Commonplace

Useful Accessible Data: Big Shifts in Data Collaboration

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We invite contributions to a series that explores how data generation and curation can be both accessible and useful within and amongst communities. We ask that abstracts of 300 words or fewer be submitted by **February 15, 2021** (please see [key details](#) below).

UPDATE: This series will be ongoing! If this topic and the published content inspires you, please feel free to submit an abstract to us and we'll keep the conversation going.

As things — technology, politics, economics, etc. — change, we increasingly find that we need to update how we interact and exchange knowledge. How we understand that change and the ways we respond to it are increasingly driven by data. What that data is, who controls it, who uses it, and who profits from it are complex questions with ethical, technical, and social implications. We lack a proper model for community data production.

There are emerging solutions for a digital ecosystem that are more connected yet decentralized in a way that could improve the scalability and privacy of information. These ideas and practices raise issues related to the sustainability and maintenance of the infrastructure itself, alongside the discoverability and usefulness of information and knowledge the infrastructure supports. Mere access to information and data isn't always enough for it to be equitable, effective, and sustainable.

We invite your ideas that explore data generation and curation within and amongst communities. How can it be more equitable, effective, and sustainable? How can it be more useful?

The lack of clarity about a proper model goes far beyond the current publishing infrastructure and academia. All groups — whether teams of scientists, journalists, government actors, foundations, or activists — have a set of infrastructure upon which they rely. Their ability to act effectively and in the service of the public good relies on this infrastructure and data. This is complicated by the entanglement of technology with society, culture, democracy, and justice.

We seek proposals that will address topics or questions, such as:

- What is held back by the current infrastructure?
- How can accessible data become useful?

- The knowledge ecosystem's and infrastructure's existing biases and its effects on our collective understanding (better still, proposals on how to recognize and/or overcome them)
- "Fan fiction" on new, future realities we envision for knowledge sharing (think outside of the system we have! show us what that world looks like!)
- The future of search engines
- What does community-centered information curation look like? Functionally, technically, organizationally, ...?
- How do we scale up infrastructure to accommodate collaborations that span interest groups?

Key Details

- Send in an abstract as your submission by emailing commonplace@knowledgefutures.org
 - Please include contributors' last name(s) + "Useful Accessible Data" in the subject header.
- The submission deadline is **Wednesday, February 15, 2022**.
- Abstracts should be no more than 300 words
- Submissions **do not** need to be text-based or "scholarly."¹ We welcome reactions in many forms, including art, fiction, poetry, audio, video, etc
 - While your submission itself need not be text-based, we do ask that your abstract still describe the form and key points of your intended final product
- If accepted, we'll ask for you to submit a draft by **March 18**
 - Submissions should be relatively brief and focused (essays should be around 1,500 words)
 - Text-based submissions should be written in English, though we will enthusiastically publish versions in other languages if you send us a translation
 - Submissions can (and are encouraged to) include **multimedia elements** like images, videos, podcasts/audio, and interactives if these assets help to communicate your point(s)
 - As mentioned above, submissions themselves do not need to be text-based

Key Dates

- Abstract deadline is Tuesday, February 15, 2022

- Responses back by Monday, February 18, 2022
- Drafts due Monday, March 18, 2022
- Pieces published in March/April 2022
- Ongoing conversation to follow

You can learn more about the [Commonplace's mission here](#).

You can learn more about [serving as a contributor to the Commonplace here](#).

Please send any questions to commonplace@knowledgefutures.org.

Footnotes

1. Here we use the term “scholarly” to mean a more erudite tone and the implementation of discipline-specific language. All pieces in the *Commonplace* aim to reach a more general, casual reader and should be written in accessible language. As always, stated facts and claims should include citations. [↩](#)