CHALLENGE

MediaFutures 3rd Open Call

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MediaFutures Open Call Challenge 2022

MediaFutures seeks to support novel, unconventional ways for people to engage with journalism, science, and democracy, using approaches and tools from the arts, technology, and innovation. In our third and final challenge, we invite creative and impactful ideas which address the issues of **online misinformation and disinformation** in different domains.

Description

Misinformation and disinformation are the two grand challenges at the heart of MediaFutures. They come in many forms, for example in election campaigns, new populist movements, and other threats to democracy. This happens not just on social networks, where it seeds mistrust against vaccinations, climate change and science in general, or even whole communities, such as refugees or LGBTQ+; deep fakes also cause political or personal turmoil, fake products and reviews on online marketplaces have a direct impact on our economy, and other mis-/disinformation is propagated by public institutions - intentionally or erroneously. The power misinformation and disinformation have is linked to several causes, such as limited science education, lack of trust in public authorities, including the data they publish, and the sheer volume of mis-/disinformation citizens are inundated with today.

These challenges are exacerbated by our digital information ecosystem, which is increasingly dominated by a small number of hugely popular online players, such as media platforms and messaging apps, which operate alongside traditional news organisations and with very little oversight. These platforms are privately owned and not thoroughly regulated, making their perception as 'public places' problematic. Citizens form opinions based on content and narratives optimised for clicks rather than a balanced point of view and corroborating evidence. In our political culture, debates and decisions appeal first and foremost to people's emotions, reinforcing preconceptions over actual data and policy details. Together with a fragmented, polarised public and shortening attention spans, this calls for new approaches, experiences, and technologies that entertain and educate at the same time.

Handled responsibly, data can help understand these phenomena and alleviate some of their effects, especially when combining several sources, such as sensors, behavioural data, and multimedia content. The ability to engage with data is also paramount to address

different social groups and communities, including those that are currently underrepresented online. We want to provide them with the tools and the opportunity to make sense of and question the information they are presented with in digital form.

In this call, MediaFutures is looking for novel ideas and solutions to support and strengthen quality journalism, science communication and education, transparency and democracy. These ideas should help counteract the negative effects of misinformation and disinformation across society, and help build trust in scientific and democratic institutions. We are interested in supporting projects that actively engage citizens through co-design, user testing, or other participatory processes that give citizens a stake in their development. We are particularly keen to receive applications that offer new approaches to support underrepresented groups and their public representation, such as refugees, ethnic minorities, the LGBTQ+ community, those with disabilities; or lower-middle income countries.

Data and technology

MediaFutures is an arts-technology programme, where the technology focus is on data science and AI. Applicants can use any dataset or combination of datasets from any source, so long as it is feasible and legal to do so. This includes datasets provided by MediaFutures, from open data portals, or data that applicants have legally collected or acquired themselves. To demonstrate the viability of the project, applicants should have a clear outline for the data they will require, including feasible strategies to access these data both technically and legally within the timeframe of the six-months MediaFutures support programme. They should also describe how they will use the data and what technologies or tools this will involve.

Expected Outcomes

Applications should address any of the issues surrounding misinformation or disinformation in innovative ways. That could mean developing software or hardware to address these issues; artworks to highlight various aspects of them; or combinations of both. Applications must include details on how these outcomes will be achieved during the six-months MediaFutures support programme, and what impact these will have on the issue they address on relevant stakeholders e.g. citizens, customers, public authorities, etc.

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