

Digital Single Market

In the press 07/02/2013

Collective Awareness Platforms: Engine for Sustainability and Ethics

Starting from the results of the Oxford Internet Institute Study on Future Internet, this paper describes how the plausible scenarios for the evolution of our future digital society oscillate between a "big brother"-like closed economic model supporting competitive individual interests and a "collective awareness" open social space exploiting the richness of human connections enabled by technology for collaboration. It analyses under which conditions the latter scenario may evolve, the role that it can play to improve the sustainability (a beyond-GDP, low carbon economy) and ethics (self-regulation, beyond commercially-driven) of our current social and economic models, and the strategy that the EU can implement to make it possible. The paper also discusses several open questions addressing how the "platforms for collective awareness" can create an extended awareness of the environment and of the consequences of our actions, to take informed and sustainability-aware decisions. Ultimately, such platforms can enable dialogues and discussions in the civil society to collectively orchestrate the most appropriate actions in a truly democratic, informed and non-mediated manner.

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