

Past fireside chats

11 June and 24 June 2020, 15:00 CET, Prof Dr **George Metakides** on **Digital Sovereignty**: The coronavirus pandemic is accelerated the digitization of all sectors of human activity. This is happening in a geopolitical context that enhances what some call a “digital arms race”. It is in such a context that we ask what is the meaning and importance of digital sovereignty for Europe, what is the impact of the aforementioned acceleration of digitization and what are some of the new policies/initiatives that could enable Europe to achieve and sustain digital sovereignty.

As befitting a fireside, it is intended to have a free for all, no holds barred....chat!



President of Digital Enlightenment Forum, Visiting Professor, University of Southampton

Born in Thessaloniki, Greece, George Metakides received his Ph.D. in Mathematical Logic from Cornell University in 1971. He pursued an academic career at MIT, Cornell and Rochester University until 1978, when he returned to Greece after being elected to the Chair of Logic at the University of Patras. Since 1984 he has held senior positions with responsibility for Research & Development policy, funding and international co-operation in European institutions. He established and headed the

department for Basic Research and International Scientific Relations in Information Technologies at the European Commission from 1988 to 1993. He was the Director of the ESPRIT (European Strategic Program for Information Technologies), from 1993 until its completion in 1998, followed by the Information Society Technologies (IST) Program (1998-2002). In 2002 he returned to his professorship at Patras until his retirement in 2012. He has contributed to the establishment of international institutions (including the launch of the World Wide Web consortium in 1993), has received a number of awards and honorary degrees and is a corresponding member of several National Academies. He is currently visiting professor at the University of Southampton, Adjunct Professor at the European University of Cyprus, President of the Digital Enlightenment Forum, and Advisor to several international organizations. He is involved in the analysis of the economic, political and social impact of digitization, related cybersecurity, data protection and regulatory issues and the promotion of international cooperation towards a digital ecosystem respecting shared human values.

26 June 2020, 15:00 CET, **Michal Boni** PhD. on **Digital Rights**: There are many dimensions of the “Digital Rights” problem. Firstly, it is the general accessibility of the Internet, which allow to avoid the threat of being digitally excluded (networks, quality of networks - 5G, rural-urban divide, territorial divides).

Secondly, it is the threat of being excluded because of the age (generations), gender (still very often phenomenon), skills and competences (digital literacy in the broad sense as a solution).

Thirdly, it is a problem of the equal level playing field of the functioning of all laws and legal systems - offline and online. For instance: anti-discrimination law tools and anti-discrimination law tools in the digital world: algorithms, biases, asymmetry of information - how to tackle those challenges, how to fight with the hate-speech phenomena.

Fourthly, key to understand: how to translate all our rights (key for the “just society”) to the digital community, our rights as - citizens, consumers, humans, users of all kind of services, patients in medical e-services (fundamental: who is the owner of the data...).

The question is: if we need to have the special “Digital Rights Charter” or to ensure full respect of all kinds of our rights in all digital areas.



Former Member of European Parliament, former Minister Poland

Minister of Labour and Social Policy in 1991 and a deputy to the Polish Sejm from 1991 to 1993. He was a member of the Cabinet of Poland from 2009 and was Minister of Administration and Digitization from November 2011 to November 2013. He was elected in 2014 and served as a MEP from the Warsaw region until 2019. From 2019 - SWPS University, Warsaw, University for Social

Sciences and Humanities, Senior Researcher Associate-Martens Centre, Senator SMEEurope, Advisory Board - Blockchain for Europe

7 October 2020 – 15:00 CET, **Dr Michal Boni** on **Digital Rights**: Dimensions of the Assymetry of Information

We will continue our discussion on Digital Rights, now focusing on the problem of the Assymetry of Information. The more data we are using, the more quality of data management means. People are playing many roles as consumers, workers, creators, prosumers, citizens - in all those positions they have the legally and culturally expressed rights. It is obvious that they should be properly informed not only about their rights, but also have adequate access to key information about the principles governing the data usage - eg. the significance of the “explainability” rule. It is not so clear when it is related to the AI and algorithms functionalities - how the digital rights of the “digital patients” should look like? How the management of consents done by us as clients, patients, citizens, users should look like and be based on what kind of conditions? How the mechanisms of redress should look like - giving to everyone all needed clear and understandable information and offer the transparent procedures? Data based relationship between business, administration, public services providers - and all kind of users is one of the most important phenomena of our world. It requires the new redefined model of the platform functioning based on legal rule, but also on standards and cultural patterns and customs (current European debates on AI, Data Spaces and Digital Services Act).

