

# Social Media as a Topic and a Resource for TA

ITAS (Institut für Technikfolgenabschätzung und Systemanalyse)

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# Premise

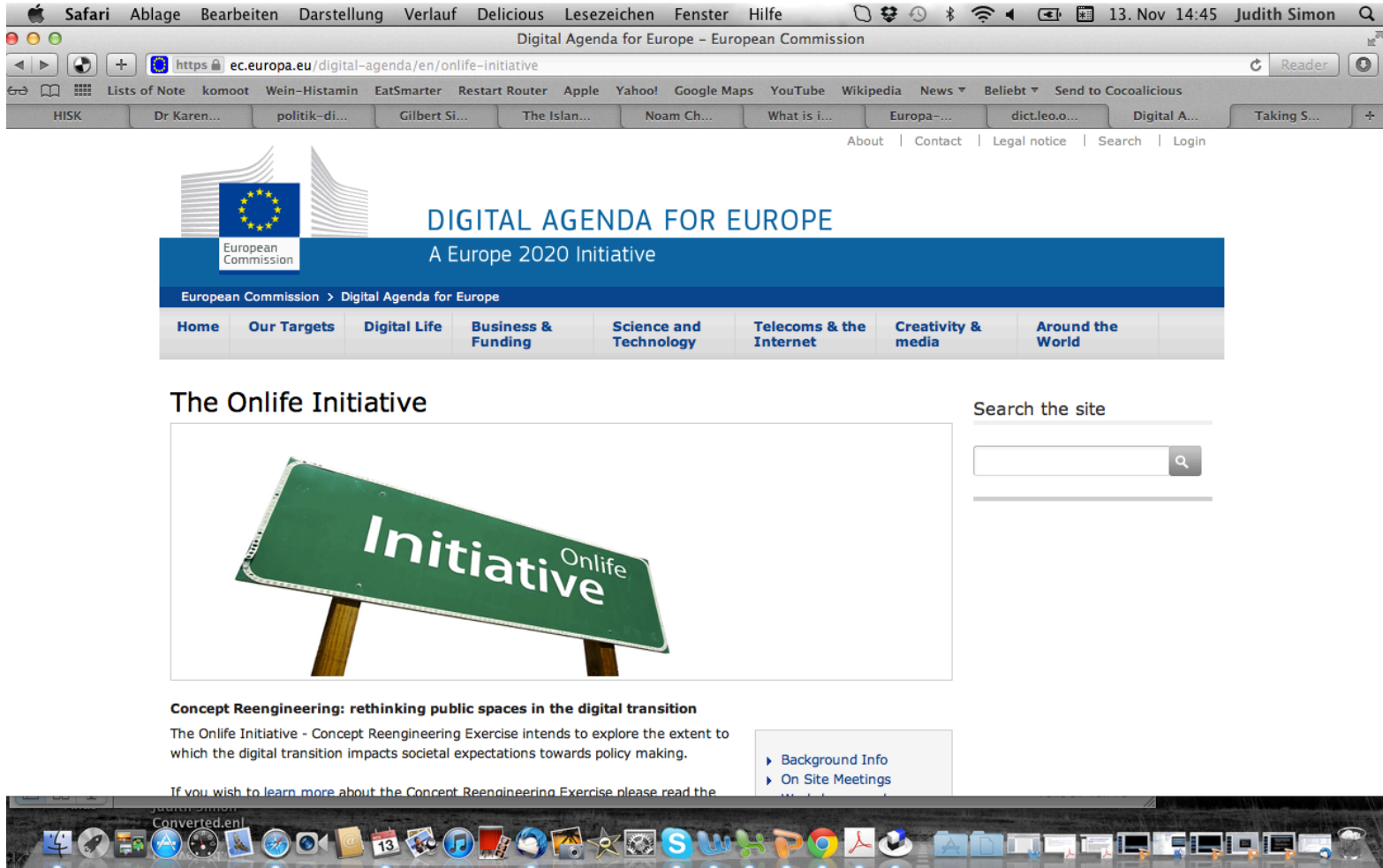
- TA-like activities increasingly take place also beyond classical TA settings/institutions
- Social media often functions as enabler

