

Hello dear CityLAB Community,

All of Germany is asking just one question right now: How is Timmy the whale doing? A few weeks ago, the ocean giant ran aground at Timmendorfer Strand (now: Timmysdorfer Strand) and has since become the nation's most talked-about whale of concern. Perfect timing, then, for a little distraction via our newsletter. Because what is also big and sometimes a bit sluggish? Exactly, digitalization! And which lifeboat is currently giving us the most HOPE? Of course, All Let BärGPT and our AI training assistant AzuKi pull you on board.

Happy reading!

Spotlight 1



BärGPT / Blog

A tool that grows with its tasks

More than 14,000 public administration employees are now using BärGPT in their daily work – but how exactly? This time, two users share their experiences firsthand: early tester Matthias Pirog gives us insights into how he uses the AI tool, and Anna Maria Stahl-Czechowska explains how working with artificial intelligence can actually be fun. You can find more tips on using BärGPT and ideas for its further development on our blog.

To the blog

Spotlight 2



AI / Blog

Putting an AI to the test

AzuKi is an AI training assistant designed to help young people find the right career path. And what's the best way to test it? With the very people it's built for, of course! At our largest user testing session to date, young adults met with stakeholders from education, public administration, and tech – and they had a lot to say. Which is great! Find out what we learned about hidden talents, needs, and expectations of young people in our blog post.

To the blog

Spotlight 3



Network / Blog

When Berlin and Phnom Penh learn from each other

As part of the Build4People project, our colleague Niklas Kossow traveled to Cambodia to work with students and experts on the sustainable and digital future of cities. The focus was the Mekong Quay project – a large-scale development creating a new satellite city on hundreds of hectares across from the city center. From digital planning tools to a citizen science app for participation, our Berlin-based experience directly informed the work on site. Read the blog post to find out what Niklas took away from the experience.

To the blog

Events



03.06.2026

Highlight

CityLAB Sommerkonferenz

09:00 am – 08:00 pm, @Umweltforum Berlin

Extra! Extra! We're revealing more speaker names for the CityLAB Sommerkonferenz: Björn Niehaves, professor of information systems at the University of Bremen, will take a critical look at AI myths. Merici Vinton, co-founder of Ada's List and an expert at the intersection of digital strategy, government tech, and open data, brings an international perspective. And Nicolas Zimmer, CEO of Technologiestiftung Berlin, represents hands-on open-source engagement. The full program will follow soon – but it's already worth securing your ticket!

More Information and registration

29.04.

Meetup

Maptime – Maps beyond the screen

from 06:00 pm, @CityLAB Berlin

No plans for tomorrow? Dive into the diverse world of maps! Whether quilted or interactive installation, this edition of our "Maptime" series focuses on projects that can be physically experienced – showing how spatial data gains a new dimension through materiality and craftsmanship.

More Information and registration

12.05.

Symposium

Democratic AI: Berlin approaches to responsibility, governance, and sovereignty

from 02:00 pm, @Publix

AI is becoming an integral part of everyday work in public administration. So the question is no longer whether it should be used, but under what conditions. That's exactly what this symposium is about. Perspectives from administration and research come together to discuss control, responsibility, and the state's capacity to act. Nicolas Zimmer will address the question: Who actually controls the state's AI? And CityLAB Director Benjamin Seibel will join the panel "Democratic AI as a location factor."

More Information and registration

18. – 20.05.

Conference

re:publica 2026

all day, @STATION Berlin

Under the motto "Never gonna give you up," re:publica once again becomes the meeting point for the digital community. We'll be there with several sessions: Benjamin Seibel will discuss how AI could simplify bureaucratic applications for social benefits. Ingo Hinterding and Anna Mehrländer will showcase BärGPT as a GDPR-compliant open-source AI in action. We'll also host an edition of "Shaping Administration," where we'll discuss AI, open data, and digital accessibility. You can find us at the Berlin stand on all three days – this year in our Kiezlabor container in Berlin style. So: don't let us down and come by!

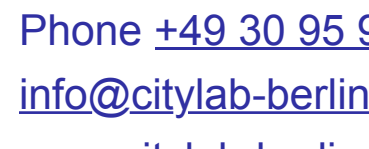
More Information and registration

Looking ahead

Symposium, re:publica, Sommerkonferenz – May is packed. We're staying on it. And so is Timmy.

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