

# İSTANBUL GELİŞİM UNIVERSİTY



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# Contents



## Techno-Agenda

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- 4 A Technology at the Edge of the Mind:  
Brain-Computer Interfaces and the New  
Human-Machine Era

## Economic Agenda

---

- 5 Is the Investor Profile Changing?  
An Age-Based Analysis  
of Investor Numbers in Türkiye

## Culture Art and Literature

---

- 6 From Ritual to Stage:  
The Earliest Memory of Art

## Sosyocom Shelf

---

- 7 A Movie: Frankenstein
- 8 A Book: Invention of Error
- 9 A Series: Only Murders in the Building
- 11 Book Review of the Month: Bozkurtlar
- 12 Academic Playlist

## Education - Research

---

- 13 The Classroom Scenario with Robot  
Educators:  
Large World Models Offer Promise,  
But “Teacher Intuition” Remains a  
Challenge

## Entrepreneurship and Innovation

---

- 14 The Solopreneur Model:  
Opportunities, Limits, and Realities

# Contents



## Political Agenda

### 15 Oil, Democracy, and Power:

**U.S.-China Rivalry Through the Fall  
of Maduro**

## Health-Psychology

### 16 Mental Calm in Digital Noise:

**A Psychological Shift from FOMO  
to JOMO**

## Social Agenda

### 17 The Age of Algorithmic Persuasion:

**AI-Generated Fake Reviews and the  
Erosion of Influencer Trust**

## Time to Socialize

### 18 Time to Socialize

### 19 February in Istanbul

### 20 IGU-Student

### 21 IGU-Graduate

### 22 Double Major

### 23 Erasmus + Diaries

### 24 Local Flavours

## About Academic Life

### 25 Publications

### 26 Academic Staff Appointments / Academic-Administrative Appointments /

### 27 Academic Staff Departees IGU Alumni Tracking System

## Masthead

### 28 Masthead

## A TECHNOLOGY AT THE EDGE OF THE MIND: BRAIN-COMPUTER INTERFACES AND THE NEW HUMAN-MACHINE ERA

Asst. Prof. Süreyya İmre Bıyıklı

The Department of Management Information Systems

Technological developments often remain limited to making everyday life easier; however, some technologies redefine the very boundaries of what it means to be human. Brain-Computer Interfaces (BCIs) stand precisely at this threshold, emerging as one of the most striking technologies that evoke both hope and concern. In recent years, BCI systems have rapidly progressed from laboratory settings to clinical applications, creating a new field of debate not only in healthcare but also in terms of ethics, privacy, and the human-machine relationship.

The primary goal of BCI technologies is to reestablish or enhance an individual's interaction with their environment by transmitting brain signals directly to computer systems. In particular, enabling paralyzed individuals to use computers through thought, control robotic prostheses, or allowing patients who have lost their ability to speak to communicate are among the most tangible and humane achievements of this technology. Current clinical studies demonstrate that both invasive and non-invasive BCI systems have moved beyond the experimental stage and are now being tested on real patient groups. This development transforms BCIs from a promise of the future into a medical reality of the present.

Yet the issue extends beyond technological progress alone. Connecting the brain directly to a digital interface means that the mental domain—long considered “untouchable”—also becomes a source of data. Brain signals are far more sensitive and personal than conventional biometric data; they have the potential to reflect an individual's intentions, emotional states, and even cognitive tendencies. For this reason, BCI technologies elevate discussions of data security and privacy to an entirely new level. The critical question now is: Who owns an individual's mental data, and how will it be protected?

At this point, the concept of “neurorights” has begun to gain increasing attention in academic and legal literature. Protecting mental privacy, ensuring cognitive freedom, and safeguarding an individual's sovereignty over their own brain require new regulations that go beyond the traditional framework of human rights. As BCI technologies become more widespread, their potential use is not limited to healthcare alone but extends to fields such as business, security, and even military applications. This makes it imperative to clearly define the boundaries of the technology through ethical principles.

Moreover, the transformative impact of BCIs on the human-machine relationship cannot be ignored. Humans are no longer merely subjects who use technology; they are becoming part of it. While this integration offers significant advantages in terms of efficiency and accessibility, it also raises the question of to what extent human will should intertwine with digital systems. In decision-making processes, will humans remain dominant, or will algorithms take precedence? Answering this question requires not only engineering solutions but also contributions from philosophy and the social sciences.

In conclusion, Brain-Computer Interfaces represent one of the most profound technological transformations of our time. While clinical successes clearly reveal their potential to directly improve human life, ongoing debates around ethics, privacy, and security remind us that this progress must be carefully managed. BCIs show us that technological advancement is not only about what we are capable of doing, but also about what we ought to do. In this new era where the mind itself is becoming digital, our true test will not be how far we push technology, but how human we can make it.





## Is the Investor Profile Changing? An Age-Based Analysis of Investor Numbers in Türkiye



Res. Asst. Gizem Varol  
The Department of Management Information Systems



Financial markets are not only a reflection of numerical indicators but also a mirror of social dynamics. Changes in the number of investors, the distribution of portfolio values across age groups, and the evolution of these patterns over time provide valuable insights into economic expectations, risk perceptions, income structures, and generational differences in financial behavior. Data from December 2025 reveal that the investor profile in Türkiye is becoming increasingly diversified, with age-based distinctions growing more pronounced.

According to the latest figures, the total number of investors increased compared to the previous month, reaching approximately 6.48 million. While this rise indicates a broader diffusion of investment culture across society, the most striking findings emerge when investor participation is examined by age group. In particular, the 20–34 age range stands out with a substantial concentration of investors, suggesting that the engagement of younger and early-career individuals in financial markets has become more persistent rather than temporary. In this group, investor numbers reach several hundred thousand, accompanied by a noticeable upward trend in portfolio values.

However, the relationship between the number of investors and portfolio size does not evolve uniformly across all age groups. Among middle-aged investors—especially those between 35 and 54 years old—portfolio values increase significantly despite relatively modest growth in investor numbers. This pattern suggests that individuals in this age range typically possess higher savings capacity, more stable income streams, and a stronger preference for long-term investment strategies. In other words, while younger investors contribute to market participation in terms of volume, middle-aged investors exert greater influence through portfolio weight.

