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One of the advantages of social networks is that members can post any piece of information in whatever format. A potential drawback of this, however, is that it becomes difficult to automatically extract knowledge and use it to build evidence for actual policy decisions. the Digital Futures' platform Futurium aims to overcome these drawbacks while capitalising on the self-organising, seamless and spontaneous character of social networks

The advent of social networks has opened up new perspectives for policy making. They give voice to anyone and allow their members to organise into groups and ultimately contribute to policy debates at local, national and international levels.

Entire movements such as "Occupy" would not have come into existence without the support of social networks. Though many consider social networks to be a significant step towards democratic participation in policy debates, their actual influence on policy decisions remains difficult to measure or assess.

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Policy Making 3.0 - the participatory and evidence-based model used by Digital Futures - aims to overcome these drawbacks while capitalising on the self-organising, seamless and spontaneous character of social networks.

It's based on the metaphor of the "collective brain" (or emergent collective intelligence), whereby stakeholders and policy makers form a social network to co-design policies based on two distinct factors:

- The **scientific evidence** stemming from the *collective wisdom* of stakeholders and policy makers. This is the collective "rational" contribution of the participants to the policy (the "[left brain](#) [1]" of the social network).
- The **passion** arising from the *collective aspirations*, creativity and vision of stakeholders and

policy makers. This can be considered as the "emotional" contribution of the participants to the policy (the "[right brain](#) ^[1]" of the social network).

Policy Making 3.0 is being prototyped through a participatory foresight platform, *Futurium*, that seeks to combine the informal character of [social networks](#) ^[2] with the methodological rigour of [foresights](#) ^[3].

Anyone can sign up to Futurium. Registered members can co-create futures (visions or long lasting trends) and rank them according to both their desirability (emotional reaction) and their likelihood (rational reaction). Members can also develop policy ideas to underpin the futures they want, and also associate scientific evidence to futures and policy ideas to substantiate their choices with more arguments.

With clear and simple framing of information and tools to extract knowledge, Futurium could become a valuable tool to support participation and scientific evidence in any policy-making context.

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Links

[1] <http://psychology.about.com/od/cognitivepsychology/a/left-brain-right-brain.htm>

[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_network

[3] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foresight_%28futures_studies%29