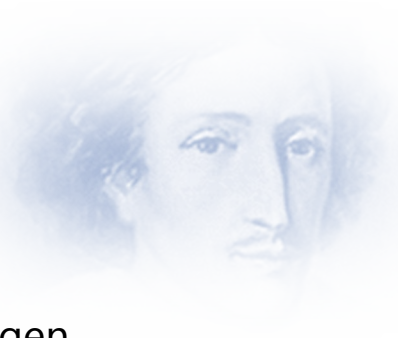# NIELS STENSEN CONFERENCE 2021

The use of data in society

Cultuur en congrescentrum Antropia - Driebergen

Thursday 26 August 2021

We would like to invite you to discuss the topic of the use of data in society on Thursday August 26th. To inspire you, the following people will shed a light on the topic, all from different perspectives. The conference will be chaired by prof. Han van Krieken, rector Magnificus Radboud University, chairman of Niels Stensen Fellowship.

10.00	Walk-in
10.45	Opening
11.00	Keynote speech
11.30	3-talk incl. Q&A
12.15	Lunch
13.30	5 Workshops
14.30	Tea & Coffee break
15.00	Debate sessions
16.15	Wrap-up with live music
17.15	Appetizers
18:30	Diner Pensant
19:45	Dinner Speech
20:30	End

**This conference is blended.
You can attend the sessions in person or online.**

Keynote Speech

Commercial Interest And Data Governance In The Digital Arena
Dr. Paul Tang - Member of the European Parliament

Workshops:

Regulation Of Recommender Systems
Prof. Natali Helberger - Information Law, University of Amsterdam

Conspiracy Thinking
Prof. Stef Aupers - Media culture, KU Leuven

Digital Targeting and Polarisation in Social Media
Dr. Sanne Kruikemeier - Political Communication and Journalism, University of Amsterdam

Fairness and the Right to Non-discrimination
Prof. Frederik Zuiderveen Borgesius **–** ICT and Law, Radboud University Nijmegen

Democratic Control Of Algorithms
Drs. Kees Verhoeven - former Member of the Dutch Parliament

Dinner Speech

A Conversation About Data Usage In The Future
Dr. Melanie Peters - director of the Rathenau Institute

Background information

The use of data in society

With the introduction of the world wide web, thirty years ago this
year, the foundations were laid for internet use all over the world. Globalisation and
interconnectedness were key in the past decades, every user had the world at their fingertips.
With billions of users online, suddenly an unimaginable amount of data could be distributed
and collected via the Web. However, there have also been major changes that were less
visible. Big data (large volumes of data from multiple sources, accessible and of varying
reliability) has been collected, analysed and successfully applied in many areas.

The usefulness of such 'big data' is of great significance to society. However, more and more
questions are raised about its impact and, in particular, the use of self-learning algorithms. It
came to light that the tech industry sells consumer data and that governments have proven
to profile their citizens, sometimes resulting in exclusion and discrimination against
minorities. Individual data collection also signifies tailor made advertising and social media
recommendations – people are at risk of getting caught up in so-called "filter bubbles",
creating their own reality based on one-sided sources. Some point to the connection with
growing conspiracy thinking in society and increased polarization.

How should we deal with such big data, micro-targeting or personalized algorithms? What
are the uses and the consequences? Is government intervention required in legislation or
education to improve media literacy, or should the government not intervene at all? And
science: what role can academics have to prevent excesses while still utilising the benefits of
big data?

The Niels Stensen Conference will invite you and our speakers to have an open discussion on
this topic. During the workshops, it will be possible to dive deeper into the material by
focussing on a single topic. The panel discussion invites to reflect on our society as a whole,
and the roles governments, businesses, universities and even each of us can play.

Workshops

Surveillance Of Recommender Systems by Prof. Natali Helberger

Recent developments in the area of information technology, AI and robotics increase the
challenges in law and public order. They raise multiple legal issues, including legal questions
related to autonomous systems and automated decision-making. A wider range of issues
relate to the impact of new technologies on society, but also on our existing rules, public
values and fundamental rights touching on property, privacy, citizenship and democracy.