A different dynamic is observed among older age groups. Although the proportion of investors aged 65 and above remains comparatively limited, their portfolio values do not decline below a certain threshold. This indicates that financial asset management continues actively even in post-retirement periods and that investment behavior is not exclusive to younger generations. In an inflationary environment, the motivation to preserve accumulated wealth appears to keep older investors engaged in financial markets. One of the most important messages conveyed by the data is the absence of homogeneity in investor behavior. Younger investors dominate in terms of numbers but tend to hold smaller portfolios, whereas middle-aged and older investors are fewer in number yet control substantially larger asset values. This divergence clearly illustrates how factors such as financial literacy, income level, and risk tolerance vary across age groups.

December 2025 data demonstrate that Türkiye's investor profile is far from uniform, revealing distinct motivations and behavioral patterns across different age cohorts. This evolving structure carries important implications for financial institutions and policymakers alike. Encouraging younger investors to adopt informed and sustainable investment practices is as critical as strengthening secure and efficient financial mechanisms for middle-aged and older investors seeking to protect and grow their savings. Ultimately, the future of financial markets will be shaped not only by their size but by the ability to accurately interpret and respond to this growing diversity.



## FROM RITUAL TO STAGE:

# THE EARLIEST MEMORY OF ART

Asst. Prof. Didem Tetik Küçükelçi  
The Department of Management Information Systems

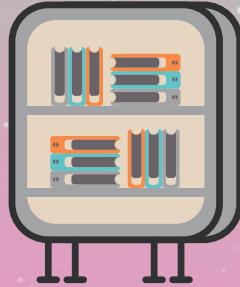
Art is one of the oldest ways through which humanity seeks to understand and give meaning to the world. Yet this effort did not begin with painting, theatre, or literature as we know them today. At the core of art lies ritual. Ritual represents a bodily and symbolic expression of the relationship humans establish with nature, the unknown, and their community. In this context, shamanic ceremonies can be considered among the earliest forms of artistic expression—moments in which art had not yet been defined as a separate field but already contained all of its essential elements.

The shaman was not merely a religious figure, but also a storyteller, performer, musician, and guide. Through the rhythm of the drum, the cyclical movement of dance, the transformation of voice, and the power of imitation, the shaman led the community beyond ordinary time. In these ceremonies, aesthetic concern was secondary to impact. The aim was not to present a spectacle to be watched, but to create an experience that transformed its participants. Art, in this sense, was not an object of observation, but a shared state of being.

At the heart of ritual lies transformation rather than representation. The shaman's body, voice, and gestures activated a collective memory rather than showcasing an individual performance. In this respect, shamanic ceremonies raised fundamental questions that continue to shape modern performance art: Where does art begin? Who creates it? Who bears witness? Does meaning emerge from a single source, or does it take form through collective participation?

Contemporary practices such as body-based performance, experimental theatre, and interdisciplinary art forms—whether consciously or not—maintain a connection with this ancient legacy. They do not exist by rejecting ritual, but by transforming it. Despite changing forms and technologies, art continues to carry a fundamental human need: the desire to produce meaning together.

Perhaps for this reason, no matter how modern it becomes, art never fully abandons the traces of ritual. The earliest memory of art lives on in humanity's enduring urge to feel together and to create meaning collectively.

**A FILM: FRANKENSTEIN (2025)**

Res. Asst. Gizem Varol

The Department of Management Information Systems

FILM: FRANKENSTEIN

DIRECTOR: GUILLERMO DEL TORO

SCREENPLAY: GUILLERMO DEL TORO, MARY SHELLEY

STARRING: OSCAR ISAAC · JACOB ELORDI · CHRISTOPH WALTZ

YEAR: 2025

IMDB: 7.5/10



The first thing that comes to mind when Guillermo del Toro is mentioned is his ability to skillfully place fairy tale and darkness side by side. *Frankenstein* (2025) stands as a strong continuation of this distinctive cinematic line. Mary Shelley's endlessly adapted classic is revisited here not through the conventions of horror cinema, but through themes of authority, father-son relationships, and the need for acceptance. By placing the creature at the center of the narrative, del Toro transforms the story into a more intimate and emotionally driven experience.

The film opens with the traumas that shape Victor Frankenstein from childhood onward: an authoritarian father figure, the loss of a mother, and a youth consumed by an obsession with death. Victor's desire to "reverse death" is portrayed not merely as scientific ambition, but as an attempt to compensate for the past. As the story unfolds, however, the emotional weight of the narrative gradually shifts from the creator to the created.

At this point, Jacob Elordi's performance becomes pivotal. Elordi carries Frankenstein's creature not only physically, but emotionally as well. In a role that is extremely demanding on a bodily level, he carefully balances anger, loneliness, rejection, and the longing to be seen. Over the course of the film, the audience's empathy subtly drifts toward the creature, leaving us face to face with the classic question: Who is the real monster?

Oscar Isaac delivers a controlled intensity as Victor Frankenstein. By conveying the character's neurotic tendencies without slipping into exaggeration, Isaac becomes one of the key elements sustaining del Toro's father-son allegory. Visually, the film consistently reminds us that we are watching a large-scale production, with its gothic set designs, theatrical lighting, and an ever-present orchestral score.

*Frankenstein* (2025) is a film that unsettles rather than frightens, one that provokes thought and challenges the viewer emotionally. For those who enjoy seeing classic stories through a fresh perspective, it is a strong recommendation. Viewers seeking a dark yet fragile narrative that focuses more on human nature than on monsters should not miss this film.



