Programmatic outline

7 November, Thursday

The objective for the first day is for everyone to be on the same page in their understanding how the technology and data tools present an opportunity for policy research, and how they can contribute to making new impact on local communities. How with the help of more tailored and interactive policy research based on data, and especially its attractive presentation, think tanks can provides people in their communities with tools and choices for understanding policy dilemmas and enable them to challenge the policy discussions in their respective countries.

Keynote

Scott Carpenter from Google Ideas, will start us off by telling a story about how combination of technology and innovative use of data makes a difference in community by influencing policy, and policy discussion.

Panel 1: ALLIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

The particular aim of the first panel is to present that apart from think tanks other stakeholders also share interest in having access to public data, and that there is an untapped scope for cooperation among different stakeholders (research, journalists, think tanks, business and government) in both using data but also defending the open access to data and data products.

Three questions that we have invited the panelists to consider are: What are the challenges and opportunities in accessing and using data for your mission? Who are allies and enemies in using technology and data from the perspective of your organization and the work you do? What can you or the type of organization you work for offer to others who rely on data for their mission?

Panel 2: LESSONS LEARNED FROM SUPPORTING INNOVATIVE PROJECTS

The aim of the panel two is to present lessons that the Think Tank Fund and Information Program of the Open Society Foundations have learned from funding think tank data intensive projects in the past three years. The full evaluation report is available in the participants' materials, and will frame the discussion for the subsequent panels highlighting some of the issues that emerged from the evaluation.

Panel 3: STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT: CHOICES IN STRATEGIES AND TACTICS

During the second half of the first day participants will be provided with opportunity to start considering some management choices in implementing these data intensive projects in their every-day work. The third panel will discuss strategic choices from the management perspective. What issues do think tanks need to consider in deciding on how to integrate use of data intensive products and their communication to new audiences in their core work. Some issues we've invited the panel to consider include:

A. Management choices for communication and advocacy strategy/tactics: *(what, when and why?)*
Strategic and tactical advocacy and communications choices related to data and data-based communications tools used for evidence-informed advocacy.

    a. Managing research relying on extensive data and new technologies: the hard choices and planning before you start communicating or advocating

    b. Understanding your niche, market, and competitors: needs assessment and stakeholder analysis *(for and with whom?)*

    c. Understanding and choosing target groups and stakeholders

    d. Choosing the genre and type of communication product and approach

B. Tactics and implementation: *(How and with what?)*

Tools and concepts related to data collection (scrapers, data-mining, access to information regulations, etc.) and processing. The purpose of this session is to increase organizations' understanding of data processing and automation, including text and data extraction, in a way that enables re-use, mash-up, and interactive data visualization and presentation.

    a. Research: Research and methodology considerations for availability and better utilization of data and new technologies: social networks for data collection (Facebook), survey methods, automated text harvesting and analysis (Twitter, etc.), modeling, e-collaboration.

    b. **Advocacy and Communications:** Using new technology to present and communicate the data -- designing effective evidence-informed advocacy; accessible communication of research (relevant to researchers who are *not* communications specialists!).

    c. **Choosing the right instruments and tools:** Today think tanks have a wide range of tools that span from the conventional (newsletters, mailings, personal meetings, print and audiovisual media), to very advanced online and digital means and tools (including social networks, info-graphics, cartograms, dynamic visuals). Which ones should you use?

While we don't expect that panel will be able to go into the detail of each of these, we have asked them to make their choice in terms of their best contribution. The perspective should remain "on the forest, not individual trees" and to contribute to informing the managerial choices, primarily the strategic choices which subsequently predetermine the tactics.

Panel 4: LEARNING ON THE GO: MEASURING AND EVALUATING IMPACT

The fourth panel will provide opportunity to discuss some of the challenges in designing and structuring learning on the go: whether think tanks are achieving their set goals (in terms of dissemination, reach and influence in the communities of stakeholders that they aim to reach) and how they can feed collected and learned lessons back into their managerial decisions to improve their work. The core of the discussion will be on learning and evaluation of policy impact. This panel will start off with considering issues related to:

C. **Learning and evaluation: online and offline** *(finding out: did it work?)*

    a. Assessing the impact and suitability of chosen strategy and tools

    b. Metrics of success and lessons learned

    Basic considerations and tools in measuring reach (to right audiences and stakeholders), impact, contribution, and relevance. Evaluating return on investment. Inspirations from the marketing and business world – benefits and limitations.

