

Beyond Algorithms: A Workshop on the Interdisciplinarity of Recommender Systems (BEYOND 2026)

Christine Bauer
Department of Artificial Intelligence
and Human Interfaces
University of Salzburg
Salzburg, Austria
christine.bauer@plus.ac.at

Eva Zangerle
Computer Science
University of Innsbruck
Innsbruck, Austria
eva.zangerle@uibk.ac.at

Alan Said
Applied IT
University of Gothenburg
Gothenburg, Sweden
alansaid@acm.org

Abstract

Recommendation and personalization research is no longer confined to computer science. Relevant questions are actively explored across disciplines including information systems, communication science, management, cognitive science, psychology, education, media studies, marketing, and the social sciences, often grounded in distinct theories, methods, and evaluation traditions. “Beyond Algorithms: A Workshop on the Interdisciplinarity of Recommender Systems” (BEYOND 2026) aims to create a dedicated space at ACM RecSys 2026 to connect these perspectives.

The workshop highlights how insights from adjacent fields can complement, extend, and sometimes challenge computing-centric approaches. It explicitly welcomes contributions studying recommendation, personalization, and related phenomena outside core computing venues, as well as integrative work that bridges computational and non-computational approaches. Through presentations and interactive discussions, we aim to surface diverse theoretical frameworks, methodological traditions, and evaluation paradigms. Our goal is to foster dialogue across disciplinary boundaries, make disciplinary assumptions explicit, and identify shared research challenges and opportunities for collaboration. By strengthening ties between the RecSys community and neighboring research traditions, BEYOND 2026 seeks to broaden participation and visibility for interdisciplinary research and to position RecSys as a hub for both technical innovation and cross-disciplinary exchange.

CCS Concepts

• **Information systems** → **Recommender systems**; *Personalization*; • **Human-centered computing**;

Keywords

recommender systems, personalization, interdisciplinarity, cross-disciplinary research, human-centered AI, socio-technical systems, evaluation methodologies, user behavior, societal impact, organizational perspectives

ACM Reference Format:

Christine Bauer, Eva Zangerle, and Alan Said. 2026. Beyond Algorithms: A Workshop on the Interdisciplinarity of Recommender Systems (BEYOND 2026). In *20th ACM Conference on Recommender Systems (RecSys '26)*, September 27–October 02, 2026, Minneapolis, MN, USA. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 2 pages. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3773078.3831720>



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. *RecSys '26, Minneapolis, MN, USA*
© 2026 Copyright held by the owner/author(s).
ACM ISBN 979-8-4007-2284-4/26/09
<https://doi.org/10.1145/3773078.3831720>

1 Introduction

Since their emergence in the early 1990s, Recommender Systems (RSs) have become a ubiquitous component of digital platforms, driven by advances in machine learning, the availability of large-scale behavioral data, and the growing demand for personalized user experiences.

As RSs have matured, the field’s problem landscape has broadened accordingly. Beyond improving predictive performance, researchers increasingly investigate questions related to user behavior and experience, interaction design, transparency, fairness, governance and regulation, and the broader societal impact of personalization. Addressing these challenges requires perspectives that extend beyond algorithmic optimization and draw on insights from multiple disciplines. Reflecting this evolution, recommendation and personalization research has extended far beyond its traditional home in computer science [12]. Today, related questions are actively explored across disciplines including information systems [1], communication science [4], management [6], psychology [14], education [3], media studies [5], marketing [11], and the social sciences (e.g., anthropology [10] and sociology [7, 13]). These communities study how RSs are designed, experienced, evaluated, regulated, and embedded in organizational and societal contexts—often drawing on theories, methods, and evaluation criteria that differ from, complement, and sometimes challenge computing-centric approaches.

BEYOND 2026 responds to this situation by positioning RecSys as a meeting point for these diverse scientific traditions. Rather than centering primarily on algorithmic innovation and benchmark performance, this workshop foregrounds theoretical, methodological, behavioral, organizational, ethical, philosophical, and societal perspectives on recommendation. We explicitly welcome contributions from researchers beyond core computing venues, as well as integrative work that bridges computational and non-computational approaches. Accordingly, the workshop is organized around three core premises: (1) RSs research is inherently interdisciplinary; (2) meaningful exchange across disciplinary boundaries remains limited; and (3) many of the field’s most pressing challenges, including fairness, accountability, regulation, user trust, organizational adoption, and societal impact, cannot be addressed from a single disciplinary perspective.

