Israeli Project Cooperation Second stage	**Adaptive AI for High-Stakes Decision Processes: Balancing Automation and Human Control** **Partners:** Prof. Joachim Meyer (Tel Aviv University), Prof. Wojciech Samek (TUB/BIFOLD, Fraunhofer HHI), Dr. Mahmood Sharif (Tel Aviv University), Dr. Vera Schmitt (TUB, XplaiNLP Group) **Role:** PI

Finished projects:

DFG 02/2020 - 01/2023	**LocTrace -** *Quantification of Perceived Location Privacy, and its Relationship to Privacy Behavior* (ID: MO 1038/28-1) **Role**: project executor (my PhD is based on this project), **Funds**: **210.150 €** (raised by Prof. Möller)
Climate Change Center 03/2023 - 12/2023	*Automatic Extraction of Sustainable Development Goals from Text* (ateSDG) **Role**: project lead (1 funded PhD student), **Raised funds**: **60.000 €**

Research Group

Current PhD Students in my group:

2023-present   **Charlott Jakob:** political leaning detection, RAGs, and trustworthy AI

2023-present   **Premtim Sahitaj**: knowledge-based reasoning, evidence retrieval with external knowledge bases

2023-present   **Luis-Felipe Villa-Arenas:** model faithfulness, faithful information retrieval, faithful XAI generation

2023-present   **Ibrahim Baroud**: anonymization of text-based medical records, medical decision-support

2024-present   **Qianli Wang:** *post-hoc* XAI, natural language explanation generation, LLM-as-a-Judge, quantization

2025-present   **Arthur Hilbert:** multi-level XAI, faithful XAI generation with logic-based approaches and causal reasoning

2025-present   **Max Upravitelev:** narrative extraction, RAGs, faithful information retrieval, rule-based approaches

2025-present   **Joao de Mata:** HCI, dynamic role allocation of human-AI decision making for high-stake domains

2025-present   **Shengyun Si** (will start in April 25): improving model architectures for MLLMs for high-stake domains

Moreover, the PhDs are supported by 6 student researchers (4 student researchers are currently in the employment process)

Current postdoctoral researchers in my group:

2025-present   **Dr. Veronika Solopova:** leading NLP/MLLM team for mis-and- disinformation

2024-present   **Dr. Jing Yang:** leading XAI team for mis-and- disinformation

2025-present   **Nils Feldhus:** leading XAI team for medical decision-support

2024-present   **Dr. Lisa Raithel:** leading NLP/MLLM team for medical decision-support

Founder and head of XplaiNLP research group:

2023-present   **Dr. Vera Schmitt** (since I have defended my PhD and acquired the additional BMBF research group funding "VeraXtract", I can independently supervise PhD students in my group)

Scientific and other Collaborations (Selection)

The XplaiNLP group actively collaborates with all partners involved in the various ongoing research projects, fostering strong research ties with both academic institutions and industry leaders. Beyond these projects, we maintain research collaborations with several international researchers to further strengthening our network and interdisciplinary impact:

Germany   Prof. Sebastian Möller (TUB, QUL), Prof. Dorothea Kolossa (TUB, MTEC), Prof. Wojciech Samek (TUB/BIFOLD/Fraunhofer HHI), Prof. Maija Poikela (BIH Charité). Prof. Klaus Beier (IfSS Charité), Dr. Jonas Fegert (FZI, KIT), Dr. Tim Polzehl (DFKI, SLT), Dr. Kevin Baum (DFKI, Responsible AI and Machine Ethics Group), Dr. Simon Ostermann (DFKI, Efficient and explainable NLP models Group), Prof. Ingo Siegert (OVGU), Dr. Patrick Aichroth (Fraunhofer IDMT)

Israel   Prof. Joachim Meyer (Tel Aviv University - collaboration on intelligent decision support systems)
Prof. Eran Toch (Tel Aviv University - collaboration on usable privacy topics)
Prof. Yoella Bereby-Meyer (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev - collaboration on social decision making)

Japan   Prof. Junichi Yamagishi (National Institute of Informatics Tokyo, Yamagishi Lab, RAGs, fact-checking, LLMs), the PhD Premtim Sahitaj just went for a research stay for four months to his lab

Denmark   Prof. Isabelle Augenstein (head of Copenhagen Natural Language Understanding research group), starting a collaboration, the PhD Qianli Wang and I will visit her group in September 2025, where he will stay for a longer research exchange

USA   Prof. Nickel (Bucknell University in Lewisburg) - collaboration via the noFake project

Spain   Prof. Paolo Rosso (Universitat Politècnica de València - collaboration on NLP/LLMs and fact-checking)

Finland   Prof. Tom Bäckström (AALTO University - collaboration on privacy in speech)

UK	Prof. James Nicholson (Northumbria University - collaboration on privacy engineering)
Brazil	Prof. Dante Barone (Dante Barone Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul - collaboration on NLP)

