
Professor Bernd Skiera is a grantee of an Advanced Grant of the European Research Council (“ERC Advanced Grant”) that will start on October 1, 2019. He is searching for



***Two Postdoctoral Researchers (100%)
from 01.10.2019 (or later) up to 30.09.2024 (Payment according to E 13 TV-G-U)***

Description of ERC project “Economic Consequences of Restrictions on the Usage of Cookies“

Tracking technologies such as cookies allow companies to collect information about users on the Internet. This information is often used to improve the performance of online advertising, which website publishers rely on in order to finance the “free” content to which their users have become accustomed. Yet, the collection of information leads to a loss of privacy. Accordingly, EU policy makers have put forward initiatives to restrict usage of tracking technologies such as cookies (e.g., General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), upcoming ePrivacy Regulation (ePR)).

So far, there exists very little empirical knowledge on the trade-off between user privacy and the economic value that website publishers, advertisers, and even users derive from cookies. As a result, policy makers have no way of telling whether their restrictions on cookies have the intended positive consequences for user privacy, or whether any benefits are outweighed by negative effects on the profits of companies—which policy makers also seek to nurture. Our project with its four work packages aims to close this gap by analyzing several data sets, including a proprietary and massive (60-65 TB) set of “cookie data” that includes 472 publishers, 842 advertisers, 2.8 billion cookies and the prices of >110 billion ad impressions, as well as an implementation dataset that shows how thousands of websites implemented the EU General Data Protection Regulation that went into effect in 2018.

An interdisciplinary team of 2 post-doctoral researchers and 2 doctoral positions with a background in business (marketing), information systems, computer science and economics will work on this project. The positions come with no obligation to teach and no administrative duties outside of this ERC project.

Your Profile

You have or are about to have a PhD or doctoral degree and you aim at publishing research in the top publication outlets in either business (marketing), information systems, computer science or economics. The interdisciplinary research team needs to have profound knowledge on consumer privacy on the Internet and methods to analyze big data. More precisely, researchers need to have knowledge on some of the following topics: cookies, tracking technologies, the value and exchange of information in online advertising, consent mechanisms on the Internet, identification of causal relationships, cloud parallel computing with R in combination with Apache Hadoop and Spark, handling of big data and databases as well as machine learning techniques such as image recognition.

Your Opportunity

The position provides you with the opportunity to focus very strongly on research in a very research active environment. The available proprietary and massive data sets enable you to examine a wide range of research questions, including those that are mentioned in the 4 work packages of the grant proposal. Sufficient funding is available to present your research at international conferences. The research group also has a reputation for being able to get access to interesting other data sets.

About the Principal Investigator: Bernd Skiera

Professor Bernd Skiera (www.skiera.de) is a chaired professor of electronic commerce at Goethe University Frankfurt (Germany) and one of the most productive researchers in Germany. He is also dedicated to support junior researchers: 13 of his former doctoral students are now professors in Germany, Austria, USA, England and Spain; nine are in tenured positions.

Please send your application that should include your vita as well as your papers that best fit to the requirements of the position:

Prof. Dr. Bernd Skiera, Faculty of Business and Economics, Goethe-University, Theodor-W.-Adorno-Platz 4, 60323 Frankfurt am Main, Germany, skiera@wiwi.uni-frankfurt.de.