

# Nordic AI Meet 2026

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## O1. AI in Democracy & Society (Wed 10:15-11:15)

### 4. When citizens talk to AI about politics: Trust, information practices and generative AI chatbots

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**Abstract:** New media technologies have driven rapid and significant change in our media systems recent decades; generative AI (GenAI), and in particular the chatbots built on large language models, are the most recent addition. As with earlier new media technologies, GenAI chatbots are becoming an increasingly important intermediary between citizens and political information, yet little is known about how people decide whether to trust them.

Much research has been devoted to making GenAI chatbots reliable and trustworthy. However, people's own perceptions of the trustworthiness of these tools, and of the information obtained from them, remain comparatively under-researched; as does their use as a source of political information specifically. The paper investigates how citizens evaluate and negotiate trust when using GenAI chatbots for political information. It asks under which conditions users rely on chatbot-generated information, how they reflect on AI as an intermediary, and how these practices relate to broader patterns of media use and political engagement.

Empirically, the paper draws on qualitative interviews with participants who use GenAI chatbots in everyday life, conducted in Norway, where adoption is high while established news media remain widely used, making such tools one possible source of political information among several. The interviews map informants' media repertoires and information practices, and combine this with a trace-based, recall component in which informants revisit their own chat logs with a GenAI chatbot. Anchoring interviews in documented chatbot interactions enables richer accounts of how trust is negotiated in practice. Further themes include comparisons with news media, assessments of the technology companies, and views on regulation.

Rather than treating trust as a single attitude, the analysis conceptualizes it as operating at three analytically distinct levels: task-level trust, expressed through verification routines, tolerance of error and topics informants avoid; interactional trust, shaped by anthropomorphic cues, conversational tone and modes of address; and institutional trust in developers and regulators, including attributions of responsibility for the accuracy of AI output.