Call for Papers

Democracy and Youth in the Digital Age: Evolving Technologies and Political Participation

International Conference, Luxembourg, 19-21 March 2025

Organised as part of Luxembourg's chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe by the University of Luxembourg

Conference outline

The advent of the digital age has fundamentally transformed the landscape of political participation, creating unprecedented opportunities and challenges, particularly for the younger generation. This international conference, "Democracy and Youth in the Digital Age: Evolving Technologies and Political Participation," aims to explore the complex and dynamic relationship between young citizens and the digital political sphere.

In an era where social media platforms, online forums, and artificial intelligence increasingly shape political discourse and engagement, it is crucial to understand how these technologies influence young people's political awareness, activism, and the formation of their political identities. This conference seeks to bridge the gap between cutting-edge academic research and practical, real-world applications by bringing together a diverse array of experts from various scientific fields, policymakers, activists, and educators.

The conference will address six interconnected themes, each exploring a critical aspect of democracy and youth engagement in the digital age:

1. **Fragmentation versus Participation: The Public Sphere in the Digital Age** - At the heart of this theme lies the paradox of the digital public sphere: while digital platforms democratize information access, they simultaneously contribute to fragmentation through echo chambers. The focus is on identifying strategies that foster a well-balanced and informed digital public sphere, encouraging diverse yet cohesive democratic participation.

2. **Parliamentary Democracy versus Activism: Techniques of Engagement** - This section examines the intersection of traditional parliamentary democracy and contemporary digital activism, with a particular emphasis on youth engagement methods. It explores how formal political processes and grassroots activism interact and impact the political landscape, assessing the effectiveness of diverse engagement strategies.

3. **Truth versus Trust: Affective Politics after the End of Argument** - Central to this theme is the growing dominance of emotional appeals over fact-based political discourse. The section investigates the implications for democratic dialogue and youth engagement, scrutinizing the shift towards emotion and trust-driven communication and its influence on young people's political beliefs and actions.

4. **Memory versus History: Imagined Identities and Ethical Claims** - An exploration of how digital media shapes young people's perceptions of identity and ethics forms the core of this section. It aims to unravel the role of digital platforms in balancing informed political discourse and diverse cultural memories, probing the intricate relationship between history, memory, and identity in the digital age's political and ethical landscape.

5. **Gaming versus Explaining? The Future of Political Education** - The potential of interactive games in modern civic education is the focus of this theme. It contrasts gaming technologies with traditional educational methods, examining how gamification can enhance political education for youth, foster engagement, and promote critical thinking.

6. **Cultures of Democracy: Political Narratives and Forms of Representation** - This final section delves into the nuanced challenges and opportunities for democratic culture in the digital age. It scrutinizes the co-option of cultural narratives by nationalist and populist discourses, while also highlighting the vital need for vibrant democracies to cultivate and transmit their unique national narratives and aesthetic expressions.

Call for Contributions

We welcome submissions from researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and experts across various disciplines, including but not limited to political science, history, media studies, law, sociology, psychology, computer science and educational sciences. Contributions that explore one or more of the conference themes are highly encouraged. We particularly invite young people to actively engage in the conference, whether through oral presentations, posters, or by sharing their perspectives during discussions. Early-career researchers and young professionals are especially encouraged to contribute. Both oral and poster presentations are welcome.

Submissions can be made in two ways:

1. Directly aligned with a specific panel: If your contribution clearly fits into one of the six thematic sections outlined above, please indicate this in your submission.

2. Addressing the conference theme as a whole: If your contribution spans multiple themes or addresses the overall conference topic, you may submit it without specifying a particular panel. In this case, the organizers will assign it to the most appropriate section.

Both types of submissions are equally valued. This approach allows for both targeted contributions to specific discussions and broader perspectives that cross-cut multiple themes.

Presentation formats:

- Oral presentations: 20 minutes, followed by a 10-minute discussion.
- Poster presentations: We also welcome contributions in the form of poster presentations.

Everyone is welcome to attend and participate in discussions, even if they are not presenting. Attendance is free of charge. Simply register by emailing digital-democracy@uni.lu.

No conference fees will be charged.

Submission Guidelines

Please submit a brief CV (max. 2 pages) and a proposal of no more than 300 words in English

Submission deadline: 15th of October 2024

Notification of acceptance: 1st of November 2024

Please submit your proposals to: digital-democracy@uni.lu

Financial Support:

We are pleased to offer financial assistance to invited speakers. If needed, we can provide support for travel and accommodation expenses up to a maximum of 500 € per person.

Conference Details

Date: 19-21 March 2025

Location: University of Luxembourg, Campus Belval

Conference language: English, French, German

This conference is part of Luxembourg's commitment to promoting the core values of the Council of Europe – human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. It aims to develop concrete solutions to the challenges and opportunities of youth political participation in the digital age.

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