Media	dpa, DW, rbb
Industry	DeepNews, Ubermetrics Technologies, delphai, Transfermedia, Crowdee, Siemens, Bosch, Acatech, SoftwareCampus
Scientific Advisor	Startup Graetchen.AI

Scientific Community Service

Reviewer for:
- ACM CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems
- ACM Forum for Information Retrieval Evaluation (FIRE)
- ACM International Journal of Human - Computer Studies
- IEEE Journal of Transactions on Computational Social Systems
- Journal of Cognitive Systems Research
- Journal of Computers & Security
- Journal of Computers and Electrical Engineering
- xAI World Conference
- AAAI Conference on Human Computation and Crowdsourcing (HCOMP)
- International Conference on Speech and Computer (SPECOM)
- International Conference on Electronics, Communications and Networks (CECNet)
- Mensch und Computer (MuC)

PC/Editorial Board Member:
- ACL Area Chair (Industry Track 2025)
- ACM International Workshop on Multimedia AI against Disinformation (MAD'25) at ICMR conference
- Journal of Advance in Information Technology and Computer Science
- Mensch und Computer (MuC)

Interviews (Selection)

About my research group:

02/2025 Interview with **TU Berlin**:
Press release: "Resilient gegen Desinformation – mit KI im Kampf für gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhalt"
https://www.tu.berlin/nachrichtendetails/resilient-gegen-desinformation-mit-ki-im-kampf-fuer-gesellschaftlichen-zusammenhalt
Interview: „Wir wollen die gesellschaftliche Widerstandsfähigkeit gegenüber Desinformation stärken."
https://www.tu.berlin/news/interviews/forschungsgruppe-xplainlp

10/2024 **Interview**: with **AI Berlin** about my research group: https://ai-berlin.com/blog/article/dr-vera-schmitt-head-of-xplainlp-group-at-tu-berlin

Mis-and Disinformation:

02/2025 **Interview BBC News Russia**: "Record results for the far right in the German elections. Why are they so popular? | BBC report" access documentary: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mwHMOU09QOI, and article: https://www.bbc.com/russian/articles/c8j0y782mlgo

02/2025 **Interview DW**: "Fact check: AI influencers targeting German elections" access interview: https://www.dw.com/en/fact-check-ai-influencers-targeting-german-elections/video-71514325

02/2025 **Interview Tagesschau**: "Rechts, weiblich, fake", access interview: https://www.tagesschau.de/faktenfinder/kontext/rechte-ki-influencer-100.html

02/2025 **Interview EFE/SwissInfo CH**: "Las elecciones alemanas, asediadas por la desinformación y la injerencias rusa y de Musk" access interview: https://www.swissinfo.ch/spa/las-elecciones-alemanas%2C-asediadas-por-la-desinformaci%C3%B3n-y-la-injerencias-rusa-y-de-musk/88890581

02/2025 **Interview Télévision Francaise 1 (TF1)**: "VÉRIF' - Élections en Allemagne : comment l'extrême droite utilise l'IA pour désinformer", access interview: https://www.tf1info.fr/international/verif-elections-en-allemagne-2025-comment-l-afd-utilise-l-intelligence-artificielle-ia-a-des-fins-de-desinformation-2351527.html

06/2024 **WDR radio interview**: „Deepfakes erkennen mit KI", access interview: https://www1.wdr.de/mediathek/audio/wdr5/wdr5-toene-texte-bilder-interviews/audio-deepfakes-erkennen-mit-ki-100.html

05/2024 **RadioEins rbb**: „Deepfakes - Our New Reality? Access interview: https://www.radioeins.de/programm/sendungen/sondersendung/re-publica-2024/beitraege/deepfakes---our-new-reality--.html#top

Other Topics:

01/2025 **Press Release TU Berlin:** DeepSeek vs OpenAI - Expert Interview: https://www.tu.berlin/news/pressemitteilung/tu-berlin-expertinnen-zum-juengsten-erfolg-von-deepseek

The full list of interviews can be found here: https://veraschmitt.github.io/talks/

Keynotes and Invited Talks (Selection)

2025 **Panel Discussion: Aktionswoche ARD zur Bundestageswahl** - live at rbb24 and ARD: „Fakten statt Fiktion – Gemeinsam gegen Desinformation"
Panel members: Alexandra Geese (EU Parliament, Dr. Vera Schmitt (Head of XplaiNLP Group), Jörg Müller (Head of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution Brandenburg), Patrick Stegemann (journalist and CEO of "Undone") - live stream in **ARD**
Link: https://shorturl.at/IrxUR

2024 **Panel Discussion:** "How does AI help with fact-checking"
Panel members: Prof. Sebastian Möller (TU Berlin), Prof. Sabine Ammon (TU Berlin), Prof. Dorothea Kolossa (TU Berlin), Dr. Vera Schmitt (Head of XplaiNLP Group), moderated by Wolfgang Richter
Link: https://www.tu.berlin/nachrichtendetails/einladung-wie-hilft-ki-beim-faktenchecken

2024 **Invited talk: Falling Walls Science Summit**
Title: "Presentation of news-polygraph project for multimodal mis-and disinformation detection"

2024 **Invited talk**: **re:publica**
Title: "Deepfakes - Our New Reality?"