# Outline

- Social Media & TA beyond TA: Projects
  - The Onlife Initiative
  - Futurium
- TA for Social Media – Social Media for TA: New directions for TA
- Conclusions

# Onlife Initiative – A Concept Re-engineering Exercise

# Onlife-Initiative: A Concept Re-Engineering Exercise



The screenshot shows a Safari browser window displaying the website <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/onlife-initiative>. The page features the European Commission logo and the title "DIGITAL AGENDA FOR EUROPE A Europe 2020 Initiative". A navigation menu includes links for Home, Our Targets, Digital Life, Business & Funding, Science and Technology, Telecoms & the Internet, Creativity & media, and Around the World. The main content area is titled "The Onlife Initiative" and includes a search bar. A large image shows a green sign on wooden posts that reads "Initiative Onlife". Below the image, the text states: "Concept Reengineering: rethinking public spaces in the digital transition. The Onlife Initiative - Concept Reengineering Exercise intends to explore the extent to which the digital transition impacts societal expectations towards policy making." There are also links for "Background Info" and "On Site Meetings".

<https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/onlife-initiative>

## ■ Topic & Context

- Impact of digitalization on societal expectations towards policy making, concept of public spaces in digital era
- Digital Agenda for Europe (DG CONNECT)
- Recognition of new challenges for policy making & governance

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- Wiebe Bijker's questions: what is new policy making/politics/citizenry?

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## ■ Format

- Expert Panel: 14 Philosophers & Social Scientists meet about every 2 months to talk for 2 half days in Brussels
- Contentwise and methodologically only minimally pre-formatted

# Onlife-Initiative

- Starting hypotheses regarding the impact of ICT/digital technologies on society
  1. The blurring of the distinction between reality and virtuality?
  2. The blurring of the distinction between people, nature and artefacts?
  3. The reversal from scarcity to abundance, when it comes to information?
  4. The reversal from entity's primacy over interactions to interactions' primacy over entities?

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## ■ Process

- Live-Meetings (Feb, April, June, Oct, Dec) of the core group in Brussels
- Meetings elsewhere with interested people & stakeholders
- In between the meetings: writing process (14x1000x4)

# Onlife-Initiative: Results

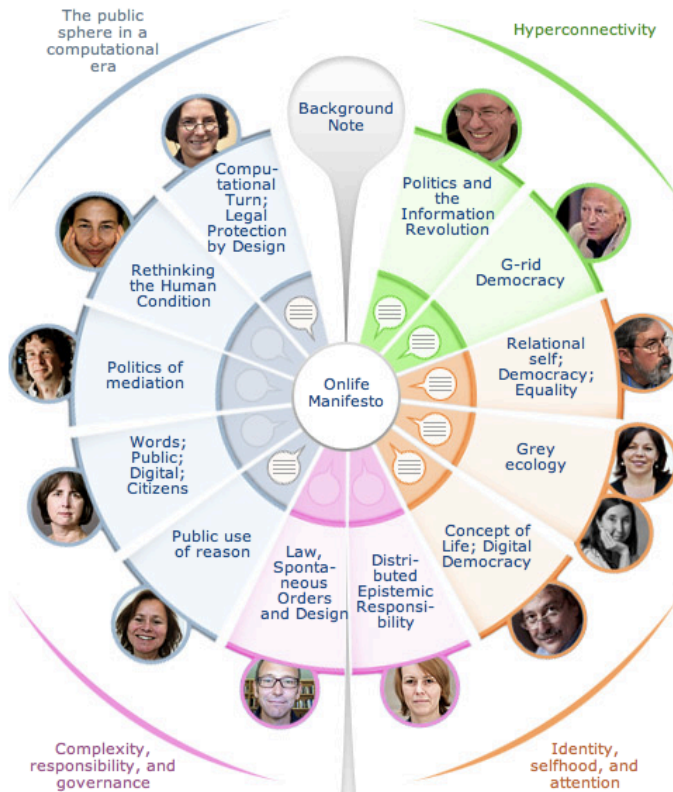
<http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/onlife-web-output>