Building on the first edition of BEYOND, held in 2025 [17, 18], the 2026 edition further deepens the cross-disciplinary focus by specifically targeting participants from adjacent fields and by foregrounding non-computing perspectives alongside computing-centric RecSys voices.

The BEYOND workshop series also connects to prior community efforts including the successful “Perspectives on Recommender Systems Evaluation (PERSPECTIVES)” workshop series [9, 15, 16],

a workshop dedicated to introspective reflection [8], and a Dagstuhl seminar on “Evaluation Perspectives of Recommender Systems: Driving Research and Education” [2].

BEYOND 2026 maintains our focus on a critical examination of research practices while extending the scope to address the fundamental question of disciplinary balance within RSs research.

2 Workshop Topics

The BEYOND workshop is designed as a meeting point for exchange across these diverse research traditions. With this workshop, we seek to foreground theoretical, methodological, behavioral, organizational, ethical, and societal perspectives on recommendation. We seek contributions from outside core computing venues, as well as interdisciplinary works on a wide variety of topics such as:

- Interdisciplinary approaches to RS (e.g., psychology, human-computer interaction, design, sociology, cognitive science, science and technology studies, computational social science)
- Theoretical, historical, and critical perspectives
- Human-centered design, HCI, and interaction
- Psychology and cognitive science
- Social, cultural, and organizational dimensions
- Ethics, law, and governance
- Methods and evaluation (diverse and mixed)
- Failures, harms, and safety
- Domains and high-stakes contexts
- Reframing goals and outcomes

3 Contribution to the RecSys Community

BEYOND 2026 contributes to the RecSys community by strengthening RecSys as a venue that engages with the full ecosystem of recommendation and personalization research. By bringing non-computing perspectives into direct conversation with computing-centric work, this workshop makes visible adjacent research traditions and creates structured opportunities for exchange across disciplines and integrate distinct theories, methods, and evaluation criteria.

Rather than duplicating the main conference program or reiterating general critiques of disciplinary imbalance, BEYOND 2026 provides a space for interdisciplinary thinking and methodological experimentation by encouraging researchers to explore new questions, adopt unfamiliar lenses, and engage in discussions that do not fit neatly within the traditional tracks of the main conference.

Building on the first edition of BEYOND, held in 2025 [17, 18] and related community efforts—including the “Perspectives on Recommender Systems Evaluation (PER-SPECTIVES)” workshop series [9, 15, 16], the workshop “Reflections on Recommender Systems: Past, Present, and Future (INTROSPECTIVES)” focused on introspective reflection [8], and a Dagstuhl seminar on “Evaluation Perspectives of Recommender Systems: Driving Research and Education” [2]—, BEYOND 2026 aims to foster cross-disciplinary dialogue, surface shared research challenges, and catalyze collaborations that connect computational and non-computational perspectives.

Acknowledgments

This publication was supported by the Excellence in Digital Sciences and Interdisciplinary Technologies (EXDIGIT) project, funded by Land Salzburg under grant number 20204-WISS/263/6-6022.

