Rathenau Instituut

4th European Technology Assessment Conference
Value-driven Technologies: Methods, Limits, and Prospects for Governing Innovations

Session[1] 'Value-driven innovation approaches: theory and practice'

Increasingly, digitalization of society is no longer seen as a collection of smart technological gadgets, but recognized as a social and economic transition that brings opportunities *and* risks. Opportunities for a better health care, safer society, and more valuable services, but also risks regarding democratic decision making, human autonomy or a fair and dynamic digital economy.

A key question for the future is therefore how to shape and structure the digital transition in a responsible way. That goes beyond the directionless promotion of innovation. It requires an integrated approach to innovation, in which governments, businesses and civil society organization collaborate and shape innovation based on shared public values. We call this a value-based innovation approach, and it ties in with new developments in innovation policy in which societal challenges acquire a leading role in shaping innovation: mission-based innovation, or decisive innovation systems.

In this session, we aim to explore what such value-based innovation approach could entail and how it can be put into practice. We invite speakers from governments, business and civil society to analyze and reflect on the concept of value based innovation. What values are leading in such an innovation approach? How to arrive at shared public values? What is required to make the step from values to concrete norms, codes of conduct, policies or design principles that can guide innovation processes? Do best practices exist?

The session starts off with a short introductory presentation by organizers about the reports 'Directed Digitalisation' and 'Valuable Digitalisation'. Consequently, there will be three twenty-minute presentations, followed by a twenty-minute overall discussion. We aim for three different perspectives; one focussing on the theory/research regarding value-based innovation, one focussing on policymaking, and one to share best practices.

Speakers:
Christine Milchram
PhD researcher in the field of values and acceptability of smart grid systems. Her research focuses on the identification of innovative organizational models of smart energy systems in support of moral values, thereby enhancing their moral acceptability and social acceptance.

Her presentation will focus on theory and research regarding value-based innovation from the perspective of Value-Sensitive Design. She examines the case of smart grids and the importance of incorporating ethical and societal issues in system design, including how to deal with differing value conceptions, value conflicts, and how to translate abstract values into more concrete norms and design requirements.

Marlou Bijlsma
Programme manager with NEN. NEN facilitates the development of national and international standards. She facilitates the process in which stakeholders draft guidelines and requirements for ethical assessment in the European research project called SHERPA (Shaping the ethical dimensions of smart information systems (SIS) – a European perspective).

Her presentation will focus on the business perspective and best practices with developing ethical guidelines. Businesses often focus on what is legally permissible. By taking into account values early in the development of new technologies it is possible to boost trust from consumers in products and services. She will also refer to cases related to the energy transition.

Zoya Damianova
Programme director with the Applied Research and Communications Fund, the premier Bulgarian innovation policy and research institute. Her current research focus is on (i) technology assessment, (ii) RTDI evaluations, and (iii) research and innovation policy analyses – innovation in the public sector, workplace innovation, social innovation and innovation for sustainable development.

Her presentation will focus on the project "Public Participation in Developing a Common Framework for Assessment and Management of Sustainable Innovation" (CASI). CASI was an EU-wide cross-sectoral partnership on sustainable innovation-related challenges and considered not only the impacts of social and technological innovations, but also the types of actors involved and their inherent interests.