

## **Call for Papers Welfare e Ergonomia 1/2026**

### **The Digital Turn in Welfare: Data, Technologies and Emerging Social Challenges**

*edited by Giuseppe Luca De Luca Picione, Gabriella Punziano, Domenico Trezza*

The digital revolution has sparked a profound transformation of welfare systems, introducing new tools and technologies that are redefining how social services are delivered and how social risks and emerging needs are identified and addressed (Taylor-Gooby, 2004; Palmiero, 2020; Safarov, 2024). In this context, digital technologies not only promote new forms of access and participation, but also raise a wide range of issues related to the increasing complexity of governance and decision-making processes (Campedelli & Vesan, 2023; van Toorn et al., 2024).

In particular, digitalisation is reshaping how social data are collected, managed, and used for informed decision-making (Dencik, 2022). Digital platforms and social media offer an unprecedented source of real-time information, particularly in relation to historically excluded or marginalised populations (Pearce et al., 2020). Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, as well as messaging apps like Telegram and WhatsApp, act as repositories of social data (Cena & Dettano, 2022; Marrazzo & Punziano, 2021; Trezza, 2023), providing valuable insights into the socio-economic and healthcare needs of individuals and communities (Yafooz et al., 2025; Yue et al., 2023). However, the use of these data raises new challenges in terms of governance, transparency, and privacy. Traditional infrastructures such as information systems, while long-established, risk becoming too slow and inadequate to meet the demands of a digitalised and platform-based welfare system (Bonifacio et al., 2022; Longo & Maino, 2022).

The potential of digital technologies goes beyond data accessibility and service innovation: it also includes the ability to foster bottom-up participatory processes, engaging both citizens and policymakers within a framework of multi-level governance (Fung, 2015; Lin & Kant, 2021). At the same time, digitalisation comes with critical downsides. While tools such as artificial intelligence (AI) may enhance service delivery—ranging from robotic technologies to AI-powered support chatbots—they also raise unresolved concerns about ethical and responsible data use (De Luca Picione, Fortini & Trezza, 2024), privacy protection, and new forms of digital exclusion (Bentivegna, 2009; Larasati et al., 2023), including the risk of social isolation caused by excessive reliance on digital technologies (Grimaldi, 2022).

The introduction of AI into welfare systems also prompts broader questions: which population groups can these technologies help us understand better? How far can we push data analysis without risking ethical violations or exacerbating vulnerabilities? Responsible data governance and the implementation of transparent and fair policies are now unavoidable priorities in the contemporary debate on digital welfare.

In light of these transformations, digitalisation should be viewed both as an opportunity for innovation in social policy and as a new terrain of challenges—for those tasked with systematising the

technological and informational change underway, and for the scientific community investigating these shifts (Henman, 2022). The production, management, and use of social data are in fact central to understanding whether and how digital welfare systems can promote inclusion, efficiency, and long-term sustainability.

Based on these premises, this call for papers invites theoretical, empirical, and case-based contributions that explore the following areas:

- **The impact of digitalisation on social policies:** how digital technologies, including AI, are transforming social and healthcare policies and their implementation.
- **Governance of digital data in welfare services:** challenges and opportunities related to the management and use of social data within welfare systems.
- **The role of social media in welfare transformation:** how platforms shape information flows and contribute to more transparent and accountable welfare services.
- **Digital exclusion and new inequalities:** implications of the digital divide and strategies to ensure equitable access to digital services.
- **Technology and co-design:** active citizen participation in the planning and implementation of digitalised social services.
- **Sociotechnical risks and vulnerabilities:** ethical, social, and technical implications of using digital data and technologies in welfare, with a focus on exclusion and inequality.
- **Data quality in digital welfare:** critical reflections on the quality of digital data in the design and implementation of welfare policies, including discussion of limitations, breaking points, and innovation potential, alongside plausible future scenarios.

Contributors interested in submitting to this special issue of *Welfare e Ergonomia* are invited to submit an **abstract (max 3,000 characters including spaces)** by **September 25, 2025**. Upon acceptance, full papers (maximum length: 25,000 characters including spaces) must be submitted by **January 20, 2026**.

Abstracts must include the following sections:

- Introduction to the topic
- Theoretical framework and national/international debate
- Methodological approach and research hypotheses
- Main and innovative findings
- Essential references

**Abstracts must be submitted via email to:** [welfarergonomia.rel@irpps.cnr.it](mailto:welfarergonomia.rel@irpps.cnr.it)

After notification of acceptance, authors will be required to register on the FrancoAngeli OJS platform:

<https://ojs.francoangeli.it/ojs/index.php/we/user/register>

Once registered, the article must be submitted via the “Submit a new proposal” link in the Dashboard.

If the proposal does not align with the journal’s themes, the editorial board reserves the right to reject the submission.

