DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

The Impact of Emerging Technologies on Law, Politics, and Civic Life

WZB Berlin Social Science Center
Berlin Germany
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University of Florence & European University Institute
Florence Italy
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CNRS
Paris France
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Organisers:
Primavera de Filippi | CNRS;
Liav Orgad | EUI, IDC, WZB;
Wessel Reijers | EUI; Andrea Simoncini | University of Florence

Berlin Social Science Center
Statement of Purpose

The protests in Hong Kong in 2019 have revealed how the lives of citizens are intertwined with the development and deployment of technologies. To assert control over its citizens, China has used surveillance technologies that are linked to social incentive systems; punishing those who protest and rewarding those who stay at home. The protesting citizens in Hong Kong have also used technologies, such as cryptocurrencies and encrypted messaging services, to create ‘cloud communities’ that challenge the centralised power of China. Do new sociotechnical systems lead to a dystopian future, ruled by faceless bureaucracy and mindless machines, or a utopian future where virtuous citizens can participate for the common good?

This workshop series seeks to understand the challenges that emerging technologies pose to the institution of citizenship. The workshop series tackle three challenges. The first focuses on the impacts of emerging technologies on citizens. It will investigate how citizens use technologies to give shape to new conceptions of political communities. What does it mean for people from different countries and across cultures to connect in digital communities and engage in new modes of political decision-making by using technologies and co-decision software?

The second challenge focuses on the role of institutions, corporations, and states in shaping civic life through the development and deployment of emerging technologies. It will explore how governments and large firms create new institutional structures through the use of surveillance, data collection and analysis, and nudging and enforcement. It will engage with ‘surveillance capitalism’ and ‘functional sovereignty’ to investigate how governments and corporations impact digital public life, and the implications for corporate social responsibility and corporate citizenship.

The third challenge brings citizens and institutions together in a call for ‘digital constitutionalism’. It asks how to think about digital rights and responsibilities in a global environment that is increasingly saturated with networked, cybernetic technologies. What public law norms should apply to this new situation, based on which justifications, and for what goals? And what should be the regulatory legal mechanisms to address the challenges?
The first workshop at WZB Berlin will be on November 10, 2019 on the topic of digital citizenship. It will bring together world-leading academics in the fields of philosophy, political theory, law, and computer science, to discuss the notion of digital citizenship in cities.

An increasing number of European cities suffer from low civic participation, absence of social solidarity, and apathy of citizens in creating solutions to common problems. A recent report of the City of London is alarming—it indicates a ‘withdraw from collective life,’ a lack of ‘cross-community contact,’ and a low level of active citizenship. The report finds this reality to be ‘one of the key challenges facing cities across the Western world’ and urges to find ways to promote active citizenship, a sense of responsibility, and a community life.

In response to the challenges, cities turn to digital solutions, trying to incentivise active citizenship by a set of municipal benefits. Can technologies bring about participatory regimes? How to decide on policy areas, by which institutions, according to which criteria, and based on which data sources? How should the city disseminate the idea, register participants, record data, and measure deeds? How effective are such incentives in cultivating habits and morals, and what can be the societal side effects? And what can be the justifications to incentives ‘good citizenship’ by rewards, rather than morality and education? We seek to investigate these and other questions.

The workshop has three goals. First, empirical, prominent European cities will share with us their experiences with ‘digital citizenship’. We seek to learn about different municipal initiatives for solving local problems by using novel technological solutions. Second, normative, leading academics will discuss challenges and opportunities related to such initiatives, as well as analyze their justification, design, and effect. Third, policy, we will discuss notions of ‘good deeds’ in return to ‘municipal benefits’ and consider the idea of putting together a consortium of European cities participating in such initiative. The discussion will be organised according to the ‘World Café’ format, followed by an interactive scenario and prototype building session led by Somatic Artist Susan Ploetz.
Programme

08:45 Welcome and Registration
09:00 Introduction
Liav Orgad and Wessel Reijers; Digital Citizenship: A Research Agenda
09:30 Digital Citizenship in Cities
City presentations of local initiatives for digital citizenship (Madrid, Amsterdam, Cascais, and Citibeats)
10:45 Coffee break
11:15 Scientific Presentations
Surveying the state-of-the-art in digital citizenship studies.
Mo Chen; Social Credit Systems for Good Deeds – a Comparison Perspective
Quinn Dupont; Blockchain Governance for Digital Citizenship
Catalina Goante; Public Value for Digital Citizenship
Udi Shapiro; Building a Municipal Community of Trust
30 minutes Q&A
13:00 Lunch
14:30 World Café Session
Five working groups on different aspects of digital citizenship & group facilitators
Liav Orgad; Normative Challenges
Primavera de Filippi; Technological Challenges
Mathias Siems; Economic Challenges
David Bovill; Democratic Challenges
Kalypso Nicolaidis; Challenges for Politics and Democracy
16:00 Coffee break
16:15 LARP: Scenarios of Digital Citizenship
19:00 End of programme
20:00 Dinner

Participants

Mo Chen | TUM
Paula Berman | Democracy Earth
David Bovill | Viral Academy
Quinn Dupont | University College Dublin
Silke Elrifai | DIS
Primavera de Filippi | CNRS
Florian Glatz | Blockchain Embassy
Catalina Goante | University of Maastricht
Alon Harel | Wissenschaftskolleg Berlin
Jens van ‘t Klooster | KU Leuven
Kalypso Nicolaidis | University of Oxford
Liav Orgad | WZB

Susan Ploetz | Artist and Consultant
Benedikt Schuppli | FQX AG
Ehud Shapiro | Wiezmann Institute
Guido Smorto | University of Palermo
Mathias Siems | EUI
Federico Tomasello | EUI
Borja Prieto | Municipality of Madrid
Wessel Reijers | EUI
Carlos Yarza | Artist and Filmmaker