8 November, Friday

Description of parallel workshop sessions:

9:30 – 11:00

EVIDENCE-BASED ADVOCACY:

Marek Tuszynski & Stephanie Hankey, *Tactical Technology Collective*

Using data effectively to create change remains a challenge. In this workshop participants can learn about approaches to analyzing and presenting data which are focused on the needs campaigning and advocacy. It will also look at different ways that think tanks can make their data more accessible and influential. For background reading see website packed full of advice, tools and inspiration for visualizing data, specifically aimed at advocates and activists. http://drawingbynumbers.org. A book, Visualizing Information for Advocacy, exploring how to influence issues using the right combination of information, design, technologies and networks. Through over 60 examples of visual information campaigns from around the world we show how they capture attention, present stories and take us on

journeys through data at http://visualisingadvocacy.org/. And a website containing a wealth of resources to help you get started with your own investigations: from obtaining evidence to visualizing data at https://exposingtheinvisible.org/.

RESEARCH AND INVESTIGATION TECHNIQUES AND METHODOLOGIES:

Paul Radu, *Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project*
Paul Radu, one of the most inspiring investigative reporters from Romania, will share from his experience in using data for investigative research, and on user-friendly communication of the outcomes. Some of the topics which will be discussed will include: Where and how to find evidence, what online tools think tanks could use, and how to convey your research and message efficiently. For additional resources and inspiration please see https://www.exposingtheinvisible.org/resources/ and https://reportingproject.net and http://www.datatracker.org/. The new Investigative Dashboard was recently launched at the Google Ideas INFO summit: http://www.google.com/ideas/projects/investigative-dashboard/

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS FRIENDLY RESEARCH:

Eliza Kruczkowska, director of communications, *Fundacja ePaństwo*
In this workshop we will discuss how to plan a successful media and communication strategy. The purpose of strategic communication planning is to effectively integrate all the think tank's projects, awareness campaigns and advocacy efforts. This means using communications to create, strengthen, or preserve opinion favorable to the attainment of organizational goals among its target groups. A communication plan is an important part of the daily operation, as it frames all media activities, including internal and external communications, public relations, and clarifies the organization's priorities, target audiences, resources and staff assignments. Having communications strategy shows how effective communications can help us achieve our overall organizational objectives engage effectively with stakeholders/sponsors, demonstrate the success of our work, ensure people understand what we do and change behavior and perceptions where necessary.
During the workshop we will discuss how to:

- provide a clear view of the role of communications strategy and linkages between its various components to provide a grounding for developing a communications plan;
- offer practical skills, tools and techniques for improving the way in which think-tanks communicate with target audiences;
- share best practices related to planning, evaluation, and development of a communications strategy.

THINK TANKER'S DATA TOOLBOX – WHAT ARE THE OPTIONS:

Lucy Chambers, head of Knowledge Unit, *Open Knowledge Foundation*
Lucy will provide an overview of tools available for think tankers and policy researchers and present the School of Data http://schoolofdata.org/. School of Data works to empower civil society organizations, journalists and citizens with the skills they need to use data effectively – evidence is power! Policy researchers can equally make a good use of its resources and tools compiled to help with data acquisition, cleaning, transforming, analysis and presentation.

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SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS – UNDERSTANDING YOUR FANS:

Josef Šlerka, managing director, *Ataxo Interactive*

This workshop will discuss ways of understanding fans on social networks. Affinity score, transactions data, online behavior, and Facebook positioning will be discussed. To prepare for this session you can review presentations at http://www.slideshare.net/josefslerka/ways-to-understand-fans-social-network-analysis and http://www.slideshare.net/josefslerka/presentations. For list of interesting tools: http://socialmediatoday.com/pamdyer/1458746/50-top-tools-social-media-monitoring-analytics-and-management-2013 and for Handbook of Social Network Analysis see http://www.google.hu/books?hl=en&lr=&id=mWlsKkIuFNgC&oi=fnd&pg=PP2&ots=tOgC_Wk1Wh&sig=nMaZMj4akdetw3xSZZ4eamAqAPQ&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false.