## **A Book: Invention of Error**

Res. Asst. HASAN FERRUH KOÇ  
The Department of Management Information Systems

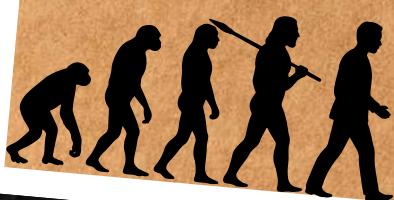
AAbdullah Reha Nazlı's 2020 book *Yanılgının İcadı* [Invention of Error] centers on evolutionary psychology and focuses on a simple question: if the human brain is not broken, why does it fall into so many errors? The book's core argument is that our brains are equipped with an ancient biological hardware shaped over millions of years for survival in hunter gatherer conditions, yet today we are forced to use this same hardware in a completely different environment filled with modern cities, technology, social media, and complex relationships. This mismatch is presented as a major source of bad decisions, psychological strain, and unhappiness. In the author's words, "What exists in humans but not in animals is the error".

The book blends evolutionary psychology with biology, anthropology, and sociology, but it does so in a fluent style grounded in everyday examples rather than technical jargon. In this sense, it does not expect readers to have a specialized background and can be followed even with a basic level of biological knowledge.

Nazlı treats "error" not simply as a list of mistakes but as the result of a clash between our evolutionary heritage and the modern environment. Mechanisms such as the modular structure of the brain, the tendency to make rapid decisions, the search for reward, and threat detection provided advantages in the past, but today they often produce false alarms. Within this framework, the book discusses why people cannot remain constantly happy, why emotions such as anxiety, jealousy, and status anxiety arise, and why repeated relationship patterns and certain fears feel as if they are innate. The frequent confusion between impulse and emotion, pleasure and happiness, and comfort and weakness are also examined in this context.

Throughout the book, the author organizes all these topics under six basic forms of interaction: the effect of biology on culture, the effect of biology on psychology, the effect of psychology on biology, the effect of psychology on culture, the effect of culture on biology, and the effect of culture on psychology. This framework allows the reader to see human behavior not as the result of a single cause but as the product of ongoing feedback loops between body, mind, and society. In this way, Nazlı shows how everything from our fears and desires to our relationships and values is shaped jointly by genetic inheritance, mental processes, and the culture we live in. The book opens with a quote from Nietzsche:

"Error has turned animals into men; might truth be capable of turning man into an animal again?"



# ONLY MURDERS IN THE BUILDING

THE UNIFYING POWER OF HUMOUR IN CRIME NARRATIVE

Asst. Prof. Merve Vural Allaham

*The Department of Management Information Systems*

In recent years, television series released on digital platforms have moved beyond mere entertainment to offer compelling narratives about urban life, individual loneliness, and social connections. *Only Murders in the Building* stands out as a notable example of this trend. Centered on three strangers living in a luxury apartment building in New York whose paths intersect after a murder, the series presents an original narrative that blends the crime genre with elements of comedy and drama.

At the centre of the series are the characters Charles, Oliver, and Mabel. Charles, an introverted former television star, is portrayed by Steve Martin. The character of Oliver, a theatre director passionately devoted to performance and storytelling, is brought to life by Martin Short. Mabel, who completes this unexpected trio as a distant, observant representative of the younger generation, is portrayed by Selena Gomez. Coming from different age groups and life experiences, these three characters are brought together by their shared interest in a true crime podcast. At this point, the series shifts its focus beyond merely solving a murder and instead foregrounds the modern urban individual's search for loneliness, belonging, and meaning.

The apartment building functions as more than a physical setting; it becomes a symbol of lives lived in close proximity yet marked by emotional distance. The fact that all the murders take place within the same building, known as the Arconia, transforms the setting into a narrative character in its own right. With its closed structure, layered social relationships, and strong ties to the past, the Arconia operates as a microcosm representing invisible boundaries and class-based distances within urban life.





One of the strongest aspects of *Only Murders in the Building* is its ability to decenter the crime narrative and create space for the characters' inner worlds. The murder serves less as a singular "event" and more as a catalyst. Throughout the investigation, the characters' past traumas, disappointments, and unfinished lives gradually come to the surface. In this respect, the series moves beyond the classic crime question of "who did it?" and instead raises the question of "why have people grown so distant from one another?"

The use of the podcast format in the series also constitutes a significant reference to contemporary digital culture. Processes of producing, disseminating, and consuming information are explored through the blurred boundaries between amateurism and professionalism. By producing their own podcast, the three characters reflect today's media environment, in which individuals are no longer merely consumers but also content creators. This dynamic invites reflection on issues such as truth-making, ethical responsibility, and the pursuit of visibility.

Humour plays a crucial role in lightening the narrative without rendering it superficial. In particular, the dialogues between characters highlight generational differences and modes of communication through irony. Comedy is not employed to diminish the gravity of crime, but rather to make human vulnerability more visible and accessible.

In conclusion, *Only Murders in the Building* offers a multilayered narrative that successfully reinterprets the crime-comedy genre while questioning the invisible walls of urban life and the distances between individuals. The series does more than provide the pleasure of solving a mystery; it also encourages reflection on how modern individuals relate to loneliness, curiosity, and the shared production of meaning. In this sense, it can be regarded as a high-quality production that goes beyond popular culture to hold a mirror up to contemporary social dynamics. The series has currently been released across five seasons and is available to international audiences on the Disney+ platform. Combining crime, humour, and human stories, this distinctive production offers an enjoyable viewing experience, particularly for those who appreciate character-driven narratives. Enjoy watching.

### BOZKURTlar

Assoc. Prof. Serkan Çakmak

The Department of Management Information Systems

Bozkurtlar is one of Hüseyin Nihal Atsız's most significant works, in which Turkish history is presented not merely as a sequence of events but as a will to revival. The novel centers on the struggle of the Turkish people, scattered after the collapse of the First Göktürk Khaganate, to reunite and reclaim their independence.

While the narrative depicts the process of reunification around the ideal of independence under the leadership of Kutluk Shad (Ilterish Khagan), this historical struggle is deepened through the inner world and adventures of Urungu, the secret son of Kür Shad. In this way, the novel portrays not only the re-establishment of a state but also the individual's relationship with destiny, loyalty, and responsibility.

