Press Release

Digital Transformation Research Network at KLU

A research network on the digital transformation has been established at Kühne Logistics University (KLU) in Hamburg. In partnership with Bucerius Law School, Hamburg, Kiel Institute for the World Economy (IfW), and Hasso Plattner Institute (HPI), Potsdam, KLU has appointed three new professors who will research digitalization from different perspectives. The heads of the four institutions held a press conference on May 23, 2017 to announce the formation of the new network. The subjects that the partners will examine include the use of digital platforms in logistics.

“The digital transformation is one of KLU’s key competence areas,” said KLU President Thomas Strothotte. “Of course our primary field of expertise is the logistics sector and our partners contribute expertise in law, economics, and computer science. This enables us to arrive at new results in training, continuing education, and research related to this multi-faceted subject.”

Dr. Christoph Meinel, director and CEO of Hasso Plattner Institute added: “Since digitalization is currently revolutionizing logistics, both sides will benefit from this academic partnership. KLU will benefit from the IT expertise of HPI and HPI will in turn benefit from KLU’s knowledge of logistics.”

Dr. Sonja Peterson, scientific managing director of IfW, also sees the advantages of the partnership. “IfW can expand its expertise in the area of digitalization as a result. The topic will have a major impact on the international distribution of labor, the type of work available, and above and beyond, the very world in which we live.”

President Katharina Boele-Woelki of Bucerius Law School underlined the importance of the digital transformation: “This partnership facilitates an interdisciplinary exchange. Looking at the big picture is especially important when dealing with a subject that is as highly disruptive as digitalization.”

Katharina Fegebank, Hamburg’s second mayor and Senator for Science, Research, and Equal Rights, spoke of the significance of the partnership for Hamburg: “I am pleased that we are able to greet three new professors at KLU today. I find it exciting that all three are women! The institutional partnership is a win-win situation for everyone involved and a sign of the outstanding collaboration among academic institutions in the Hamburg metropolitan region and beyond. More interconnection, more cooperation – it will also strengthen Hamburg’s reputation as an academic location.”

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As part of the partnership, the four institutions are planning to develop new continuing education program aimed at providing companies with approaches to dealing with their digital transformations.

**Where the digital transformation is leading us**

The three new professors will supplement the research on digital transformation already being conducted at KLU. “Digitalization will change logistics – and with it, the economy – more dramatically than many other previous developments,” said Kai Hoberg, Professor of Supply Chain and Operations Strategy at KLU. He presented KLU’s fields of research, which include the digitalization of supply chains, emission reductions in logistics, and the Internet of Things.

The use of digital platforms is one of the subjects the four institutions will tackle as part of the new research network. In brief lectures, the three new KLU professors explained in detail what research in this field could look like from the perspectives of computer science, law, and economics.

Dimka Karastoyanova, Professor of Data Science und Business Intelligence, talked about how big data could be used to optimize business processes. “Smart devices, sensors, and other sources channel masses of data. However, the data cannot be used per se for process optimization due to the lack of automation and system integration, immature technologies, a lack of understanding, and IT system inflexibility. One possible solution is a platform that would encourage cooperation between companies and organizations, provide a homogeneous software landscape, and adapt dynamically. It would allow the results of data analysis to be integrated into processes, thus improving performance,” Karastoyanova said.

Professor Catharina Maracke specializes in IT and Data Law. In her lecture, she focused on the legal aspects of digitalization and how data is used after it has been collected. She used the example of autonomous driving: “Car manufacturers, suppliers, and IT companies are all working furiously to complete new technology platforms to launch autonomous driving. Alongside hotly debated liability issues, this gives rise to the question of how to handle the data collected: Under what conditions can they be used within and for the companies involved? And what role will data privacy play?”

Christina Raasch, Professor of Digital Economy, spoke about the effects of digital platforms on logistics in particular and the economy in general. Raasch said: “In many industries, digital platforms are changing the market structure and outlook for success of established companies to a major extent. And this is happening without the enormous investments in infrastructure borne by the established
players – often within a relatively short time. Economic theory and empirics shed light on the strategies platforms can use with successful results and the conditions under which they can disrupt industry conventions. Presently, many startup platforms are making giant waves in logistics.”

About KLU
Kühne Logistics University – Wissenschaftliche Hochschule für Logistik und Unternehmensführung (KLU) is a private university located in Hamburg’s HafenCity. The independent, state-certified university focuses on the areas of logistics and management. With one BSc and four MSc degree programs, a PhD program, and a part-time Executive MBA, KLU offers its 275 full-time students a high level of specialization and excellent learning conditions. In open, customized management seminar series, industry specialists and managers benefit from the application of academic findings to practical issues. KLU has an international team of 23 professors who teach in English. The programs are oriented toward students from Germany and abroad. Research at KLU is concentrated on the Key Competence Areas of Digital Transformation, Creating Value, and Sustainability for the benefit of transportation, global logistics, and supply chain management.

The most recent Handelsblatt rankings identify KLU as one of the leading research universities in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland based on research output per professor. In the newest CHE university rankings, KLU obtained the highest ranking in all major criteria.

For more information, visit www.the-klu.org.