

Bio-creation of Informatics: Rethinking Data Ecosystems in the Network Economy

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Abstract

The evolution of the information society has seen 'data' becoming the most important economic resource of the networked economy, mediated by the collocated and instantaneous access, dissemination and sharing of information amongst people across vast distances. Central to these various transactions that occur in our network culture, there exist numerous policy propositions that seek to regulate the archiving, access, sharing, use and dissemination of data. These policy propositions are often enforced upon users as encoded rules of the informatics of bio-creation, rather than being modeled by the very participants of the network who created the data in the first place - bio-creation of informatics. Furthermore, the design of most policy recommendations that have deep socio-economic and political implications have been restricted to reflecting the views of legal scholars and members of the technology industry, giving little or no room for a larger public discourse that is fueled by multi-stakeholder approaches. This panel seeks to explore how transdisciplinary media practitioners and creative art and design practitioners in tandem with information policy activists can address the context of data ecosystems to reimagine them and at the same time engage members of the general public to reflect and contribute to a larger inclusive discourse that can help re-shape public policy surrounding data ecosystems

Introduction

The relevance of data is not as much because of its value as chunks of information, but because of the ecosystems where data is created, transformed and disseminated that makes it possible to use pieces of information to achieve larger goals. Data ecosystems have the potential to become spaces for positive economic, social and cultural adaptations. However, current ecosystems tend to respond to particular interests that challenge democracy, and radically transform our reach

as autonomous individuals, citizens and members of socio-cultural groups. We will look at these scenarios through the lenses of ownership, privacy, transparency, openness and choice of individuals. Furthermore, we will elucidate the role of creative practices in designing data ecosystems that are inclusive and allow the public to contribute. Cultivating cultural participation in collective electronic spaces and shared knowledge in the networked realities of hypermedia meshwork is the foundation for an ecology of information.

Provocations for the panel

The Panel situates itself across transdisciplinary modes of enquiry, shifting gears between policy and design factors that influence infrastructural and informational aspects of the network society while dealing with multiple provocations: How can we shape ecosystems that mediate flows of information and data in a decentralized and self-governed manner? How can we create mechanisms for data ecosystems to be mutable and capable of infinite expansion? Can there exist different networks that are mutually incompatible with each other, encoded by specific group of users? How can the often concealed inner-workings of infrastructural components and processes behind user interfaces be exposed, so that best practices of data sharing, privacy, and intellectual property decisions be encoded into the design tools for creating data ecosystems?

Further, the panel underlines the importance of developing an informed art and design practice that takes into account communication policy recommendations needed to tackle and comment on the desirable state of data ecosystems. A set of provocations

Panels

to this end includes: How should we rethink the right to participation in the digital age? How can we balance notions of privacy and transparency while understanding the involvement of users in a data ecosystem? What are the implications for data policy, when shaping networks that involve users with access to digital devices and code literacy and those without? What are the socio-cultural implications for technology policy law and data protection laws, and how often are they considered by top-down replications in global policy? These are but some of the provocations that the panel seeks to answer across four papers that give ample room to invite diverse points of view from the audience.