In Bozkurtlar, Atsız does not reduce heroism to a romantic glorification. The idea of independence is presented as an ideal that demands heavy sacrifices. The characters are not flawless figures; rather, they are individuals who are fully aware of their historical responsibility and are willing to face death for the values they believe in. This approach strengthens the epic structure of the novel while also enhancing the credibility of the narrative.

Life on the steppe, ancient Turkish customs, moral values, and social order are conveyed in a plain yet powerful language. Atsız's narration does not idealize the past through nostalgia; instead, it creates a space of historical memory that keeps historical consciousness alive.

In conclusion, Bozkurtlar stands out as a powerful literary work that goes beyond being a historical novel by placing the ideas of independence and national identity at its core. Depicting the revival of the Turkish people, the novel emerges as a narrative of ideals whose meaning endures across generations.



# ACADEMIC PLAYLIST



## A SELECTION FOR JANUARY

RES. ASST. MUSTAFA NURKAN BİTLİSLİ

The Department of Political Science and Public Administration

This selection prepared for January brings together melodies from different regions of Anatolia and Rumelia. These folk songs, which at times speak of journeys, and at other times of separation and waiting, invite the listener into a shared cultural memory, resonating with the calm and introspective atmosphere of the winter season. With its plain narrative rooted in oral tradition, the selection aims to accompany the month of January.

We wish you an enjoyable listening experience. Please [click](#) to access the playlist.

151		Turnam Gidersen İlkkay Akkaya	Bize Kalan Miras
152		Havada Bulut Yok (Yemen T... Doğa İçin Çal	Havada Bulut Yok (Yemen ...
153		Şu Dağlar Depe Depe Hale Gür	Elimizden Yöremizden, Vol...
154		Kara Tren Zara	Özhan Eren: 35 Yıllık Türkül...
155		Hey Onbeşli Onbeşli Erkan Oğur	Bir Ömürlük Misafir
156		Drama Köprüsü Ruhi Su	Pir Sultandan Levniye
157		Gesi Bağları Selda Bağcan	Türkülerimiz 1
158		Fidayda Arif Sağ	Anadolu Döktürmeleri
159		Telgrafın Telleri Yeni Türkü	Yeni Türkü Koleksiyon
160		Dağlar İle Taşlar İle Başar Dikici	Ney The Mey





Is classroom management truly a problem that can be taught through data? And if so, in the future, would we be willing to entrust this responsibility to a robot teacher?

### The Classroom Scenario with Robot Educators: Large World Models Offer Promise, But "Teacher Intuition" Remains a Challenge



Asst. Prof. Merve VURAL ALLAHAM  
The Department of Management Information Systems

In recent years, artificial intelligence has gained strong momentum in areas such as text generation, question answering, and content creation through the development of Large Language Models (LLMs). However, a classroom is not merely a space of "language." It is a living ecosystem shaped by gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, silence, pacing, fluctuations in attention, and unexpected situations. For this reason, a growing line of inquiry in current research focuses on Large World Models (LWMs), also referred to as world models.

World models aim to enable an agent not only to communicate through language but also to perceive its environment, retain information over time, and anticipate action–outcome relationships through internal simulation. The goal is for systems to model not only linguistic structures but also real-world dynamics such as time, space, causality, and action feedback loops. Within the embodied AI literature, these models are often described as internal simulators: they learn environmental dynamics, perform future-oriented "rollouts," and support decision-making processes.

Does this development bring us closer to the idea of a "robot teacher"? Only partially. Robots still struggle with one of the most critical components of the classroom: human intuition. During a lesson, for instance, a teacher can immediately sense when students begin to disengage by reading subtle facial expressions, reduced eye contact, or a drop in classroom energy. A student may signal the need for a break not verbally, but through body language even when the scheduled break time has not yet arrived. Similarly, teachers often detect when a student feels unwell, anxious, or on the verge of tears through small, fragmented cues. While studies using computer vision attempt to estimate engagement through gaze direction and facial expressions, these approaches typically operate under controlled conditions with limited variables. In real classrooms, complexity arising from lighting, crowd density, cultural differences, face coverings, and privacy constraints significantly reduces performance.

Field studies on the use of social robots in classrooms reflect a similar pattern. Robots can attract attention and curiosity in specific activities; however, sustaining long-term interaction with high autonomy and teacher-like flexibility remains difficult. Review studies acknowledge the feasibility of deploying robots in natural classroom environments, yet consistently identify high autonomy and sustainable interaction as key bottlenecks. Moreover, experimental findings often report that children demonstrate higher behavioral and emotional engagement when interacting with human educators rather than robotic ones.

At this stage, LWMs offer a promising direction for enabling robots to model the physical and social world more coherently. In particular, simulation-based world models may allow agents to plan over longer temporal horizons within dynamic environments. Recent work on world models focuses on capabilities such as interactive world generation and short-term coherence memory. In the educational domain, several European research groups have shown that LLM-supported social robots can foster greater enjoyment and engagement in long-term classroom activities, such as storytelling. Nevertheless, these studies also emphasize that integration policies, scenario design, and continuous teacher guidance remain critical.

Ultimately, the core issue in the debate over "robot educators" is not whether robots can speak, but whether they can perceive the classroom and exercise pedagogical initiative at the right moment. Current scientific evidence suggests that robots are more realistically positioned as supportive actors that reduce teachers' workload rather than as replacements for human educators. At the same time, LWMs represent a research pathway that may gradually enable this supportive role to become more contextual, adaptive, and safe.



## The Solopreneur Model: Opportunities, Limits, and Realities

Res. Asst. Hasan Ferruh KOÇ

*The Department of Management Information Systems*

Dario Amodei, the CEO of Anthropic, the company behind the Claude family of language models that enjoys strong popularity among developers in programming related fields, said at a conference early last year that he expects to see the first billion dollar company with only one human employee by 2026. Similarly, in a blog post published in June 2025, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman wrote that we have entered the age of what he calls the “idea guy,” people who have an idea and the desire to form a technical team to bring it to life.