Conspiracy Thinking by Prof. Stef Aupers

Over the last years conspiracy theories have become
more mainstream in culture and politics. During the corona
pandemic, such paranoid narratives particularly addressed the origin
of the virus, vaccinations, 5G-networks, the government and the 'elite' representing power. In this workshop we will focus on the internet, social media and conspiracy theories. What role does the medium play in the global transmission of conspiracy theories – its democratization and the socialization and radicalization of people? And what are the implications of such a turn to an alleged 'post-truth' society?

Digital Targeting and Polarisation in Social Media by Dr. Sanne Kruikemeier

Data-driven political campaigns are on the rise. Concerns have been voiced that practices like online political microtargeting techniques are harmful for democracy. These concerns grew after the unexpected outcome of the US presidential elections in 2016, the Brexit vote in the UK, and several recent elections in Europe. However, it is unclear if data-driven campaigns using online microtargeting techniques are an actual threat to democracy. This workshop will focus on the consequences of data-driven targeting and digital persuasion.

Fairness and the Right to Non-discrimination by Prof. Frederik Zuiderveen Borgesius

Modern data use can help society in many ways. Data can be used to predict who will commit crime, who will be a good employee, who will default on a loan, etc. However, such data use can also have unfair or discriminatory effects. In this workshop we explore questions such as: What are discrimination-related risks of modern data use? Are our laws ready for such risks?

Democratic Control Of Algorithms by Drs. Kees Verhoeven

Political influence, discrimination, polarization: disinformation in its various manifestations has caused social damage in recent years. The algorithms of the large tech companies play an important role in this distribution. YouTube, Twitter or Facebook determine what the public sees via these algorithms. However, the same algorithms are not transparent and verifiable. It is therefore high time for a thorough investigation into the social impact of private algorithms and a 'Disinformation Attack Plan'.

This conference is blended.
You can attend the sessions in person or online.

Practical information

Location

Antropia is located on Landgoed de Reehorst and is situated next to station Driebergen-Zeist. It is on walking distance (200 m) from the station, where you can find signs to direct you to Antropia.

When you attend the conference by car, you can only park in the parking garage Q-Park P+R Driebergen Zeist. Advise to not navigate to Antropia itself, it will lead you to a gate you can't pass. Navigation to Q-Park or Stationsweg 15B is recommended. Exit passes for the parking garage will be available at the front desk.

Antropia, Cultuur- en Congrescentrum
Hoofdstraat 8
(navigation to Stationsweg 15B or Oude Stationsweg 13)
3792 LA Driebergen
Telephone: 0343 – 53 18 18

Covid-19 measures

We have planned the conference taking the Covid-19 safety measures communicated by the RIVM into regard. Like last year, we have chosen to organise the conference in blended form to accommodate participants **in person** as well as **online**. All plenary talks and speeches can be attended online, as well as the 5 workshops in the afternoon and the debate sessions. Simultaneously we are doing our utmost best to organise a safe conference at Antropia. At all times we will abide to the rules as put forward by the RIVM. This means all of our guests need to adhere to the 1,5-m distance-rule.

A maximum of 65 guests can attend the conference in person to guarantee a safe distance between attendees. Disinfection stations are present throughout the building.
In case you have COVID symptoms, we need to urge you to attend the conference online.

Dinner

At Antropia you can enjoy traditionally prepared dishes from organic cuisine. The chefs use local seasonal ingredients. This means: fresh, pure, without artificial aromas, colors and flavors, but also produced with respect for animals and environment.

The dinner served during the Conference will be vegetarian.

Please sign up for the

Niels Stensen Conference 2021

using this link

https://forms.office.com/r/EFkbkeibam

Please keep in mind

Only 65 guests can attend the conference in person

Attendance in order of sign up – be on time!

This conference is held with the participation of:

- Thomas More Academy - a Dutch network that stimulates broad academic education from the Roman Catholic philosophy of life
- Cusanuswerk - Scholarships for gifted students in Germany

Niels Stensen Fellowship

For more information about Niels Stensen Fellowship and the conferences, please visit our website.

www.nielsstensenfellowship.nl