### **Bibliography**

- Aragona, B., & De Rosa, R. (2019). Big data in policy making. *Mathematical Population Studies*, 26(2), 107-113.
- Bonifacio F., Manzo C., Pais I. (2022), “Mappatura delle piattaforme digitali di welfare in Italia”, Working Paper WEPLAT PROJECT, <https://www.weplat.it/report/>
- Bonsón, E., Royo, S., & Ratkai, M. (2015). Citizens' engagement on local governments' Facebook sites. An empirical analysis: The impact of different media and content types in Western Europe. *Government information quarterly*, 32(1), 52-62.
- Bentivegna, S. (2009). Disuguaglianze digitali. Le nuove forme di esclusione nella società dell'informazione. In *Disuguaglianze digitali. Le nuove forme di esclusione nella società dell'informazione* (pp. 3-228). Laterza.
- Campedelli, M. e Vesan, P. (2023). Welfare digitalizzato, welfare digitale e i nuovi rischi sociali digitali: un'introduzione. *Social Policies*, 10(2), 169-192.
- Cena, R., & Dettano, A. (2023). About Waiting: A Reading from Social Policies and Emotions in the Context of a Pandemic. *Social Policy and Society*, 22(3), 531-544. doi:10.1017/S1474746422000331
- De Luca Picione, G. L., Fortini, L., Trezza, D. (2024). Digitalizzazione dei servizi e data governance in Campania. Prospettive di policy e ricerca verso un nuovo welfare digitale. *Sociologia Italiana*, (24).
- Dencik, L. (2022). “The Datafied welfare state: a perspective from the UK” in *New perspectives in critical data studies: The ambivalences of data power*. eds. A. Hepp, J. Jarke, and L. Kramp (Cham: Springer International Publishing), 145-165.
- Fung, A. (2015). *Putting the Public Back into Governance: The Challenges of Citizen Participation and Its Future*. *Public Administration Review*, 75(4), 513-522.
- Grimaldi, R. (2022). *La società dei robot* (pp. 1-338). Milano: Mondadori.
- Lin, Y., & Kant, S. (2021). Using Social Media for Citizen Participation: Contexts, Empowerment, and Inclusion. *Sustainability*, 13(12), 6635. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13126635>
- Henman, P. W. F. (2022). Digital social policy: Past, present, future. *Journal of Social Policy*, 51(3), 535-550.
- Larasati, Z. W., Yuda, T. K., & Syafa'at, A. R. (2023). Digital welfare state and problem arising: An exploration and future research agenda. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 43(5/6), 537-549.

- Longo, F., e Maino, F. (2022). *Platform Welfare: Nuove logiche per innovare i servizi sociali*. Milano: EGEA spa.
- Marrazzo, F., & Punziano, G. (2021). Social Media in Disasters. Big Data Issues in Public Communication Field. In *Data Science and Social Research II: Methods, Technologies and Applications* (pp. 259-268). Springer International Publishing.
- Martire, F. (2020). La centralità dei dati per un welfare che cambia. Una sfida per la ricerca sociale. *La Rivista delle Politiche sociali*, 2020(3), 273-287.
- Mauri, L. (Ed.). (2007). *Il sistema informativo sociale: una risorsa per le politiche pubbliche di welfare*. Roma: Carocci.
- Palmiero M. S. (2020), COVID-19 Disuguaglianza e welfare digitale Aspetti critici che possono sfavorire i beneficiari del welfare digitale, in «Cambio. Rivista sulle trasformazioni sociali», OpenLab on Covid-19. DOI: 10.13128/cambio-9458.
- Pearce, K. E., Gonzales, A., & Foucault Welles, B. (2020). Introduction: Marginality and Social Media. *Social Media + Society*, 6(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120930413>
- Safarov, N. (2024). Administrative Literacy in the Digital Welfare State: Migrants Navigating Access to Public Services in Finland. *Social Policy and Society*, 23(4), 908–921. doi:10.1017/S1474746422000719
- Taylor-Gooby, P. (ed.) (2004). *New risks, new welfare: the transformation of the European welfare state*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
- Trezza, D. (2023). To scrape or not to scrape, this is dilemma. The post-API scenario and implications on digital research. *Frontiers in Sociology*, 8, 1145038.
- Yafooz, W.M.S., Al-Gumaei, Y., Alsaedi, A., Mandala, S. (2025). From Disease Detection to Health Campaigns: The Role of Social Media Analytics in Public Health. In: Yafooz, W.M., Al-Gumaei, Y. (eds) *AI-Driven: Social Media Analytics and Cybersecurity. Studies in Computational Intelligence*, vol 1180. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-80334-5\\_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-80334-5_6)
- Yue, Z., Zhang, R., & Xiao, J. (2023). Social media use, perceived social support, and well-being: Evidence from two waves of surveys peri- and post-COVID-19 lockdown. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 41(5), 1279-1297. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075231188185>
- Van Toorn, G., Henman, P., & Soldatić, K. (2024). Introduction to the digital welfare state: Contestations, considerations and entanglements. *Journal of Sociology*, 60(3), 507-522. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14407833241260890>