These two predictions point to how the momentum in the artificial intelligence sector is transforming entrepreneurial practices while also opening space for new forms of entrepreneurship. The automation provided by generative AI systems in areas such as software, customer service, content production, and data analysis makes it possible to run entrepreneurial activities with far less human labor and expands the role of the entrepreneur from an organizational manager to a “system designer” who orchestrates human and machine resources together. This does not, however, eliminate traditional elements of entrepreneurship such as financing, team building, and access to markets. At this point, the solopreneur model emerges as a new layer of production and growth added to classical entrepreneurship, where a single person can build a scalable business by handing over a significant part of business processes to software and artificial intelligence.

Of course, such statements by major technology companies are not completely independent of strategic motivations such as fueling the AI trend and keeping investor capital flowing. But do these claims have a concrete economic and technological foundation? To assess this more clearly, one can look at some highly valued companies from before GPT-3, widely regarded as a major leap in generative AI, was released in 2020. For example, when Mojang Studios, the developer of Minecraft, was acquired by Microsoft for 2.5 billion dollars in 2014, it had only forty employees. As a more recent example, Telegram, which has long passed the unicorn threshold, operates with around forty employees and a largely office free organizational model.

These examples show that even before generative AI reached its current level of maturity, relatively small teams were already able to build billion dollar companies on a global scale. The main dynamics behind this were the global accessibility of the internet and the spread of cloud computing infrastructures, which drastically reduced operational costs.

The new form this historical trend has taken with artificial intelligence shows how the solopreneur and micro team model has gained speed in the present period. Digital nomad and independent developer Pieter Levels has built a portfolio of projects such as Nomad List, Remote OK, and PhotoAI that generates millions of dollars in revenue with zero employees. Similarly, Cal AI, founded in 2024 by high school student Zach Yadegari and two friends, has reached millions of users and tens of millions of dollars in revenue as an AI powered calorie tracking app. The mobile application Rise: Life Reset in 66 Days, developed by Hong Kong based independent developers Desmond and Peter, also entered the global market with only two people, very limited capital, and no external investment, and has reached a significant level of revenue. These examples show that AI and digital infrastructure allow small actors to create large scale economic value.

Although solopreneur and micro team models offer important opportunities, it would be misleading to see them as equally accessible to everyone or completely independent from traditional entrepreneurship. Even though AI and digital infrastructures have lowered entry barriers, starting capital, income security, access to global networks, and the legal and financial conditions of different countries remain decisive. While examples like Pieter Levels and Cal AI demonstrate the importance of individual capability, these successes are usually backed by strong educational opportunities, access to international platforms, and economic security. For this reason, while the solopreneur model has the potential to democratize entrepreneurship, it is not a miracle that eliminates classical inequalities but rather a new mode of production that operates within existing economic and social conditions.

## Oil, Democracy, and Power: U.S.-China Rivalry Through the Fall of Maduro

Asst. Prof. Hadi POURMOUSA

The Department of Management Information Systems

The detention of Nicolás Maduro in a U.S.-led military operation has elevated the Venezuelan crisis beyond a conventional regime-change debate. This development once again demonstrates that oil is no longer merely an energy resource; it has become a geopolitical lever in the global struggle for power. Washington's move should be read as part of a multilayered power strategy that extends well beyond domestic legitimacy disputes.

For years, the United States has targeted the Maduro administration on grounds of "democratic violations," "drug trafficking," and "mass migration," while sweeping oil sanctions have effectively rendered the Venezuelan economy dysfunctional. As a country heavily dependent on oil revenues, Venezuela lost much of its production capacity during this period and was forced to redirect its exports—primarily to China—at discounted prices and under high-risk conditions. This trajectory has left Venezuela fragile not only economically but also diplomatically.

With Maduro sidelined, the United States has gained an opportunity to reassert control over Venezuelan oil and to restructure the country's energy sector through Western companies. While the short-term impact of this oil flow on global markets may be limited, the move carries a strong strategic signal in terms of weakening China's energy and financial influence in Latin America. In this sense, the operation is less economic than it is geopolitical and symbolic.



Allegations of drug trafficking constitute one of the most controversial dimensions of this process. Washington's narrative linking Maduro to "narco-terrorism" has not, to date, been substantiated by concrete and internationally verified evidence. Assessments indicating that Venezuela functions more as a transit country than a producer of narcotics suggest that U.S. military and legal actions serve primarily to provide a legitimizing framework. This underscores how security discourse has become intertwined with energy interests and geopolitical objectives.

Meanwhile, migration has become a significant extension of the Venezuelan crisis within U.S. domestic politics. The departure of millions of Venezuelans is presented as evidence of the Maduro government's failure, yet the United States' harsh deportation policies and practices lacking due legal process raise serious human rights concerns. This picture reveals that the Venezuelan crisis has implications not only at the regional level but also for global norms and the international legal order.

In conclusion, developments in Venezuela amount to far more than the arrest of a single leader. They point to a new geopolitical alignment at the intersection of energy security, sanctions, migration, security narratives, and great-power rivalry. This process indicates that the U.S.-China competition is becoming more explicit, more confrontational, and more structural on the Latin American front, while also revealing the increasing politicization of the global energy order.

**Note:** The visual is generated by artificial intelligence.

## FOMO: Fear of Missing Out



### FOMO: Fear of Missing Out

Gelişmeleri Kaçırma Korkusu:  
Başkalarının daha iyi deneyimler yaşadığını  
endişesi. Sürekli bağlantıda kalma dürtüsü, sosyal  
kiyaslama, tatminsızlık ve kaygı. Zihinsel yorgunluk.

## JOMO: Joy of Missing Out



### JOMO: Joy of Missing Out

Gelişmeleri Kaçırma Keyfi:  
Bilinçli olarak bağlantıyi kesmenin huzuru.  
Şimdiki ana odaklılama, sahip olduklarına değer verme,  
dinginlik ve tatmin. Özgürlük.