Digital Agenda for Europe – European Commission

[ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/onlife-web-output](http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/onlife-web-output)

Apple Yahoo! Google Maps YouTube Wikipedia News ▾ Beliebt ▾

- ▶ About
- ▶ Consultations
- ▶ Digital Agenda Assembly 2012
- ▶ Collective Awareness
- ▶ Digital Champions
- ▶ Digital Agenda Assembly 2011
- ▶ Going local 2011
- ▶ Big ideas community
- ▶ Stakeholder Day 2010
- ▶ Digital Futures
  - ▶ About
  - ▶ Interviews
  - ▶ Onlife Initiative
    - ▶ Onlife Web Output
    - ▶ About Onlife
    - ▶ On Site Meetings
    - ▶ Workshop members
    - ▶ Join the Debate
    - ▶ OnLife News
    - ▶ Policy Making 3.0

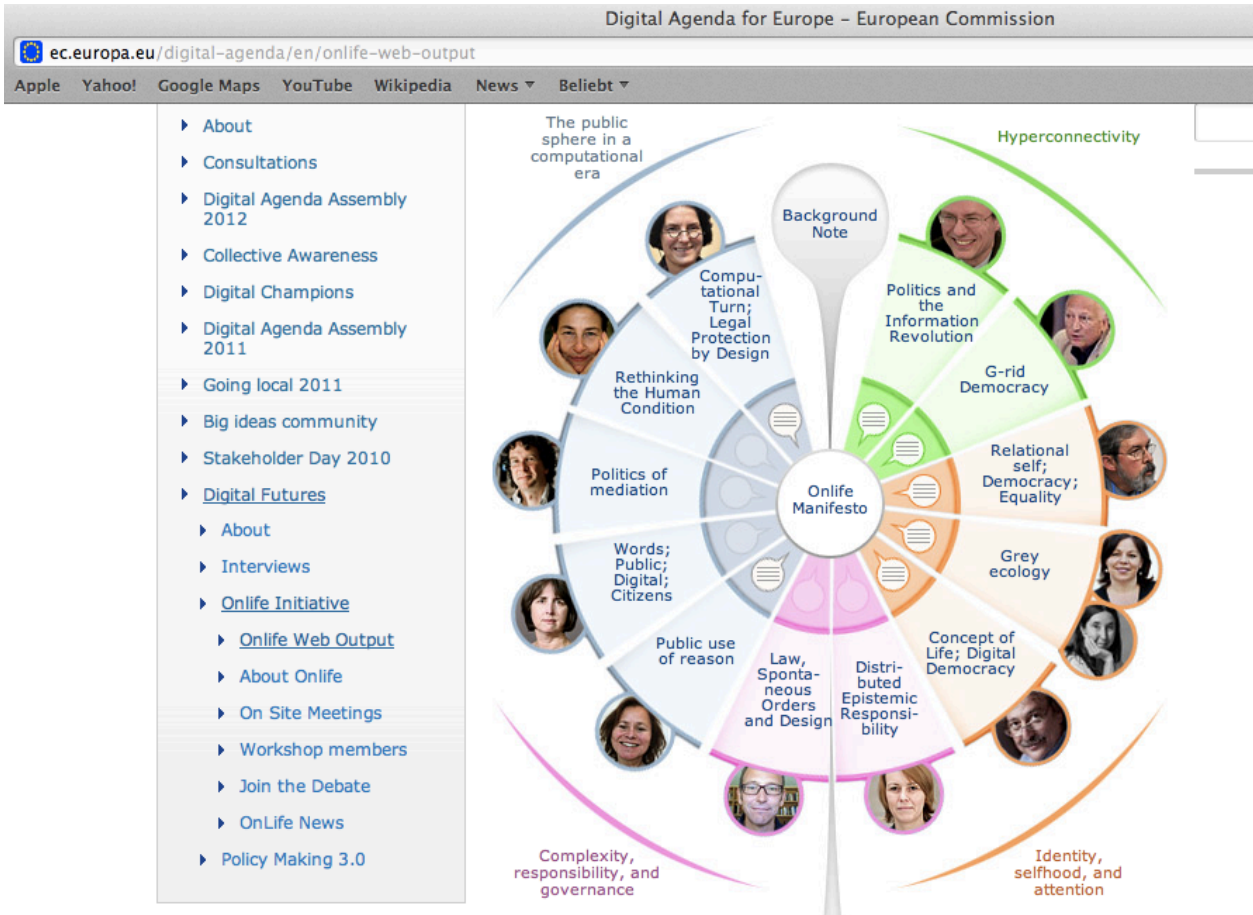


The diagram is a circular infographic centered on 'Onlife Manifesto'. It is divided into several segments, each with a representative photo and a title. The segments are: 'Background Note' (top), 'Hyperconnectivity' (top-right), 'Politics and the Information Revolution' (right), 'G-rid Democracy' (right), 'Relational self; Democracy; Equality' (right), 'Grey ecology' (right), 'Concept of Life; Digital Democracy' (right), 'Distributed Epistemic Responsibility' (bottom-right), 'Law, Spontaneous Orders and Design' (bottom), 'Public use of reason' (bottom-left), 'Words; Public; Digital; Citizens' (left), 'Politics of mediation' (left), 'Rethinking the Human Condition' (left), 'Computational Turn; Legal Protection by Design' (left), and 'The public sphere in a computational era' (top-left). The diagram is framed by two large curved lines, one green at the top and one purple at the bottom.

- The Onlife-Manifesto
- Comments on the Manifesto
- Individual Contributions
- Conclusions

# Onlife-Initiative: Results

<http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/onlife-web-output>



The screenshot shows the website interface for the Digital Agenda for Europe. The main content area features a circular diagram titled "Onlife Manifesto" with a central hub and several surrounding segments, each with a representative photo. The segments include:

