



<https://ethiktool.org>

## Human-Participant Research & the *Ethiktool* Software

[alexandra.bendixen@physik.tu-chemnitz.de](mailto:alexandra.bendixen@physik.tu-chemnitz.de)

Alexandra Bendixen & the Ethiktool team



Alexandra  
Bendixen



Wolfgang  
Einhäuser-  
Treyer



Inka  
Schmitz



Tina  
Frenzel



Thomas  
Wegner



Katarina  
Blask



Eva-Maria  
Berens

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TU Chemnitz

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ZPID Trier

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Bielefeld



## Personal Background

- Experimental psychologist
- Chair of Ethics Review Board @TU Chemnitz (TUC) since 2018
- application volume: ~240 proposals per year
  
- Project lead of the *Ethiktool* concept and software development since 2020

# Ethics Review

- Collecting research data from human participants comes with (legal and moral) responsibilities
  - Applicable laws; code of conduct for assuring good scientific practice; (inter)national ethics guidelines
- **The participant's well-being takes priority over all other considerations.**
  - Unfortunately, this has not been the case throughout the history of science. It is all the more important to take proper care of it nowadays.

# Ethics Review

- In the context of this presentation, the issue of whether research is ethically permissible refers to the question whether it puts the well-being of the participant (or the researcher or by-standers) at risk.
- Other aspects, such as the potential societal, economic or military use of the research results (“dual use”), are of high relevance, too, but outside this presentation’s scope.

# Ethics Review

- Local ethics review boards are in place to assist researchers in their judgment of ethical issues involved in their planned research.
  - risk identification, mitigation and communication
- Most ethics review boards provide template forms for researchers to query ethically relevant aspects of their planned research.
- How research data are handled, is one of these aspects.

# Ethics Review

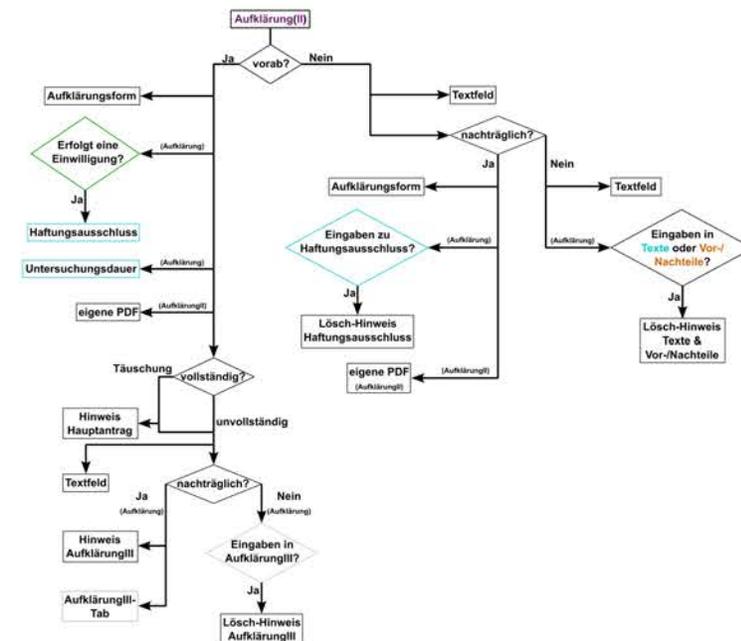
- Please note: I am sharing my experience with the procedures we use at Chemnitz University of Technology, and with the Ethiktool software we developed to be freely used by other boards as well.

Whether a local ethics review board decides to use the Ethiktool, is fully up to them.



## The *Ethiktool* project

- Key idea: facilitation of ethics proposal composition via software-based guidance
- Context sensitivity (questions depend on previous answers)
- Automatic consistency check for all user entries
- Software composes the ethics application form and participant documents (information & consent forms, including a GDPR-compliant data privacy statement)
- project website: <https://www.tu-chemnitz.de/physik/SFKS/ethiktool/index.html>