# HEALTH & PSYCHOLOGY



## Mental Calm in Digital Noise: A Psychological Shift from FOMO to JOMO

Asst. Prof. Deniz ALTUN  
The Department of Management Information Systems

We are living in the most connected era in human history. In a world where 64.4% of the global population is online and 95.5% of households in Türkiye have internet access, access to information is no longer a luxury but a constant flood of exposure. This situation has given rise to a modern form of anxiety in psychological literature known as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO). FOMO is the feeling that others are having more rewarding experiences than oneself. Interestingly, this is not merely a digital addiction but a primitive survival instinct inherited from our ancestors; in early human history, staying within the group and the familiar was vital for survival. Today, however, this instinct has transformed into a chronic sense of inadequacy in the face of endless social media feeds.

The psychological cost of this condition has also been demonstrated in laboratory studies: even individuals separated from their smartphones for just seven minutes show significant increases in anxiety levels. Constantly checking notifications and watching the “perfect” lives of others leads people to engage in harsh self-comparisons. This triggers the brain’s threat-detection system, sending signals of insecurity and pushing individuals to seek the belonging they lack in the virtual world. Paradoxically, the effort to stay connected deepens dissatisfaction rather than alleviating loneliness, as it pulls people away from the reality of the present moment.

The most powerful antidote proposed by health psychology to this vicious cycle is JOMO (Joy of Missing Out). JOMO does not mean completely disconnecting from the digital world; rather, it means reclaiming the ability to say “no” through conscious choice. This philosophy encourages people to value what they currently have and the moment they are in, instead of focusing on what they are missing. Research shows that individuals who intentionally avoid chasing social media trends and choose to stay away from what is popular become psychologically stronger and have a greater potential to find genuine happiness.

The healing effect of JOMO has even been observed during global digital outages. For example, a study conducted after the major Meta (Facebook/Instagram) outage in 2021 found that while some users experienced stress, a significant portion described the forced disconnection as “unexpectedly peaceful” and reported feeling happier. This demonstrates the brain’s need for rest in response to the mental fatigue created by constant information flow. People who experience JOMO report much higher levels of satisfaction when they skip an event or delay consumption of something, compared to those who experience FOMO.

In conclusion, preserving mental health in the digital age does not require removing technology from our lives, but rather restructuring our relationship with it. When individuals choose to be alone with their thoughts, slow down, and embrace silence instead of reaching for their phones in traffic, while waiting, or during idle moments, they can enhance their creativity. A person who turns away from the curated lives displayed in social media showcases, returns to their own reality, plans their time according to their priorities, and enjoys what they choose instead of fearing what they miss, can escape the anxiety of FOMO and attain the freedom offered by JOMO.

# The Age of Algorithmic Persuasion: AI-Generated False Reviews and the Erosion of Influencer Trust

SOCIAL AGENTA

Asst. Prof. Neda Alipour

The Department of Management Information Systems

With the acceleration of digitalization, consumers' purchasing decisions have increasingly come to rely on online reviews and influencer recommendations. In recent years, however, advances in artificial intelligence have introduced a new challenge that has profoundly disrupted this ecosystem: AI-generated fake product reviews and the parallel growth of an influencer trust crisis. These contents—designed to resemble authentic user experiences, linguistically flawless, and highly persuasive—now constitute one of the most fragile fault lines in digital marketing.

AI-generated fake reviews not only mislead consumers but also distort market dynamics by creating unfair competition. Small and medium-sized enterprises can gain visibility through artificial content without delivering genuine customer satisfaction, thereby reducing the visibility of firms that offer high-quality products and services. More importantly, as consumers begin to approach all reviews with skepticism, the foundational logic of digital platforms is weakened. The erosion of trust becomes a structural problem that threatens not only individual decision-making but also the sustainability of e-commerce itself.

These developments also directly affect influencer marketing. Influencers, whose effectiveness traditionally stems from the intimate and trust-based relationships they build with their audiences, are experiencing a loss of credibility amid the rise of sponsored content and the use of AI-assisted texts. The question of whether a product has truly been experienced or merely presented through an algorithmically constructed narrative increasingly occupies the minds of followers. This dynamic undermines not only the individual reputation of influencers but also the value of brand partnerships.

At the same time, the inadequacy of platform oversight mechanisms deepens the problem. Although the technical detection of fake reviews is possible, effective filtering systems are not always implemented due to commercial priorities and the sheer volume of content. At this juncture, artificial intelligence must be employed not only as a source of the problem but also as part of the solution. Verification mechanisms, transparent labeling practices, and user education play a critical role in rebuilding digital trust.

In conclusion, AI-generated fake reviews and the influencer trust crisis represent a multidimensional challenge with ethical, economic, and social implications that extend beyond a purely technological issue. For the digital ecosystem to remain healthy and sustainable, the promotion of transparency, accountability, and informed consumer behavior is indispensable. Otherwise, in an environment dominated by algorithmic persuasion, trust will continue to be the value that is lost most rapidly.

Note: The visual is generated by artificial intelligence.



# Time to Socialize

Res. Asst. Zehra Makar

The Department of Business Administration (English)

## IGU Connect Club

IGU Connect Club is a dynamic student organization that aims to foster a strong sense of campus spirit, strengthen university identity, and build a solid network of communication and collaboration among students at Istanbul Gelisim University. Through social, cultural, and academic activities, the club seeks to contribute to students' personal and professional development. Open to all IGU students, the club brings together everyone who wishes to make university life more productive, connected, and meaningful.

Instagram: iguconnect\_



## Agenda of IGU

### New Semester New Goals

With the arrival of the spring semester, it is not only classes that begin again, but goals as well. Some students plan to improve their GPA, some want to join a new club, while others aim to make more time for themselves. Big or small, what truly matters is starting this semester consciously and drawing our own roadmap for the journey ahead!

Instagram: iguiisbf

Twitter: iguiisbf

## Let's Socialize!

A new semester means not only new classes, but also new people. Campus life is more than lecture halls; student clubs, talks, workshops, and coffee breaks are just as important parts of the university experience. This spring is the perfect time to step out of your routine, join the social life on campus, and build new connections😊



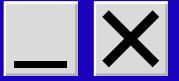
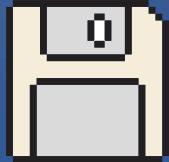
# February in Istanbul

We have compiled some of the prominent events in Istanbul in February for you.

