

Participatory Aesthetics of Information Ethics.

Artwork and workshop by Paolo Cirio at MozFest, Ravensbourne College, London, October 27-29, 2017.

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The so-called information revolution brings us an increasing number of pressing ethical issues. Artists can be particularly sensitive to these issues and they question ethics by proposing and challenging perceptions and scenarios beyond common understanding. This process can become part of the work of art through participants commenting and responding to the artist's propositions.

As an Internet artist and activist, Paolo Cirio has been working for over a decade with online privacy, fake news, piracy, algorithms, big data, leaks, and hacking. He explores boundaries and consequences of reconfiguring, exposing, and creating social relations within the risks of challenging institutions and making compromises for artistic and social agendas.

Currently, Paolo Cirio is working on a reflection of the complexity of information ethics and how central it is today. He is interested in how aesthetics can navigate the uncertain and unjust social conditions produced by information systems. He examines liability of algorithms, responsibility in anonymous networks, exploitation of shared content and labor, censorship on social media, freedom of speech used to harass, public shaming to condemn, hacking to protest or leak, and micro-targeting for political campaigning. In order to inspire inquiry and policy making, the artist questions what can be justified and sacrificed to balance freedom, empathy, justice, and accountability.

Paolo Cirio's artwork at MozFest presents a set of ethical questions concerning historical cases, hypothetical scenarios, and particular technological systems that affect personal and societal conditions. The artist will ask simple questions on which the audience can answer through a series of polls. In the space there will be boxes where the audience can cast votes by marking pieces of paper. These ethical questions will also be shown on the floor, the boards, and the screens in the space. This particular site-specific, in-progress, and immersive installation will create paths in the space where people can walk through to navigate complex ethical issues and arguments. Beyond the polls and the paths to choose, the audience will be able to leave feedback and add new questions to examine. They can also add feedback on a shared document, have a discussion with other people with different opinions, and talk to the artist to deliberate on hypothetical information policies.

This project addresses specific highly problematic cases like the Facebook Files, Right To Be Forgotten, Wikileaks DNC leak, Predictive Policing, and Cambridge Analytica, and generally, emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence and Darknet. These issues urgently need democratic debate. The discussion can't be limited to technocrats, legislators, coders, and opaque internal policies of private entities. Art can play a role in this process of creating awareness and reflection on difficult ethical questions through making them relevant and engaging.

In the open studio Paolo Cirio will also discuss his ongoing campaign Right to Remove to bring a form of Right To Be Forgotten in United States. His proposal for this specific Internet policy is at the heart of the philosophical questions for balancing social accountability, freedom, empathy, access, and human rights on the Internet.

This artwork is ultimately a process of participatory decision-making on ethical issues affecting the security, privacy, and dignity of everyone for a just and equal society.

Some problematic issues that will be questioned:

Search engines and social media moderation:

Hate Speech
Harassment
Trolling
Bullying
Blackmail
Stigmas

Social Profiling:

Social score & bias
Consumer profiling
Racial profiling
Sex offenders
Criminal records
Predictive Policing

Privacy and surveillance:

State and corporate surveillance
Cryptography for power structures
Cryptography backdoors for individuals
Public shaming

Security:

Hacking
Leaks
Theft

Piracy:

Copyright
Trademark
Royalties
Fair use
Education

Sharing Economy:

Labor rights
Private property

Media and politics:

Targeting Voters
Fake News

Algorithms:

Accountability of coders
Artificial Intelligence control

Blockchain, deepweb, and darknet:

Anonymity
Trust
Privacy
Fraud
Hate speech
Cruelty

Digital Currencies:

Transparency
Volatility
Access

Robotics:

Automated weapons
Automated Labor

Infrastructures:

Internet of things policy
Cloud servers
Decentralization
Ecological impact

**Should fake news on
social media be
removed by Internet
companies
themselves?**

**Should we remunerate
the open source code
utilized by big
corporations such as
Google?**

**Should the coders of
algorithms with racial
biases be legally
accountable?**

**Can the hacking of
political parties during
election be justified?**

**Should we be able to
trace individuals who
use digital currency,
such as Bitcoin?**

**Should Facebook
delete posts
concerning hate
speech toward
refugees?**

**Should the documents
leaked by Snowden be
made available to
everyone – not only
journalists?**

**Should public figures
on Twitter be given
access to block other
accounts?**

**Should politicians be
able to use fully
cryptographed
communications for
work?**

**Should voter profiling
and databases being
banned?**

**Should vulnerable
individuals be
protected online even
if they are key to
public debate?**

**Should political
spending for online ads
be regulated like they
are on TV?**

**Should electronic
voting be completely
avoided and analog
systems restored?**

**Should ads managed
by algorithms be
considered
physiologically
manipulative
advertising?**

***Machine Logic: Our Lives are Ruled
by Big Tech's 'Decisions by Data'***

The Guardian

***The EU is Right to Take on Facebook,
but Mere Fines Don't Protect Us from
Tech Giants***

The Guardian

Why Are We Giving Away Our Most Sensitive Health Data to Google?

The Guardian

***Right to be forgotten: Swiss Cheese
Internet, or Database of Ruin?***

The Guardian

***If Fake News Fools You, It Can Fool
Robots, Too***

Bloomberg

***Obfuscation: How Leaving a Trail of
Confusion Can Beat Online
Surveillance***

The Guardian

***How Europe is Fighting to Change
Tech Companies' 'Wrecking Ball'
Ethics***

The Guardian

***In the Wake of Apple v FBI, We Need
to Address Some Uncomfortable
Truths***

The Guardian

Artificial Intelligence is Ripe for Abuse, Tech Researcher Warns: 'A Fascist's Dream'

The Guardian

***The A.C.L.U. Needs to Rethink Free
Speech***

NY Times

***Algorithms: AI's Creepy Control Must
be Open to Inspection***

The Guardian

Forget Far-Right Populism – Crypto-Anarchists are the New Masters

The Guardian

***We Can't Ban Killer Robots – It's
Already Too Late***

The Guardian

Make Algorithms Accountable

NY Times

***Why is Silicon Valley Fighting a Sex
Trafficking Bill?***

The Guardian

***Why Does Facebook Allow Advertisers
to Target 'Jew Haters'?***

The Guardian

***Scholar Says Google Criticism Cost
Him Job: 'People are Waking Up to its
Power'***

The Guardian

***Why is Google Spending Record Sums
on Lobbying Washington?***

The Guardian

***Far-right 'Free Speech Week' at
Berkeley Collapses in Recrimination
and Discord***

The Guardian

***Tech Firms Open to Changing Law to
Combat Sex Trafficking***

Wired

***Forget Wall Street – Silicon Valley is
the New Political Power in
Washington***

The Guardian

'From Heroes to Villains': Tech Industry Faces Bipartisan Backlash in Washington

The Guardian

***'Our Minds Can Be Hijacked': the Tech
Insiders Who Fear a Smartphone
Dystopia***

The Guardian

***As Google Fights Fake News, Voices
on the Margins Raise Alarm***

NY Times

***Data Power Could Make 1984 'Look
Like a Teddy Bear's Picnic'***

Irish Times

Rethinking Ethics Training in Silicon Valley

The Atlantic

***Tories Refuse to Disclose Content of
Facebook Adverts Targeted at
Marginal Seats***

Independent UK

***Facebook and Google: Most Powerful
and Secretive Empires We've Ever
Known***

The Guardian

***How Do You Stop Fake News? In
Germany, with a Law.***

Washington Post

***Data Populists Must Seize Our
Information – for the Benefit of Us All***

The Guardian