- Background Note
- Hyperconnectivity
- Politics and the Information Revolution
- G-grid Democracy
- Relational self; Democracy; Equality
- Grey ecology
- Concept of Life; Digital Democracy
- Distributed Epistemic Responsibility
- Law, Spontaneous Orders and Design
- Public use of reason
- Words; Public; Digital; Citizens
- Politics of mediation
- Rethinking the Human Condition
- Computational Turn; Legal Protection by Design
- The public sphere in a computational era

On the left side of the screenshot, there is a navigation menu with the following items:

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- Hyperconnectivity
- Identity, selfhood and attention
- Complexity, responsibility and governance
- The public sphere in a computational era

- Presentation of the Onlife Manifesto & the 4 Core Topics
- Reactions from stakeholders
  - Industry, NGOs, EC, ..
- Parallel Sessions
  - SESSION A: The Onlife Manifesto and policy approaches to privacy and security
  - SESSION B: The Onlife Manifesto and policy approaches to innovation, IPR and new business models
  - SESSION C: Responsible research and innovation: how to go about it, in a hyperconnected world?
  - SESSION D: A research agenda for digital SSH in H2020 and beyond
- Plenary session: wrapping up and next steps

# Onlife-Initiative & TA

## ■ Onlife-Initiative & TA?

- Advisory Function of TA (political and societal consulting)
  - Focus on public goods and public space
  - Stakeholder involvement
  - In the Context of DAE explicitly to complement classical foresight/TA
  - Idea: get away from risks/challenges discourse, think out of the box, work on the level of concepts
  - What we did: re-assess the framework for policy making in a digital, hyperconnected reality
- Components of cTA (implications for design), TA (recommendations for policy making), so far rather expert-focused

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- Components of cTA (implications for design), TA (recommendations for policy making), so far rather expert-focused
- But: Open for broader participation through FUTURIUM