26 October 2020 – 15:00 CET, **Patrice Chazerand on “Of Mice and Men... and our future Digital Industry”**

Director, Global Digital Foundation



Prior to joining DIGITALEUROPE, Patrice Chazerand was the Secretary-General of the Interactive Software Federation of Europe (ISFE), the trade body of PC and videogames publishers operating in Europe between 2002 and 2009. In this capacity he has established PEGI, the only pan-European system of harmonised rating of digital content dealing with various topics such as internet content, protection of minors, privacy, freedom of expression and intellectual property; competition law as applied to interactive and user-generated content; Net neutrality, etc.

In 1999, Patrice Chazerand set up the Brussels office of Viacom which he ran as Vice President, European Affairs until 2002. During this tenure with Viacom he dealt with audiovisual content creation and distribution on all platforms, anti-piracy, EU audiovisual issues.

From 1989 to 1995, Patrice Chazerand was Director, Public Affairs, at AT&T France, and subsequently Managing Director from 1995 to 1999. He has extensive knowledge of telecom services and networks: regulation, interconnection, universal service, broadband deployment, next gen networks, etc.

Patrice Chazerand spent the first fifteen years of his career with the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, seven of which were at the Embassy of France in Washington.

“Of Mice and Men... and our future Digital Industry”

The amazing achievements of digital technology and its growing presence at every step of our way have earned it the dubious privilege of being called Big Tech. From the outset, it has been seen as a powerful agent for an easier life in a better society. Lately though, Big Tech has started raising hackles as a result of permissionless, unfettered and uninterrupted intrusiveness in our lives, also due to the potential of the ‘attention economy’ to crowd humans out of what we do best, i.e. using our brains. This conversation is meant to set the record straight: algorithms, or ‘disembodied brains’, are no competition to our ‘body-minded brains’ (Antonio Damasio). It will hopefully rekindle the younger generation’s faith that our future lies mostly in their hands, not in the computer mouse – or in microchips for that matter -, even though no one would recommend emulating what Lennie’s unchecked endearment would do to mice...

5 November 2020 – 15:00 CET, **Prof Dr Paul Timmers on The Life of European Commission policymaker**

Digital Enlightenment Board member, former Director European Commission, Research Associate Oxford



Paul Timmers is research associate at the University of Oxford/Department of Politics and International Relations and adjunct professor at European University Cyprus. He is also Senior Advisor to the European Policy Center, Chief Adviser to the European Institute of Technology/Health, and Supervisory Board member of the eGovernance Academy in Estonia. He is also CEO of iivii BV, which provides policy advice. Paul Timmers is a former Director at the European Commission for Digital Society, Trust & Cybersecurity. He was responsible for policy, legislation and innovation in cybersecurity, e-privacy, digital health and ageing, e-government / e-ID, and smart cities/mobility/energy. He was member of the Cabinet of European Commissioner Liikanen. For several years, he participated in the European Commission's Impact Assessment Board which scrutinizes policy and legislative proposals.

Paul held various academic positions. He was manager in a large ICT company and co-founder of an ICT start-up, holds a PhD in physics from Nijmegen University in the Netherlands, an MBA from Warwick University in the UK, was awarded an EU fellowship at UNC Chapel Hill and completed executive cybersecurity education at Harvard.

26 November 2020 – 16:00 CET, **Dr Elly Plooij-van Gorsel on Policymaking and politics in the European Parliament and the founding of the EIF European Internet Forum**

Digital Enlightenment Board member, former Member European Parliament



Dr. Elly Plooij- van Gorsel. After finishing her studies as a cognitive neuropsychologist, she worked 14 years as assistant professor and brain researcher at Leiden University and 8 years in business. From 1994 - 2004, Elly was a Member of the European Parliament and also served a period as Vice-President.