Res. Asst. Asel ATAOĞLU  
The Department of Business Administration (English)

Event Type	Event Name	Venue	Date
Theater	Kaç Para Bi Fön	MOİ Sahne	February 08, Sunday
Stand-Up	Kahpe Feleknaz ile Doğaçlama Varyete	Duru Tiyatro Watergarden	February 11, Wednesday
Theater	Bir Baba Hamlet	MOİ Sahne	February 12, Wednesday
Concert	Miraz Concert	MOİ Sahne	February 21, Saturday
Concert	Amelie Lens	Volkswagen Arena	February 27, Friday
Stand-Up	Kadıköy Stand-Up Night	Sahne Kadıköy	February 28, Saturday

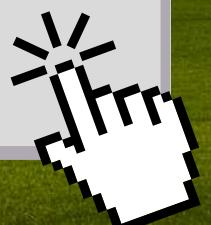
**Nurgül YILDIZ a 3rd Year Student from The Department of Management** 



My name is Nurgül Yıldız, and I am a third-year student in the Management Information Systems Department at İstanbul Gelişim University, Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences. While making my university preferences, I was undecided between several departments within the equal-weight field. However, as I researched Management Information Systems more deeply, I realized that this department suited me better and I decided to include it consciously in my preference list. At the beginning, I often asked myself questions such as "Is this the right department for me?" and "Will I struggle since I have not been involved in software before?" Yet, my interest in mathematics and analytical thinking naturally drew me toward this field.

Like many students, my first year was a period of adaptation. There were moments when I questioned whether this department truly fit me. However, as I became more familiar with the courses and university environment, and especially as I progressed in software and data-related subjects, I clearly understood that this was the right choice for me. The sincere attitude of our lecturers, their guidance in both career and life matters, and walking this path with friends who share similar goals have made me feel even more connected to my field.

Through my education in Management Information Systems, I have had the opportunity to develop myself particularly in analytical thinking, research skills, and essential 21st-century competencies. The education I receive goes beyond theory; it strengthens my abilities in problem-solving, data-driven thinking, and effective use of technology. My future goal is to specialize in data science, and I aim to achieve this goal through my university education, my department, and my own continuous efforts.



# IGU GRADUATE



Fadime AKDOĞAN A Graduate Student from The Department  
of Management Information Systems



Hello, my name is Fadime Akdoğan. I am a 2023 graduate of the Management Information Systems Department at the Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences of İstanbul Gelişim University. I am currently working as a Business Intelligence Specialist at a digital bank called Hadi.

Throughout my university life, I had the opportunity to explore how numerical thinking, deriving meaning from data, and an analytical perspective translate into real value in the business world. In particular, the courses I took in data analysis, data science, statistics, and machine learning laid the foundations of my current professional career. In order to put the theoretical knowledge I gained at university into practice, I took part in many project-based studies. The training I received in SQL, data visualization, analytical tools, and analytical thinking enabled me to view data not merely as numbers, but as a strategic resource that feeds decision-making mechanisms. This approach has given me a significant advantage in my professional life.

To further develop myself beyond the academic knowledge I gained at school, I strengthened my portfolio through the bootcamps, training programs, and summits I attended, as well as the projects I produced and the articles I wrote during this process. This portfolio became one of the most important factors that distinguished me from other students during my internship search. In my third year at university, I took my first professional step by working as a Business Intelligence Intern at Koç Holding.

Business intelligence is a field of expertise that involves processes such as querying data with SQL for business needs, statistically interpreting the state of the data, making future-oriented predictions based on existing data, and reporting. The education I received in my department not only provided me with professional knowledge but also instilled in me skills such as problem-solving, disciplined work, and a culture of continuous learning. The support and guidance I received from my academic instructors played a crucial role in clarifying my career goals and choosing the profession I wanted to pursue. Recognizing early on the importance of data-driven thinking in today's business world kept my motivation to improve myself in this field constantly alive.

The academic infrastructure offered by İstanbul Gelişim University, the practice-oriented education I received in laboratory settings, and the skills I developed during my thesis process have been the most valuable gains shaping my career journey. At the point I have reached today, I would like to sincerely thank all my esteemed professors who guided me during my years at the university.





## Cennet SEZER

A Double Major Student from the Department of Management Information Systems

When I started the New Media and Communication program in 2022, my primary goal was actually to study Management Information Systems (MIS) and be closely involved with software and technology. However, my strong social skills, along with my curiosity and enthusiasm for politics and public affairs, also drew me toward the dynamism of the media world, which left me undecided about my department choice. Fortunately, in the end I found myself studying in the New Media and Communication department, and I am quite satisfied with this decision.

The introductory-level programming courses I took in the New Media program reignited my interest in software and technology and led me to consider pursuing a Double Major in the Management Information Systems department. In this way, I would feel more well-equipped and more fulfilled in terms of academic intensity. When I reached my second year, I researched the university's requirements and quotas and submitted my application; I was accepted based on my GPA.

From my second year onward (I am currently a fourth-year student in New Media and Communication), I have been continuing both programs simultaneously through the double major in MIS. To be honest, MIS courses are technically much more demanding; however, in line with my goals, I continue without giving up. During this intensive process, my advantage has not only been the academic opportunities but also the friendships I have built within the departments, as well as the support of our instructors who are always there for us and the strong bonds we have formed with them.

By taking advantage of the opportunities offered by our university, I continue to develop myself in these two fields, which may appear as "two different areas" from the outside but in fact directly support each other. My aim is to fit two different areas of expertise into a single time period, to progress in the field I desire, and to enter the professional world after graduation much more strongly by approaching media, technology, and the language of data with an interdisciplinary perspective and skill set.

At this point, I should also note that pursuing a double major has significant advantages. The more students we interact with at university and the more different fields and environments we are exposed to, the greater our capacity becomes to recognize our own abilities and ideas. The double major has provided me with exactly this kind of natural environment; interacting with different instructors for each course and having an additional class of my own has strengthened my connection to the university and increased my awareness.