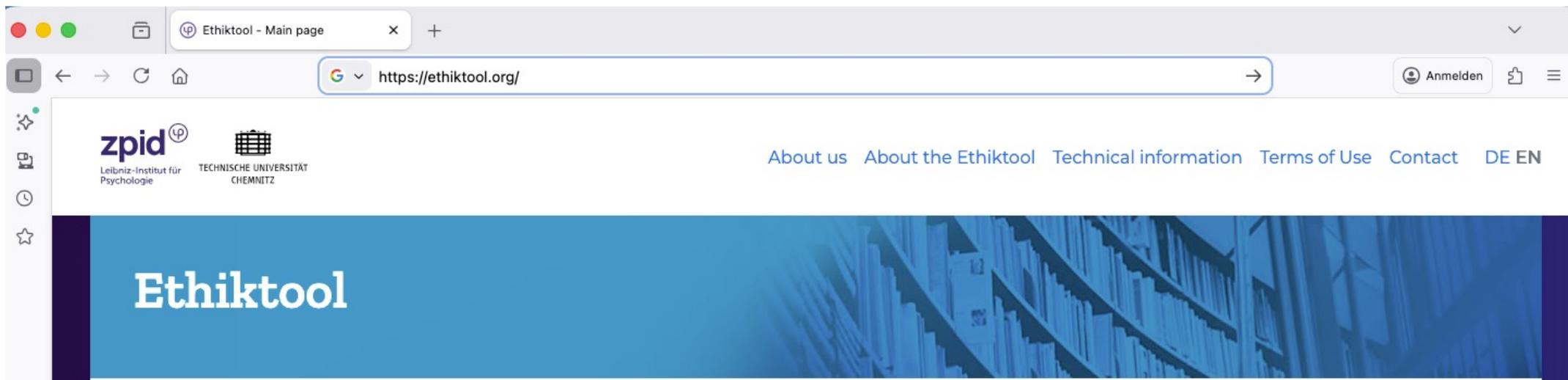


# The *Ethiktool* project: Open-source software available at <https://ethiktool.org>

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the main page of the Ethiktool project. The browser's address bar shows the URL <https://ethiktool.org/>. The page header includes the logos for 'zpid' (Leibniz-Institut für Psychologie) and 'TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT CHEMNITZ'. Navigation links for 'About us', 'About the Ethiktool', 'Technical information', 'Terms of Use', 'Contact', and 'DE EN' are visible. The main content area features a large blue banner with the word 'Ethiktool' in white. Below the banner, there is a form for creating or loading proposals, with buttons for 'New proposal', 'Load proposal', and 'Save'. A description of the software is provided, stating that it supports applicants in writing their ethics proposal and guides them through the application process. Further information is available in the 'About us' and 'About the Ethiktool' sections.



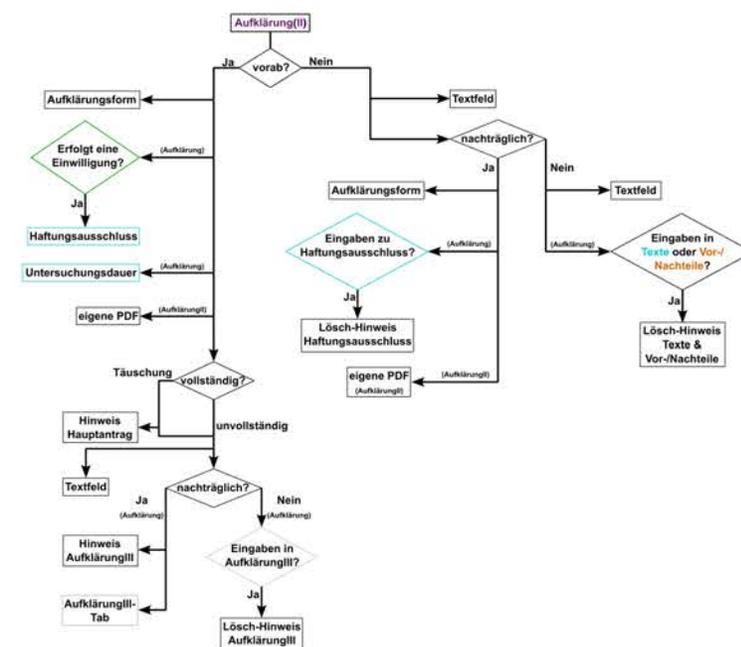
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- Step-by-step questions
- Live feedback on missing or inconsistent entries
- Live preview of ethics proposal and participant documents
- Language selection English/German

# Aims of the Ethiktool

- Facilitating proposal composition for applicants
  - e.g., avoiding unnecessary questions, clarifying terms without long-winded explanatory documents
- Facilitating proposal review for board members
  - Focus on ethically relevant issues
- Reduction of errors and inconsistencies
- Standardization of proposals
- Transparency of review principles



## Positive effects of the Ethiktool

- Successful use of a prior tool version at TU Chemnitz since mid-2021
  - Substantial load reduction for the Ethics Review Board
  - Applicants appreciate guidance

... based on these effects:

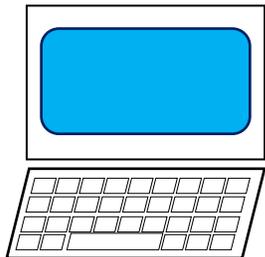
- Funding by VolkswagenStiftung since 04/2023 for further development and adaptation to other sites
- By 2026, Ethiktool will be provided free of charge via ZPID to all interested ethics review boards



Volkswagen**Stiftung**

**zpid** 

Leibniz-Institut für  
Psychologie

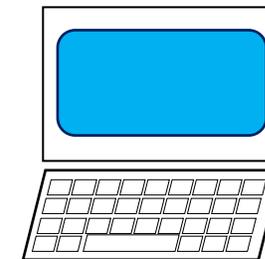
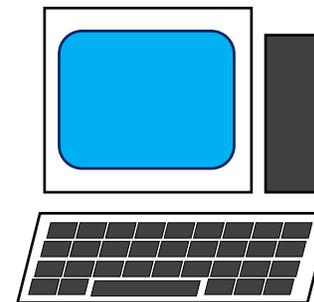


## Ethiktool: Technicalities

- Web-based, compatible with practically any browser and device

<https://ethiktool.org>

- Back-end: mainly php/html, some javascript/css
- Ethiktool runs on ZPID server,  
    BUT: all data stored locally on the applicant's device
- Data format: XML; PDF files for review and later use





Let's try it: Live Demo of <https://ethiktool.org>



Try it yourself: Feel free to explore <https://ethiktool.org>

- Check whether the Ethiktool covers all aspects of your research project and of how the research data are processed
- We are looking forward to your feedback at [ethiktool@tu-chemnitz.de](mailto:ethiktool@tu-chemnitz.de)
- You are very welcome to approach us if you would like to use the Ethiktool at your ethics review board



<https://ethiktool.org>

Thank you  
for your  
attention!

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