References

- [1] Gediminas Adomavicius, Jesse C. Bockstedt, Shawn P. Curley, and Jingjing Zhang. 2022. Effects of Personalized Recommendations versus Aggregate Ratings on Post-Consumption Preference Responses. *Management Information Systems Quarterly* 46, 1 (March 2022), 627–644. doi:10.25300/MISQ/2022/16301
- [2] Christine Bauer, Alan Said, and Eva Zangerle. 2024. Evaluation Perspectives of Recommender Systems: Driving Research and Education (Dagstuhl Seminar 24211). *Dagstuhl Reports* 14, 5 (2024), 58–172. doi:10.4230/DagRep.14.5.58
- [3] Yunxiao Chen, Xiaou Li, Jingchen Liu, and Zhiliang Ying. 2018. Recommendation System for Adaptive Learning. *Applied Psychological Measurement* 42, 1 (Jan. 2018), 24–41. doi:10.1177/0146621617697959
- [4] Aaron Hyzen, Hilde Van den Bulck, Manuel Puppis, Michelle Kulig, and Steve Paulussen. 2026. Epistemic Welfare and Algorithmic Recommender Systems: Overcoming the Epistemic Crisis in the Digitalized Public Sphere. *Communication Theory* 36, 1 (Feb. 2026), 46–57. doi:10.1093/ct/qtaf018
- [5] Xiaozhong Liu, Tian Xia, Yingying Yu, Chun Guo, and Yizhou Sun. 2016. Cross Social Media Recommendation. *Proceedings of the International AAAI Conference on Web and Social Media* 10, 1 (2016), 221–230. doi:10.1609/icwsm.v10i1.14714
- [6] Brad McKenna, Michael D. Myers, and Michael Newman. 2017. Social Media in Qualitative Research: Challenges and Recommendations. *Information and Organization* 27, 2 (June 2017), 87–99. doi:10.1016/j.infoandorg.2017.03.001
- [7] Silvia Milano, Mariarosaria Taddeo, and Luciano Floridi. 2020. Recommender Systems and their Ethical Challenges. *AI & Society* 35 (2020), 957–967.
- [8] Alan Said, Christine Bauer, and Eva Zangerle. 2024. Reflections on Recommender Systems: Past, Present, and Future (INTROSPECTIVES). In *Proceedings of the 18th ACM Conference on Recommender Systems (RecSys '24)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 1237–1238. doi:10.1145/3640457.3687101
- [9] Alan Said, Eva Zangerle, and Christine Bauer (Eds.). 2023. *Proceedings of the 3rd Workshop Perspectives on the Evaluation of Recommender Systems 2023 co-located with the 17th ACM Conference on Recommender Systems (RecSys 2023)*. Singapore, Singapore, September 19, 2023. CEUR Workshop Proceedings, Vol. 3476. CEUR-WS.org. <https://ceur-ws.org/Vol-3476>
- [10] Nick Seaver. 2022. *Computing Taste: Algorithms and the Makers of Music Recommendation*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL, USA. doi:10.7208/chicago/9780226822969.001.0001
- [11] Anyuan Shen. 2014. Recommendations as Personalized Marketing: Insights from Customer Experiences. *Journal of Services Marketing* 28, 5 (Aug. 2014), 414–427. doi:10.1108/JSM-04-2013-0083
- [12] Barry Smyth. 2025. People who Liked This Also Liked ... A Publication Analysis of Three Decades of Recommender Systems Research. *ACM Transactions on Recommender Systems* 4, 2, Article 28 (Nov. 2025), 41 pages. doi:10.1145/3742442
- [13] Markus Unternährer. 2021. Die Ordnung der Empfehlung. *KZfSS Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 73, 1 (2021), 397–423. doi:10.1007/s11577-021-00753-z
- [14] Yan Xu and Wantian Cui. 2022. Commodity Recommendation Model Integrating User Psychological Data Analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology* 13 (May 2022). doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2022.907865
- [15] Eva Zangerle, Christine Bauer, and Alan Said (Eds.). 2021. *Proceedings of the Perspectives on the Evaluation of Recommender Systems Workshop 2021, co-located with the 15th ACM Conference on Recommender Systems (RecSys 2021)*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands, September 25, 2021. PERSPECTIVES '21, Vol. 2955. CEUR Workshop Proceedings, CEUR-WS.org. <http://ceur-ws.org/Vol-2955>
- [16] Eva Zangerle, Christine Bauer, and Alan Said (Eds.). 2022. *Proceedings of the Perspectives on the Evaluation of Recommender Systems Workshop 2022, co-located with the 16th ACM Conference on Recommender Systems (RecSys 2022)*. Seattle, WA, USA, September 22, 2022. PERSPECTIVES '22, Vol. 3228. CEUR Workshop Proceedings, CEUR-WS.org. <http://ceur-ws.org/Vol-3228>
- [17] Eva Zangerle, Alan Said, and Christine Bauer. 2025. Beyond Algorithms: Reclaiming the Interdisciplinary Roots of Recommender Systems (BEYOND 2025). In *Proceedings of the Nineteenth ACM Conference on Recommender Systems (Prague, Czech Republic) (RecSys 2025)*. Mária Bielíková, Pavel Kordík, Markus Schedl, Marco de Gemmis, Sole Pera, Rodrigo Alves, Olivier Jeunen, and Vito Ostuni (Eds.). ACM, New York, NY, USA, 1360–1361. doi:10.1145/3705328.3747998
- [18] Eva Zangerle, Alan Said, and Christine Bauer (Eds.). 2025. *Proceedings of Beyond Algorithms: Reclaiming the Interdisciplinary Roots of Recommender Systems Workshop, co-located with the 19th ACM Conference on Recommender Systems (RecSys 2025)*. Prague, Czech Republic, September 26, 2025 (Prague, Czech Republic). BEYOND '25, Vol. 4063. CEUR Workshop Proceedings, CEUR-WS.org, Aachen, Germany. <https://ceur-ws.org/Vol-4063>