

International symposium of the DEL/CERTOP/CNRS research network
"Online political participation and its critics"
Paris, 19-20 June 2013

Since its inception in June 2002, at CERTOP/CNRS, under the scientific responsibility of Gerard Loiseau, the "Electronic Democracy" network (DEL)¹ has been dedicated to enhancing research in the field of relationships between democratic processes and digital technologies. In 2012, with its 150 members in more than twenty countries, DEL has contributed to the creation of a place for interdisciplinary discussions through the organization of regular meetings and seminars. In addition to the individual publications of its members, the network has enhanced scientific cooperation among them and has been able to establish solid partnerships. DEL now wishes to contribute more directly to the scientific production by organizing, ten years after its creation, an international symposium. This meeting is aiming at producing several publications that will allow both to summarize the mass of research conducted so far in the field of "electronic democracy", and to tackle new scientific issues.

Therefore, the aim of the conference "A critical approach to online political participation" is to confront the scientific work, from various fields, devoted to the transformations of contemporary political regimes possibly induced by the increasing integration of digital technologies, especially Internet, in the various fields of social life. Oscillating between a techno-centric enthusiasm and skeptical social constructivism, the first analysis of the Internet's ability to revitalize the functioning of representative government through citizen appropriation has quickly given way to more substantive questions. Under what conditions are citizens able to capture digital networks in order to inform themselves, to express preferences or political demands, to challenge institutionalized powers or to constitute new forms of social mobilizations?

Beyond such a teleological perspective, the increased opportunities for information and expression generated by the development of social networks that can disturb traditional representations and institutional practices questions the boundaries of politics and the role of technology in their ability to increase their degree of elasticity.

Specifically, this conference aims to explore the digital practices of political participation by questioning both its empirical manifestations, and the consistency of the concepts previously used to qualify those practices.

The conference will be held in Paris, for two days:

♣ The first day (June 19, 2013) will be based on the presentation and discussion of young researchers' papers, both in French or English, coming from answers to the call for papers available on the DEL website: <http://www.certop.fr/DEL/spip.php?article2573>

This first day is organized around three thematic sessions:

1. Theoretical and ideological debates on online political participation;
2. The new formats of political talk and new spaces of politicization;
3. New actors and reconfigurations of political power.

For each session, four papers will be presented and discussed by a dedicated critical reader, followed by a discussion with the public.

♣ In addition to the general assembly of the DEL network to be held in the morning, the second day (June 20, 2013) will be devoted to two panels:

- The first roundtable will invite French and International key researchers in the field to debate around the following question: *Can we analyze online political participation with the traditional concepts used in social sciences?*

- The second panel will invite politicians and practitioners to react to the following question: *is digital politics "politics as usual", or has it changed your way of doing politics?*

¹ See *La Lettre de l'Institut National des Sciences Humaines et Sociales du CNRS*, n° 16, mars 2012, p. 8-9.

http://www.cnrs.fr/inshs/Lettres-information-INSHS/lettre_infoINSHS_16.pdf and the DEL website: www.certop.fr/DEL

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Organization

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In parternship with:

- CERTOP/CNRS
- CEDITEC, University of Paris Est Cr teil
- COSTECH, University of Technology of Compi gne
- Groupement d'int r t scientifique sur la participation du public aux processus d cisionnels et la d mocratie participative (GIS Participation and Democracy)
- International Political Science Association (IPSA) - Research Committee 10 "Electronic Democracy"
- European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR) - Standing Group on Internet & Politics

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