# Futurium: Participation & Crowd-Sourced Foresight



## DIGITAL AGENDA FOR EUROPE FUTURIUM

[European Commission](#) > [Futurium](#)

[Home](#) | [About](#)

[View](#) | [Repeats](#)

### The "Onlife Manifesto": Being human in a hyperconnected era

#### Description:

*What does it mean to be human in the computational era?  
How can we experience freedom and plurality in a hyperconnected reality?  
Is the public/private distinction still relevant?  
How can we endorse and attribute responsibilities in a world where artefacts become agents?*

It is often thought that philosophy is a luxury for persons who enjoy the beauty of the world of ideas, only. However, answers to philosophical questions

#### Event Hashtag(s) on Twitter:

#OnlifeEU

#### Twitter @reply:

@nicoledewandre

#### Venue:

Brussels, Avenue de Beaulieu, 25

#### Type of event:

#### Events

- ▶ The Future of Personal Data and Citizenship  
Hosted by: jacquesb
- ▶ Information and Communications Technology for Environmental Regulation: Developing a Research Agenda  
Hosted by: ronank
- ▶ Future Internet Assembly  
Hosted by: georetic

#### Most Recent Futures

- ▶ Social Network for Fishermen's associations. Mobile Maritime Hub 2009-2050



„Futurium is the online platform used by the Digital Futures project to facilitate a broad reflection on future European policies. It combines the informal character of social networks with the methodological approach of foresights to engage stakeholders in the co-creation of futures and policy ideas that matter to them.“

<http://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/futurium/>

- Tech Core: Web2.0-Platform (Drupal-based, Wiki-functions, SNS-embeddedness, ...)
- Function: participation & „crowd-sourced foresight“: bottom-up creation of
  - Future Visions & Trends
  - Policy Ideas
  - Library Entries
  - Events
- Results are (somehow) supposed to feed into policy making for Digital Agenda
- Open Source Platform for Open Data Exchange (→ Futurium Lab)

enda/futurium/en/content/artificially-enhanced-humans---rise-cyborgs

s YouTube Wikipedia News ▾ Beliebt ▾

KIT - ITAS - Institute for Technolog... dict.leo.org - Ergebnisse für "Adressat" Futurium - European Commission

## Artificially enhanced Humans – the rise of the cyborgs

Share 0

Create Future

Humans have always strived to augment their own limited abilities with the help of various tools and aids. The horse allowed one to travel faster, the binoculars allowed one to see further.

Also the human body has been augmented and enhanced, especially when having dysfunctions. In ancient Egyptian times seashells were used as dental implants and, in more recent times, the first heart pacemaker was implanted in human patient in 1958. Today artificial joints, ligaments, hearing aids, dental implants, insulin pumps and other enhancements are so common that it is considered a standard practice and nothing out of the ordinary.

With improved implant techniques and the creation of direct nerve connectors, in 2050 body and sense enhancing implants are a common practice. They enhance the capabilities in normal functioning humans and provide normal or enhanced capabilities for impaired people. The visual implants make the blind see and the hearing implants make the deaf hear. Muscle implants make the weak stronger. Neural implants make the lame walk. New organs can be manufactured when needed using the recipient's own DNA as blueprint. Life expectancy has increased; being 100 years old is nothing exceptional and scientist believe that many people will reach 150 years or more. Using DNA reprogramming and cell rejuvenation techniques there is no theoretical upper limit to life expectancy.

The cerebral implants enhance the cognitive abilities, improve memory, and continuously scan the blood stream for irregular levels of hormones or dangerous substances. The implants greatly enhance human intellectual, physical, and psychological capacities. In 2040 artificial intelligence and robots achieved greater than human intelligence and by 2050 even an average household robot has more intelligence than a non-enhanced human. The line between humans and machines has been blurred and in many areas of life no difference is made.



Submitted by Mattias Bergdahl on 2012.