As a scientist and politician, she was involved from the very start in the digitalization of society and concerned about privacy, trust and security for citizens, companies, governmental institutions as well.

In 2000 she was co-founder and first President of the European Internet Forum (EIF). EIF is led and governed by elected Members of the EP from various countries and different political groups to foster an open and inclusive dialogue with digital policy stakeholders to contribute with their work to the development of public policies, economic and societal challenges of the digital revolution.

After leaving the EP, she held various positions as board member and supervisor, as well as advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Defense of the Netherlands. Since 2012, she is on behalf of the Dutch Government chairing the Strategic Council, that is responsible for the Governance and further development of the Dutch eID Trust framework for citizens and business.

7 December 2020 at 17:00 CET, **Pierre Lévy on How to use digital technologies in order to augment human collective intelligence?**



Pierre Lévy devoted his professional life to the understanding of the cultural and cognitive implications of the digital technologies, to promote their best social uses and to study the phenomenon of human collective intelligence. He has advised several governments, companies and cultural institutions on these subjects. He is fellow of the Royal Society of Canada and received several awards and academic distinctions. Pierre Lévy has been professor at several Universities in France and Canada. He is currently co-founder and CEO of Intlekt Inc. a company that develops and sells an ontology editor and a semantic database based on IEML, a constructed language with a computable semantics
Pierre Lévy has authored 13 books that have been translated in more than a dozen languages and are studied in many universities all over the world.

- *Collective Intelligence* was originally published in French by La Découverte in 1994
- *Becoming Virtual* was originally published in French by La Découverte in 1995
- His last book *The Semantic Sphere. Computation, Cognition and the Information Economy* was published in 2011 by Wiley.

How to use digital technologies in order to augment human collective intelligence?

My whole professional life was oriented by this very question. I discussed it in my teachings in various disciplines and universities, I tried to answer it theoretically in my books and academic papers, I also advised governments and companies on subjects like cyberculture, on line collaborative learning, synergy in public and private research, etc. I would like to emphasize in this fireside chat the entrepreneurial part of my life adventure. I created a company devoted to collaborative knowledge management (using an innovative visualization software) at the beginning of the 1990's in Paris. I am currently founding a start-up to implement a language (IEML) that makes semantics computable and is destined to become the next addressing layer of the Internet!"

27 January 2021 at 15:00 CET, **Dr.Thanassis Tiropanis on The centralisation-decentralisation pendulum on the Internet and the Web - research challenges**



Associate Professor, Electronics and Computer Science - Web and Internet Science, University of Southampton

Thanassis is associate professor with the Web and Internet Science Group, Electronics and Computer Science, University of Southampton and is interested in distributed linked data infrastructures, linked data for higher education, social networks and social machines.

Prior to that he was assistant professor with the Athens Information Technology Institute (AIT) in Greece working on Web technologies and e-learning. Prior to AIT, Thanassis was a research fellow with University College London (UCL) where he worked on network and service management research for telecommunication services.

He holds a PhD in computer science from UCL, and a DiplIng in computer engineering and informatics from the University of Patras, Greece.

He is also visiting associate professor at the department of Computer Science at the National University of Singapore and a senior member of IEEE, a chartered IT professional with BCS, a fellow of the Higher Education academy in the UK, a member of the ACM and a member of the Technical Chamber of Greece.

The centralisation-decentralisation pendulum on the Internet and the Web - research challenges

Patterns of transition from centralisation to decentralisation and vice versa have been observed throughout the evolution of the Internet and the Web and they correlate with major shifts in innovation and policy. Technological developments on computer networking, distributed systems, knowledge management and data mining have been key enablers in that process. At the present stage, decentralised data infrastructures have been proposed as an enabler for innovation by letting individuals control access to their data in data sharing ecosystems. Nevertheless, there are technological challenges on security, scalability, and optimisation when processing data on a large, decentralised scale. This fireside chat will discuss those challenges and roadmaps to further explore them. Further, it will discuss the implications of technological affordances and challenges on policymaking.