

Call for Papers (Updated)
Fortifying Democracy for the Digital Age: Interdisciplinary Perspectives
May 18-20, 2023
Prague University of Economics and Business, Czechia

Conference Description

Democratic societies find themselves amidst a rapid process of epistemic democratization. Top-down information structures that employ elite curators to select and frame the issues of the day are in retreat. In their place, social media based on digital platforms ascend to prominence. Organized in a bottom-up fashion, they allow users to create and spread almost any content. Since epistemic democratization undermines the cultural elites' ability to shape the information diet of the masses and designate the authoritative experts, this process is revolutionary. As with any revolution, the inherent risks and opportunities are momentous.

How compatible is epistemic democratization with political democracy? On the one hand, the prevalence of misinformation and disinformation in the digital space causes much concern. The fears that the online crowd tends to ignore relevant expertise are rising, and the talk of a democratic crisis grows ever louder. On the other hand, digital media can and often do empower regular citizens to effectively engage in political discourse not subject to oversight by possibly self-interested elite facilitators and gatekeepers. A claim that such unsupervised discourse will inevitably lead to a disaster collides with the democratic creed that invokes popular sovereignty and free speech.

The conference aims to provide an interdisciplinary forum for a discussion of the relationship between political democracy and epistemic democratization and the possibilities of their alignment. The task is to consider which avenues of epistemic democratization appear workable with what shapes of political democracy.

The talks may relate to any of the following topics:

- Political epistemology
- Epistemic democratization
- Use of expertise in democracy
- Democratic reform
- Bounded rationality and rational irrationality in politics
- Behaviorally informed paternalism

The conference revolves around the themes of Petr Špecián's 2022 book *Behavioral Political Economy and Democratic Theory: Fortifying Democracy for the Digital Age* (Routledge, ISBN 9781032229737).

Update on publication opportunities: We are negotiating with the international peer reviewed journal *Democratic Theory* (e-ISSN 2332-8908), whose editor-in-chief, Jean-Paul Gagnon, is tentatively interested in running a special issue based on our conference. In this context, we especially encourage contributions that work towards seizing the opportunities opened by the digital age for bridging the gap between philosophical theorizing and practical political reform.

Submissions

The deadline for submissions is January 31, 2023.

Authors will be notified of accepted talks by February 26, 2023.

Please, submit an abstract of up to 500 words via EasyChair here:

<https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=dd230>.

Any questions can be directed to the conference e-mail: digitaldemocracy23@gmail.com

Venue

The conference venue is located at Prague University of Economics and Business, W. Churchill Sq. 1938/4, 130 67 Prague 3 – Žižkov, Czech Republic.

The expected time frame for each talk is 20 minutes presentation + 15 minutes Q&A.

Personal attendance to the conference is strongly preferred (online participation can be allowed in exceptional cases – please, contact us on digitaldemocracy23@gmail.com).

Participation is not subject to a registration fee.

Organizers

Petr Špecián (Prague University of Economics and Business, Charles University)

Petra Chudárková (University of Hradec Králové, Palacký University Olomouc)

Filip Tvrdý (Comenius University Bratislava)

Miroslav Vacura (Prague University of Economics and Business)

Ondřej Dohnal (Prague University of Economics and Business)