2024 **Invited keynote: Innerbehördliche Kooperation 2024 – IBK 24 Meißen**
Title: Deepfakes – Unsere neue Realität?

2024 **Invited talk**: dpa (with 130 journalists from all media outlets in Germany)
Title: "KI Wegweiser" what can we do with LLMs for fact checking?

2024 **Invited talk**: SoftwareCampus
Title: "How to regulate AI?" introducing the AI Act, DSA and DA for LLM applications

2024 **Invited talk**: Digital Technologies and Responsibility Euregio-Workshop at the Interface of Technology, Academia and Public
Title: "Do explanations make a difference?"

2023 **Invited keynote**: 3th **Symposium** on Security and Privacy in Speech Communication
Title: "Multimodal Fake News Detection and the AI Act"

2023 **Panel discussion**: "AI-Regulation and Data-Protection: Perspectives from the World" SPSC Symposium
Panel members: Prof. Jennifer Williams, Prof. Sneha Das, Prof. Tom Bäckström, and Vera Schmitt, moderated by Prof. Ingo Siegert

2023 **Invited talk**: Expert Workshop on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights - Federal Foreign Office - incubator session prepared and hosted with the Bertelsmann Foundation together
Title: "Fact Matters! The Role of AI in Combating Digital Disinformation"

2023 **Panel discussion**: Das Katz- und Mausspiel der Desinformation
Panel members: Dr. Eva Flecken (MABB), Jana Heigl (BR Faktenfuchs), Georg Heil (ARD-Politikmagazins "Kontraste"), Stefan Voß (dpa)
Link: https://events.rbb-online.de/b/?p=newspolygraph&host=events.rbb-online.de

2022 **Invited talk**: Tel Aviv University

Title: "Usable Security and Privacy"

2022 **Invited talk**: Usable Security and Privacy Day 2022
Title: "What is Your Privacy Worth?"

2021 **Panel discussion**: Usable Security and Privacy Day 2021
Panel members: Prof. Ahmad-Reza Sadeghi (TU Darmstadt), Prof. Simone Fischer-Hübner (Karlstad University), Prof. Joachim Meyer (Tel Aviv University), Dr. Aljoscha Burchardt (DFKI), CTO Philipp Berger (neXenio), moderated by Vera Schmitt and Prof. Sebastian Möller

2017 **Panel discussion**: Bayreuther Dialoge "Big Data – Chance oder Risiko"
Panel members: Konstantin von Notz (Grüne), Nikolaus Blome (BILD-Zeitung); Vera Schmitt (damals co-Founder CorrelAid), Denny Vorbrücken (Bund Deutscher Kriminalbeamter)

The full list of keynotes and panel discussions can be found here: https://veraschmitt.github.io/talks/

Teaching

Since WS 2020	Supervision of 21 final theses (16 MA theses, and 5 BA theses)
SS 2025	Usability Engineering Exercise/ Advanced Study Projects (9 ECTS) projects
WS 2024/2025	Projects (9 ECTS) projects with M.A. students
SS 2024	Advanced Study Projects (9 ECTS) project with M.A. students LLM for information extraction project
WS 2023/2024	Advanced Study Projects (9 ECTS) project with M.A. students LLM for fact checking
SS 2023	Advanced Study Projects (9 ECTS) 2 projects on Fusion Models and GANs for synthetic data generation and LLM-based Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) detection
WS 2022/2023	Usable Privacy Seminar for M.A. students (3 ECTS)
SS 2022	Advanced Study Projects (9 ECTS) 2 projects with B.A. students on HCI and LLM-based Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) detection challenge Projekt Medienerstellung (6 ECTS) 2 projects on building an intelligent hydroponic system, and location privacy engineering Usability Engineering Exercise
WS 2021/2022	Usable Privacy Seminar for M.A. students (3 ECTS) Advanced Statistics Seminar for M.A. students (3 ECTS)
SS 2021	Projekt Medienerstellung (6 ECTS) 2 projects on HCI and building and intelligent hydroponic system
WS 2020/2021	Usable Privacy Seminar for M.A. students (3 ECTS) Advanced Statistics Seminar for M.A. students (3 ECTS)
SS2020	Advanced Study Projects (9 ECTS) project with M.A. students usable privacy engineering Projekt Medienerstellung (6 ECTS) project with B.A. students on HCI