Safeguarding Freedom in the Digital World

Big Tech, Bots & the Future of Democracy

02 June – 14 June 2024

Gummersbach, Germany

Abstract

TOPICS

Would you prefer living in the 1970s or in 2024? The answer seems obvious: The world is better today than just 50 years ago. The main reasons for this are computers, technology, and the Internet. Just imagine the room you are sitting in right now without all the screens around you. Would you be able to tell the difference between 1970 and now? Well, not really. That is because digitalization has been the major driver of human progress and enabled us (amongst many other things) to connect with other people from all around the globe. And this is what we will do in this seminar…but in the real world.

Liberal nerds from all over the world will meet to discuss some of the hot topics of our times—ranging from artificial intelligence and the role of big tech companies to the use of technological surveillance by authoritarian regimes. Besides all tech optimism, there is also a dark side to the story: Digitalization has given rise to new and powerful threats to democratic processes, human rights, and the rule of law. And the solutions to such challenges are far from obvious from a liberal perspective. Hence, it is on us to strike a balance between recognizing the positive disruptions of the Internet age and the concerns about its impact on inclusive liberal democracies. That is why participants will develop a joint vision of how the Open Society™ translates from the physical to the digital world. Because Adam Smith, JS Mill, and FA Hayek had many interesting to say; but they didn't own an iPhone with ChatGPT.

DAILY THEMES

- Artificial Intelligence: A New Industrial Revolution or the End of Humanity?
- Digital Empires: The Power & Impact of Big Tech
- Fake News: Destabilizing our societies or simply overrated?
- Free Speech: The Future Content Moderation and the Global Town Hall
- Privacy: Who should get access to your data?

- Digital Money: Bitcoin & the Future of Money
- When Government Goes Online: Geopolitics, Propaganda, and Surveillance
- When Government Goes Online: Transparency & E-Governance
- Twitter & Tear Gas: Networked Protests Around the World

METHODOLOGY

Besides input sessions from the facilitators and experts, the seminar will rely on the active exchange between participants to flesh out the tensions between technology and democracy. In order to enhance the learning experience and to emphasize the practical dimension of the workshop, the seminar will rely on non-formal education methods, such as simulations, case studies, and role plays. In the end, participants will be equipped with a thorough understanding of public policy-making through daily hackathons — where they can translate their abstract normative judgments into concrete ideas of technology regulation

TARGET GROUP

This seminar targets technologists, cyber security experts, privacy advocates, journalists, content creators, liberal politicians, and policy-makers from liberal think tanks. Participants should have a good grasp of current trends and contemporary debates around technology and digitalization, as well as a firm understanding of liberal principles and public policy. Ideally, they have backgrounds in information technology, software engineering, digital media, or public policy — and are working on topics, such as digital rights, transparency, privacy, content moderation, and regulation.

Facilitators

Sven Gerst

Sven Gerst is a PhD Student in Political Philosophy at the Department of Political Economy at King's College London. His research mainly focuses on matters of global justice, democratic responsibility, and individual accountability. At King's College London, Sven also teaches courses on political and economic philosophy, environmental economics, meta-ethics, and contemporary issues in applied ethics. He holds a M.Sc. in Philosophy from the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), as well as a M.Sc. in Management from the University of Mannheim. Previously, he also studied at Harvard University, St. Petersburg State University and at National Taiwan University. Sven has already designed and facilitated a number of seminars for IAF.

Hussam EL Erhayel

The Executive Director of the International Federation of Liberal Youth and former Jordan Projects Coordinator at the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom. Graduated from the German Jordanian University and currently studying Public Administration at the Hertie School in Berlin. Through his 8+ years of work experience in Political Education, Erhayel designed, lead, and co-facilitated several seminars and conferences, including seminars on Networking, NGO management and the Foundations of the Open Society at the International Academy for Leadership (IAF).

The Foundation

We, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, promote individual liberty, free and open societies and free markets in Germany and throughout the world. To us freedom is the guiding principle in policy making. We believe that free and open societies are the only societies that allow human beings to decide for themselves what is best, to develop their full potential and to pursue their dreams. This is what we mean when we claim to value human dignity. And it is freedom that produces prosperity. Together with our counterparts – who all share a similar set of values – we support initiatives in Germany and abroad that serve to enhance respect for the rule of law, private property and human rights, that foster tolerance and that strengthen economic freedom rights and democracy.

The programmes of the Foundation's International Academy for Leadership (IAF) form an integral part of our international work and offer Liberals from all parts of the world opportunities to engage in dialogue, an exchange of ideas, networking and mutual cooperation. We aim to inspire.

Venue: **International Academy for Leadership (IAF)**
Theodor-Heuss-Straße 26
51645 Gummersbach
Germany

Language: English

Registration: 01 March 2024 (via dvinci)
https://fnst.dvinci-hr.com/en/p/iaf/jobs/30549/intro

Registration fee: 270.00 €

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