**Year:**

2050

**Type:** vision

**Desirability:**



Average: 4.3 (7 votes)

**Likelihood:**



Average: 3.6 (7 votes)

**Contributors:**

- Mattias Bergdahl
- Franco Accordinò

**Keywords:**

Search

Title	Name	Type	Last update
Artificially enhanced Humans – the rise of the cyborgs	Mattias Bergdahl	vision	2012
Trans-humanism and the Enhanced Mankind	Franco Accordinò	vision	2012
MEET JANE'S SHOP-FLOOR MANAGER: THE FINAL CONSUMER	Antje Plutte	vision	2012
A World of Super-Centenarians	Franco Accordinò	vision	2012
Politics in 2050	Franco Accordinò	vision	2012
ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE CYBARIUM	Adam Watson-Brown	vision	2012
A World Without Poverty	Tiziano Demaria	vision	2012
THE SUPERBLY INFORMED AND ACTIVE CONSUMER	afonso ferreira	vision	2012
SOCIALLY SMART ECONOMY	Bernadett Köteles-Degrendele	vision	2012
DYNAMICS OF INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE	Tiziano Demaria	vision	2012

- „The Futurium is up. Let's co-create the futures we all want! The coming two years will be crucial for the design of a comprehensive strategy for the European Union. This strategy will have to respond to the expectation of the tax payers, serving their needs and not the other way around. People want research investments and policies to help addressing the societal challenges of today and tomorrow. In order to know better which challenges we should focus on, we need your help.“

Submitted by Robert Madelin on Sun, 11/25/2012 - 18:48

## ■ Futurium & TA?

- Future Scenarios to guide and support policy making
- New form of participation: participation in the age of Web2.0
- (Futurium Lab: Open Data & Open Source)

## ■ TA as critical force

- Pros & Cons on being tied into commercial platforms (Facebook, etc)
- How exactly do the crowd-sourced recommendations feed into policy making? → issues of legitimacy
- ....

# TA for Social Media – Social Media for TA



- TA activities take place beyond classical TA settings & institutions
- Social Media functions as enabler

## ■ Participation

- Harness enthusiasm for social media for political engagement & participation
- Example: Avaar.org

# TA for Social Media – Social Media for TA



The screenshot shows the AVAAZ.org website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the AVAAZ logo and the tagline 'THE WORLD IN ACTION'. Below the logo, there are links for 'HOME', 'ABOUT US', 'HIGHLIGHTS', 'PRESS CENTRE', and 'DONATE'. A language selection menu is visible, including options like '繁體中文', '日本語', 'NEDERLANDS', 'ITALIANO', 'עברית', 'TÜRKÇE', 'POLSKI', and 'ROMÂNĂ'. A 'JOIN AVAAZ' button is also present. The main content area features a large image of a group of people holding lit candles, with the text 'End India's war on women' overlaid. To the right of the image, there is a pink sidebar with the AVAAZ logo and the text 'AVAAZ is the campaigning community bringing people-powered politics to decision-making worldwide'. Below this, it states 'THE AVAAZ MOVEMENT: 20,129,344 members worldwide' and includes a 'JOIN NOW' button with an email input field.

“The world’s largest online campaigning community for change using social media to bring “people-powered politics to decision-making on any issue of public concern”.

## ■ Participation

- Harness enthusiasm for social media for political engagement & participation
- Example: Avaar.org

## ■ Foresight

- Use social media content for foresight
- Example: Futurium?
- More importantly: data mining/big data

## ■ Support Rational Debate

- Argument extraction through text mining, sentiment analysis, ...
- Argument visualization
- →Counter filter bubbles, support decision making, innovation processes etc.

# Conclusions

# Conclusions: Social Media & TA

- Social Media's dual role as important topic & resource for TA
- TA activities beyond TA settings/institutions
  - Danger versus chance for TA?
- To use social media as a resource, we may need to collaborate with data experts, learn from them and develop novel TA methodologies harvesting distributed data and crowd-sourced content
- But we must keep up TA's critical function
  - Ensure that e-participation is not reduced to mere data mining & having your digital traces processed
  - Focus on power relations, resp. power/knowledge links
  - ...

**Thanks a lot for your attention!**

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