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HOLLANDSCHE MAATSCHAPPIJ
DER WETENSCHAPPEN

Jury report
KHMW Thesis Awards Responsible Internet 2025

The “information highway,” an “ocean of data,” a “marketplace of knowledge,” a “digital infrastructure”—these are just a few of the many metaphors launched into the world during the early years of the internet to describe the immense societal impact of this technological revolution. A few decades later, somewhat sobered, we find ourselves using very different language. We now speak of the internet as a “digital jungle,” a “battlefield of public opinion,” a “ticking time bomb,” or an “arena” in which the greatest challenges of our society are reflected.

The master’s theses submitted this year—originating from no fewer than eleven different institutions—show that their authors understand these challenges all too well and, fortunately, also see opportunities for improvement. From combating misinformation and critically analysing new legislation to conducting technical assessments of the security and reliability of the internet, many facets of what makes an internet *safe* and *responsible* were explored.

For the jury, reading these theses was an absolute pleasure. The members not only learned a great deal but also deeply enjoyed the passion, creativity, and social engagement of these young scholars. Their work demonstrates academic depth, coupled with a keen eye for applicability and social impact—precisely the qualities that the Responsible Internet Thesis Awards seek to recognize.

Before announcing the winners, we would like to thank the sponsors that make these prizes possible: the SIDN Fonds, The Sharing Group and Stichting DINL. Thanks to their generous support, we can once again honour research that contributes to a stronger, safer, and more responsible internet—with a first prize of €3,000 and a second prize of €1,000.

Second prize: Dirk Doesburg, MSc, Radboud University
Post-Quantum Cryptography for the RPKI

The second prize goes to Dirk Doesburg for his master’s thesis *Post-Quantum Cryptography for the RPKI*. This thesis combines sharp insight with directly applicable solutions. The author shows that an ill-considered PQ transition could harm the routing system and offers two pragmatic contributions: an executable “mixed-tree” migration path and an innovative hash-based optimization for RPKI objects. With a functioning proof-of-concept in existing software, the path toward adoption and standardization is clear. This work unites originality, technical rigor, and societal relevance—the essence of a *Responsible Internet*.

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First prize: Lily Heisig, MA, Maastricht University

When the Whole Society is at Risk: Analysing the Governance Discourse of General-Purpose AI models with Systemic Risk (GPAISR)

The first prize is awarded to Lily Heisig, for her exceptional thesis *When the Whole Society is at Risk*.

Through a meticulous discourse analysis of various European AI policy drafts, she demonstrates how the EU not only identifies risks but also actively defines and allocates them. Heisig exposes a subtle yet crucial shift: industrial stakeholders, deeply involved in drafting the AI policies, have introduced a "no-blame" discourse that downplays their own responsibility. The risks are instead shifted toward users—or even to an anthropomorphized image of "AI" itself.

With her insightful analysis, critical perspective, and elegant prose, Lily Heisig shows how enriching it is to view law and regulation through an STS lens—sharp, innovative, and profoundly socially engaged. Our heartfelt congratulations on this well-deserved first prize.

Prof. Dr. J.F.T.M. (José) van Dijck, Distinguished University Professor of Media and Digital Society, Utrecht University
Prof. Dr. M.J.G. (Michel) van Eeten, Professor of Cybersecurity, Delft University of Technology
Prof. Dr. E.L.O. (Esther) Keymolen, Head of the Tilburg Institute for Law, Technology, and Society (TILT), and Professor of Regulation of Digital Technology, Tilburg University

The jury meeting took place via Zoom on 13 October 2025, chaired by KHMW Community Member **Dr. E.A.A. (Elmar) Hellendoorn**. Also present was **Prof. Dr. W.B. (Wim) Drees**, Board Member and Academic Secretary for Humanities and Social Sciences, KHMW.