STRATEGY AND PLANNING OF A COMMUNICATION CAMPAIGN: CASE STUDY

Radovan Ďurana, senior analyst, *INESS &* **Juraj Stehlik**, copywriter, *McCann Erickson,*

This workshop group will discuss lessons learned on the example of The Price of the State Project - history of the project, strategy, work with media and the successful campaign "The Richer Slovakia."
Issues of proper goals of fiscal literacy campaigns, and increasing fiscal literacy will be also discussed. As a background for this session you can review the campaign videos at http://bohatsieslovensko.sk/ and the video about the campaign and the portfolio at: http://www.behance.net/gallery/Richer-Slovakia-Campaign/9537593 and the Price of the State Project http://www.priceofthestate.org/. The source code is available at http://code.google.com/p/price-of-the-state. For similar international efforts you can check http://openspending.org/, http://amipenzunk.hu/, http://priceofthestate.ge/, and www.meieraha.eu.

DATA JOURNALISTS – THINK TANKER'S ALLIES: Petr Kočí, Jan Cibulka

Petr Kočí, data journalist, *Economia;* **Jan Cibulka**, data journalist, *Economia*

The usual "data journalism process" consists of acquiring, analyzing and presenting computer data. We will go through this process together step by step using and showcasing open source tools and programming languages Open Refine, R, Python, Google Fusion Tables and QGIS to scrape, clean, make sense of and visualize sample data - results of the latest Czech general election.

As a preparation for participating at this session participants should have a Google account and following software installed (platform independent):

1. http://openrefine.org/
2. http://www.rstudio.com/
3. http://www.qgis.org/en/site/forusers/download.html

14:30–16:00

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INTERNET-BASED RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES:

Peter Krekó, director, *Political Capital Institute*

Jonathan Birdwell, senior researcher / head of Citizenship Programme, *DEMOS*

Political Capital Institute (based in Budapest) is partnering Demos (based in London) in the Facebook surveys on Hungary, and doing several other internet researches, including conspiracy theories and prejudices, a comment analysis on FB and a network analysis of the conspiracy blogosphere.

Peter will present the results and methodology of their work using internet representative survey which follows a joint Demos Political Capital study which can be read at http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/populismineuropehungary

Jonathan's contribution will focus on how the use of methodologies to gather information from social media in order to conduct research, which Demos recently pioneered.

In 2011, Demos published the report The New Face of Digital Populism, based on an online survey of over 10,000 supporters of far right groups across Europe. Demos also published Inside the EDL, and country specific reports about the far right in the Populism in Europe series. More recently, Demos has used Facebook advertising to survey populist parties in Italy and Germany, university students in the UK and anti-globalisation movements in Hungary. Beyond this method, Demos has launched a new Centre for the Analysis of Social Media (CASM) which is deploying machine learning and scrapping techniques on Twitter and Facebook in order to provide policy makers with ethically and methodologically robust insights. Recent topics of research include online sentiment towards the EU and hate speech on Twitter.

Background reading: available from http://www.demos.co.uk/publications

Demos, Inside the EDL http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Inside_the_edl_WEB.pdf

Demos, The New Face of Digital Populism http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Demos_OSIPOP_Book-web_03.pdf

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Demos, #intelligence http://www.demos.co.uk/files/_Intelligence_-_web.pdf

Demos, New political actors in Europe: Beppe Grillo and M5S http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Beppe_Grillo_and_the_M5S_-_Demos_web_version.pdf

Demos, Virtually Members. http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Virtually_Members.pdf

HANDLING YOUR MEDIA PRESENCE:

Danica Radovanović, *internet researcher, social media consultant; science & tech editor AuScience*

In this workshop we will discuss how think tanks can improve their use of social networks (Twitter, Google +, Facebook, Flickr, Soundcloud, etc.) as a communication and collaboration tool for dissemination of information/data, and interaction with their audience and other institutions.

This session will also address social media needs of think tanks, digital and media literacy for social media usage, strategies that will help them to use internet and web tools wisely, having in mind the content, context, connection, interaction in the community.

Social networks, forums, blogs, podcasts, pictures, and videos are just channels to communicate with target audiences. In the workshop we will discuss the efficient tools for social networking, and the challenges of research communicators in the context of social media tools usage to help meet their goals and mission.

