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Special Session Proposal

Digital Inclusion and Cultures of Discrimination across Regions

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Abstract

The question whether a more digitized world will lead to a more equitable or a more elitist world is a question of paramount importance. It is often oversimplified to the level whether one is a new technology and universal basic income enthusiast, or a sceptic with concerns for immediate destruction of labour markets and job loss on a big scale. But in reality, the question about the costs and benefits from the intensified digitization of our world in the context of a new industrial revolution is a far more complex question of digital inclusion, which has several aspects, regarding what the particular digital future will itself entail and also, what will define the inequalities that may emerge in it.

The aim of this special session is to highlight the potential pockets of inherited and replicated regional inequalities from the real world of our recent past into the future world of intensified digital access to goods, services and representation and to identify new pockets of discrimination across space in terms of digital inclusion. Contributions in this special session will help to elucidate existing empirical examples of the replication of the inherited spatial inequalities from the past and their amplification by digital illiteracy and digital access issues in a world of a new technologically transforming reality.

Thus, we expect the session to contribute towards clarifying the role of AI and blockchain in the process of adaptation of regions, their entrepreneurial ecologies and their consumers to the technologically changing reality. AI and blockchain are to be debated as crucial new forms of endowments on which regional resilience depends.