

# Privacy Camp 2021 | 26 January 2021 | Call for panels

## Digital rights for change: Reclaiming infrastructures, repairing the future

The 9<sup>th</sup> edition of Privacy Camp explores the relations between digitalisation, digital rights and infrastructures.

2020 has highlighted the importance of **digital infrastructures**. Many facets of our personal and social life rely on these infrastructures – from public health to education, from labour to services, from politics to intimate relations. Although this is not completely new, society has realised that there is a need to design and maintain digital infrastructures to prioritise the *public interest* – resituating the interests of private actors that so often dominate practice and discourse on the topic.

In this context, **digital rights** are more important than ever. Privacy and data protection are important tools to question, limit and counter massive data collection and intrusive surveillance technologies. Their impact goes well beyond individual interests. While some promote a ‘data altruism’ that would consist in inviting data subjects to consent to more and more data processing operations, it might be that the real altruism and caring for *the other* is actually calling for a better use of digital rights. It certainly demands thinking about how these individual rights can serve the *interests of the public*.

Ever-expanding desires for **digitalisation** - now also connected to promises of post-Covid-19 recovery - are shaped jointly by government data collection priorities and the objectives of ‘big tech’ companies. Reclaiming infrastructures, and embracing digital rights as a tool for change and justice are, in this light, critical for repairing a dire, and inevitably shared, **future**.

**Public spaces** and the **environment** are privileged territories for investigating the intersections between digitalisation, digital rights and infrastructures. The public space, offline and online, is as such a basic democratic infrastructure. The roll-out of surveillance measures such as automated speech moderation on social media or facial recognition technologies in our streets question whether European local authorities, police forces and private companies mandate the public space under a public interest agenda. The environmental impact is furthermore a crucial dimension of all things digital. The IT sector, broadly defined, accounts for more than 2% of global emissions, which is in the same range as aviation. The negative impact of digitalisation is reflected in the effects of big data collection and storage on energy consumption; in poor reparability of devices linked to unnecessary emissions and e-waste; or in vast carbon emissions resulted from training Artificial Intelligence models.

Moving the conversation towards a solution-oriented vision, questions remain around **how** digital rights can best contribute to reclaiming infrastructures, and how reclaimed infrastructures sustain democratic practices, for a fair, people-centered, digital future in the EU.

In this vein, we invite panel proposals revolving round the following themes:

1. The transformative power of digital rights
2. The social dimensions of digital infrastructures
3. The preservation of public voice in the public space
4. The environmental impact of digitalisation

Concrete examples of topics include (non-exhaustively):

- Examples of using existing rights under EU law to advance a fair society
- Actions and negotiations to reclaim digital infrastructures for the public interest
- Biometric mass surveillance and resistance methods for the public square
- Digital infrastructures of oppression | Digital infrastructures of resistance
- Reclaim the means of deliberation and public debate

## **Submission guidelines:**

- Indicate a clear objective for your session, i.e. what would be a good outcome for you?
- Include a list of maximum 4 speakers that could participate in your panel. Ensure you cover academia, civil society and decision - makers' perspectives. Let us know which speaker(s) has/have already confirmed participation, at least in principle.
- Make it as interactive as possible and encourage audience participation.
- Support diversity of voices among panelists and strive for multiple perspectives.
- Note that the average panel length is 50 minutes.
- Send your proposal (a panel description of max. 400 words and a tentative list of speakers) to [privacycamp@edri.org](mailto:privacycamp@edri.org) by 6 December 2020.

## **Deadline for panel proposal submissions: 6 December 2020**

After the deadline, we will review your submissions and will notify you about the outcome of the selection procedure before 10 December. Please note that we might suggest merging panel proposals if they are similar or complement each other.

## **About Privacy Camp**

Privacy Camp is jointly organised by European Digital Rights (EDRi), Research Group on Law, Science, Technology & Society (LSTS) at Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), the Institute for European Studies at Université Saint-Louis – Bruxelles (IEE at USL-B), and Privacy Salon.

In 2021, Privacy Camp's Content Committee are: Andreea Belu (EDRi), Gloria González Fuster (LSTS, VUB) and Rocco Bellanova (IEE, USL-B)

## **Privacy Camp 2021 will take place on 26 January 2021 online.**

Participation is free and registrations will open in early December 2020.

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