

PRESS RELEASE

Tübingen, 26 November 2020

Evaluation: Leibniz Association publishes outstanding report on the Leibniz-Institut für Wissensmedien (IWM) in Tübingen

In a statement released on November 24, the Leibniz Association Senate recommended that the German federal and Länder governments continue to support the institute for the next seven years. The recommendation is based on the assessment report written as part of a regular evaluation. The report attests to the IWM's excellent strategic developments and research achievements. The committee of independent academics was also impressed by the institution's wide range of transfer activities. The expansions that have already been initiated and those planned for the future were expressly welcomed.

The Leibniz-Institut für Wissensmedien (IWM) is dedicated to research into the role of digital media in knowledge processes. The projects of the institute, which has procured large amounts of third-party funding and has a strong publication record, range from foundational research to the development of prototypes for knowledge transfer. The committee rated the IWM's research performance and strategic development as excellent: The plans for the future were convincing and followed logically from previous work. According to the evaluation committee, research topics such as the use of digital media in schools and leisure activities are innovative and highly relevant to society.

"The evaluation group's assessment that we have made very good progress following the high level of performance we already achieved in the past encourages us to expand our range of topics and methods as planned," stated IWM Director Prof. Ulrike Cress, who has headed the institute since 2017.

Strengthened by this positive assessment, the IWM intends to continue pursuing its plans for strategic expansion to include *data science for knowledge media*. Since earlier this year, the institute has been establishing a research network on human-agent interaction. This expansion is to be followed in 2021 by a new working group on *data science*. The fact that the new working group will be closely linked to the "Cyber Valley Stuttgart-Tübingen" and the Department of Computer Science at the Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen, with which the IWM has been cooperating closely since 2010

as part of the Leibniz Science Campus, was rated particularly positively. A second project on the *knowledge-based use of everyday digital media* was also supported in this context.

The IWM's diverse services in the field of knowledge transfer were well-received by the committee. These services were further strengthened in 2017, when five fields of practice were defined to which results are to be transferred. The international scientists in the evaluation group particularly emphasized the institute's contribution to training and further educating teachers, both in the context of the "Tübingen Digital Teaching Lab," which was rated as excellent, and the award-winning online portal "e-teaching.org," which is designed for university instructors. A further area in which transfer is especially strong is the transfer of knowledge to museums, for example as part of successful cooperation with the Deutsches Museum or the Obersalzberg Documentation Centre. The international committee was also pleased by the supervision of early career researchers.

"The overall very positive assessment of IWM's research, publication, and transfer achievements is perceived by all employees as wonderful praise and encourages the IWM to face the challenges of the coming years with total dedication," stated Cress. After 2013 and 2006, this was the third highly successful evaluation for the Leibniz-Institut für Wissensmedien, founded in 2001. The German text of the Senate statement can be found on the Leibniz Association's website at:

<https://www.leibniz-gemeinschaft.de/ueber-uns/evaluierung/das-evaluierungsverfahren-der-leibniz-gemeinschaft/senatsstellungen.html>

Background:

Evaluation Procedure

The Leibniz Association Senate evaluates the Leibniz Association's institutions over a maximum period of seven years. On the basis of the Senate's statements, in the Joint Science Conference (GWK) the German federal and Länder government determine whether the conditions for joint funding of Leibniz institutions are still fulfilled. The Senate is staffed externally, and the evaluation procedure is strictly independent. The evaluation groups visit the institutes and then form an opinion on the scientific quality and significance of the institution based on text materials and institute data as well as interviews and discussions with institute researchers.

Leibniz-Institut für Wissensmedien (IWM)

The Leibniz-Institut für Wissensmedien (IWM) in Tübingen investigates how digital media influences knowledge and communication processes. Foundational and applied research focuses not only on institutional learning fields such as schools and universities, but also on informal learning on the Internet, at the workplace, or in museums. At the IWM, researchers from various disciplines work together, with many colleagues coming from the areas of psychology, communication science, neuroscience, and computer science. The non-university research institute was founded in 2001 and is a member of the Leibniz Association.

Leibniz Association

The Leibniz Association links 96 independent research institutions. Its focus ranges from the natural, engineering, and environmental sciences to the economic, spatial, and social sciences and the humanities. Leibniz institutes address socially, economically, and ecologically relevant issues. They conduct foundational and applied research, including in the overarching Leibniz research networks, or manage scientific infrastructures and offer research-based services. The Leibniz Association has set knowledge transfer as a priority, especially with the Leibniz research museums. It advises and informs politicians, the scientific community, businesses, and the public. Leibniz institutions maintain close cooperation with the industrial sector, other partners in Germany and abroad, and universities, for example as part of the Leibniz Science Campi. They are subject to a transparent and independent evaluation procedure. Due to their importance at national level, the federal and Länder governments jointly support the institutes of the Leibniz Association. The Leibniz institutes employ almost 20,000 people, about half of whom are researchers. The total budget of the institutes is more than 1.9 billion euros.

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