# Erasmus DIARY



## YUSUF İLİNGİ

A 4th Year Student from The Department of Management Information Systems

As part of my undergraduate program at Istanbul Gelişim University, I had the opportunity to study in Lublin, Poland through the Erasmus+ student exchange program during the previous spring semester. This experience was extremely valuable and educational for both my academic and personal development. Living and studying in a different country not only gave me a new academic perspective, but also contributed greatly to my intercultural communication, independence, and ability to adapt to new environments.

Like every Erasmus+ student, I initially had difficulty adapting to the culture of the country I was living in. However, these challenges helped me grow in many ways on a personal level. Over time, thanks to the friendships I formed, I was able to overcome these difficulties and successfully adapt to my new environment.

Lublin is a city located in eastern Poland and stands out with its historical atmosphere and student friendly character. Due to the universities in the city, there is a multicultural student population. This allowed me to communicate with students from different countries and become familiar with various cultures. Especially the social and cultural activities organized for Erasmus students helped me quickly build a social circle and adapt to the city.

From an academic perspective, the teaching methods at the institution where I studied were different in some ways from those at Istanbul Gelişim University. A strong emphasis on student participation, along with presentations and group work, encouraged active learning. These methods increased my interest in the courses and strengthened my sense of responsibility. In addition, improving my academic communication skills in English became an important benefit for my future academic and professional life. The friendly and supportive communication of the instructors who taught us also directly contributed to our motivation and willingness to learn.

The Erasmus experience also made a major contribution to my personal development. Living alone in a foreign country taught me how to deal with everyday challenges and increased my self confidence. Experiencing a different culture allowed me to view situations from a broader perspective and helped me question my prejudices. Thanks to Erasmus, I not only had the opportunity to explore the country I lived in but also nearby countries, which helped me gain unforgettable experiences and friendships.



## Tokat Cuisine

Res. Asst. Gizem VAROL

*The Department of Management Information Systems*

Tokat cuisine speaks through its variety. In this culinary tradition, every dish carries not only taste but also the imprint of the land it comes from. Meat dishes, vegetables, pastries, and wild herbs come together in a balanced harmony. No single element dominates the table; nothing feels missing.

When Tokat is mentioned, the first dish that comes to mind is undoubtedly Tokat Kebab. Prepared with lamb, eggplant, potatoes, tomatoes, and peppers arranged in a specific order and cooked slowly over a wood fire, this kebab stands as the symbol of Tokat cuisine. The aroma that spreads as it comes out of the oven completes the table even before the first bite. Its slow cooking method preserves both the tenderness of the meat and the natural flavor of the vegetables.

One of the most distinctive features of Tokat cuisine is its herb-based dishes, foremost among them madımak. Harvested in spring, this wild herb is a staple of Tokat tables. Sometimes cooked with minced meat, sometimes with eggs, madımak reflects how closely the cuisine follows the rhythm of nature and the seasons.

Another dish unique to Tokat is bat, which perfectly represents the character of the region's cuisine. Made with fine bulgur, walnuts, tomato paste, and spices, bat is not simply eaten—it is shared. Consumed by dipping bread into the mixture, bat is less a conventional dish and more a communal way of eating, highlighting the strong culture of togetherness in Tokat.

Keşkek holds a special place in Tokat cuisine, particularly at large gatherings and on special occasions. Made by cooking wheat and meat for long hours, keşkek is a dish that requires patience and collective effort. In Tokat, its meaning lies as much in the preparation process as in its taste.

Stuffed vegetables and rolls are also essential components of Tokat cuisine. In particular, stuffed vine leaves made with Tokat grape leaves are well known for their thin texture and perfectly balanced acidity. The grape leaves themselves are what set Tokat sarma apart, giving it a distinctive character.

Pastries and baked goods such as çökelek-filled flatbreads, savory pies, and homemade bread reflect the close connection between Tokat cuisine and everyday life. These foods are simple, filling, and sincere—free from excess, yet rich in flavor.

When it comes to desserts, natural sweetness takes precedence over heavy syrups. Molasses-based pastries, walnut desserts, and traditional dough sweets reveal Tokat cuisine's preference for moderation and balance. Desserts here do not overshadow the meal; they gently complete it. Tokat cuisine derives its richness from diversity. Each dish serves as a complementary element on the table rather than competing for attention. In Tokat, food is not merely eaten—it is shared, remembered, and kept alive.

## ABOUT ACADEMIC LIFE



## PUBLICATIONS

Asst. Prof. Mehdi Safaei's article titled "Empowering future caregivers: the role of self-leadership in reducing stress among nursing students" was published in International Journal of Innovation and Learning.

## STAFF AGENDA



### ACADEMIC-ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- Asst. Prof. Berk Efe ALTINAL has been appointed to the position of Asst. Prof. in the Department of Psychology
- Asst. Prof. Mehmet Osman Kurtkan KAPICIOĞLU has been appointed as the Head of the Department of Psychology.

### ACADEMIC STAFF DEPARTEES

- Asst. Prof. Selcen YETKİN ÖZDEN has left the Department of Psychology.



Dear IGU Alumni and Students,

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### IGU Alumni Tracking System

The Alumni Tracking System (Metsis) has been launched to determine and follow the current status of our graduates, such as their employment and higher education careers, and to generate statistical data. Moreover, Istanbul Gelisim University aims to strengthen its relations with its graduates and contribute to their employment process through the METSIS platform. IGU alumni can subscribe to the platform for free. ([metsis.gelisim.edu.tr](http://metsis.gelisim.edu.tr))

Our graduates who are members of the platform can update their profiles and follow job postings.

#### How to subscribe to the METSIS platform?

1. Enter the platform ([metsis.gelisim.edu.tr](http://metsis.gelisim.edu.tr)) via internet-connected devices.
2. You can follow the job postings by clicking on the jobs.
3. You can create an account from the New Candidate section to apply.
4. After creating an account, you can see job postings from the jobs section on the top and apply for open positions.

# M A S T H E A D

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Content Editor

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**(Head of Department)**

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Translation Coordinator

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Graphic Design

**Nevin METİN**

Redaction

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