Recommended reading:

Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of Social Media.

http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0007681309001232

Handbook of New Media: Social Shaping and Consequences of ICTs, edited by Leah A Lievrouw, Sonia Livingstone.

http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=VwJ4xsYHboYC&oi=fnd&pg=PP2&dq=social+media+and+research+organizations&ots=bpDuswtlev&sig=wNEz-Axphpp86aX8sUbtAOSfvdA&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=social%20media%20and%20research%20organizations&f=false

Social Media and think tanks: lessons from London Thinks by Enrique Mendizabal on June 18, 2012. http://onthinktanks.org/2012/06/18/social-media-and-think-tanks-lessons-from-london-thinks /

Think tanks are neglecting cheap and easy social media, and failing to reach out to broader audiences for their work. http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2012/04/13/think-tanks-are-neglecting-cheap-and-easy-social-media-and-failing-to-reach-out-to-broader-audiences-for-their-work/

Communications Strategy for Think-Tanks, http://pasos.org/7434/communications-strategy-for-think-tanks/

MANAGING TECHNOLOGY INTENSIVE PROJECTS:

Annamaria Hirs, *Project Manager, Information Systems, OSF;* **Eva Vozárová**, *tech projects manager, Fair Play Alliance*

This workshop session will provide space for discussion and finding answers to questions such as:

Where to start with your first technology driven project? How to find developers / designer on a tight budget? Whom to work with and whom not - tap your local tech community help you - the mistakes we've made and the lessons we learned: wrong choice of contractors, bad planning, the most common misunderstandings. Choosing between in-house and outsourced - financial criteria vs. creative possibilities. The risks of diving into technologies - using available open source tools (robust or innovative? what language to choose?) Agile vs. waterfall: budgeting in advance for the ever-changing technological needs - how to become the "innovator"?

- Hiring external providers, tradeoffs between in-house vs. outsourced.
- Planning the process; time-lining and scheduling.
- Document all requirements and get sign off from stakeholders

- Who is doing UAT- User Acceptance Testing? Plan dedicated resources for it in your timeline.
- Plan on Training in your timeline
- Managing new Enhancements and Releases
- Integration issues with other systems

Background readings:

Blogs:

http://tech.transparency-initiative.org/blog/ - Transparency & Accountability Initiative's blog about using IT in transparency work, useful for beginners as well as advanced professionals

http://sunlightfoundation.com/blog/ - Sunlight's blog about open data, often contains useful tips and experiences form the US and globally.

http://sunlightfoundation.com/blog/2013/10/22/empowering-the-open-data-dialogue/ - an interesting article about how to get to use open data in your country - th whole series is quite handy: http://sunlightfoundation.com/blog/tag/why-open-data/

- http://www.fabriders.net/fabblog/ a blog by Dirk Slater, an IT consultants for many NGOs, including the Tactical Tech Collective and the Fair-play Alliance - very good for getting some idea about how to do IT projects. Also, Dirk's blog is something that might be worth following https://twitter.com/fabrider

Mailing lists:

- http://lists.okfn.org/mailman/listinfo OKFN huge list of mailing lists that are open for anyone to join. If you don't know where to start, it might be a good idea to search for your topic of interest or simply join one of the "Open-" mailing lists. Everyone on the lists is very open to questions and they might point you in the right direction.

Books:

http://gettingreal.37signals.com/ - This is not recommended as the go-by manual, the books describes a certain way of building IT projects that may not be suitable for everyone, and very often is not completely usable in an NGO for reasons we are going to discuss during the session. But it may be inspiring in how to keep the costs, both financial and transactional, at a minimum, if you're working in a small organization or on a project that needs to be delivered quickly.

http://shop.oreilly.com/product/9780596009489.do - A book by Jennifer Greene, an author that's extremely useful for beginning project managers.

Additional materials are available electronically at:

http://url.thinktankfund.eu/TTFDATAres (ISSUU) and https://osf.box.com/ttfdata (The BOX)

Including:
Agenda and description of sessions (this document)
Biographies of speakers with their photos
Contact list of participants
List of examples of work by participating organizations
Think Tank Fund ID presentation
Portfolio of projects supported by TTF and IP
Evaluation report of projects funded by TTF and IP