



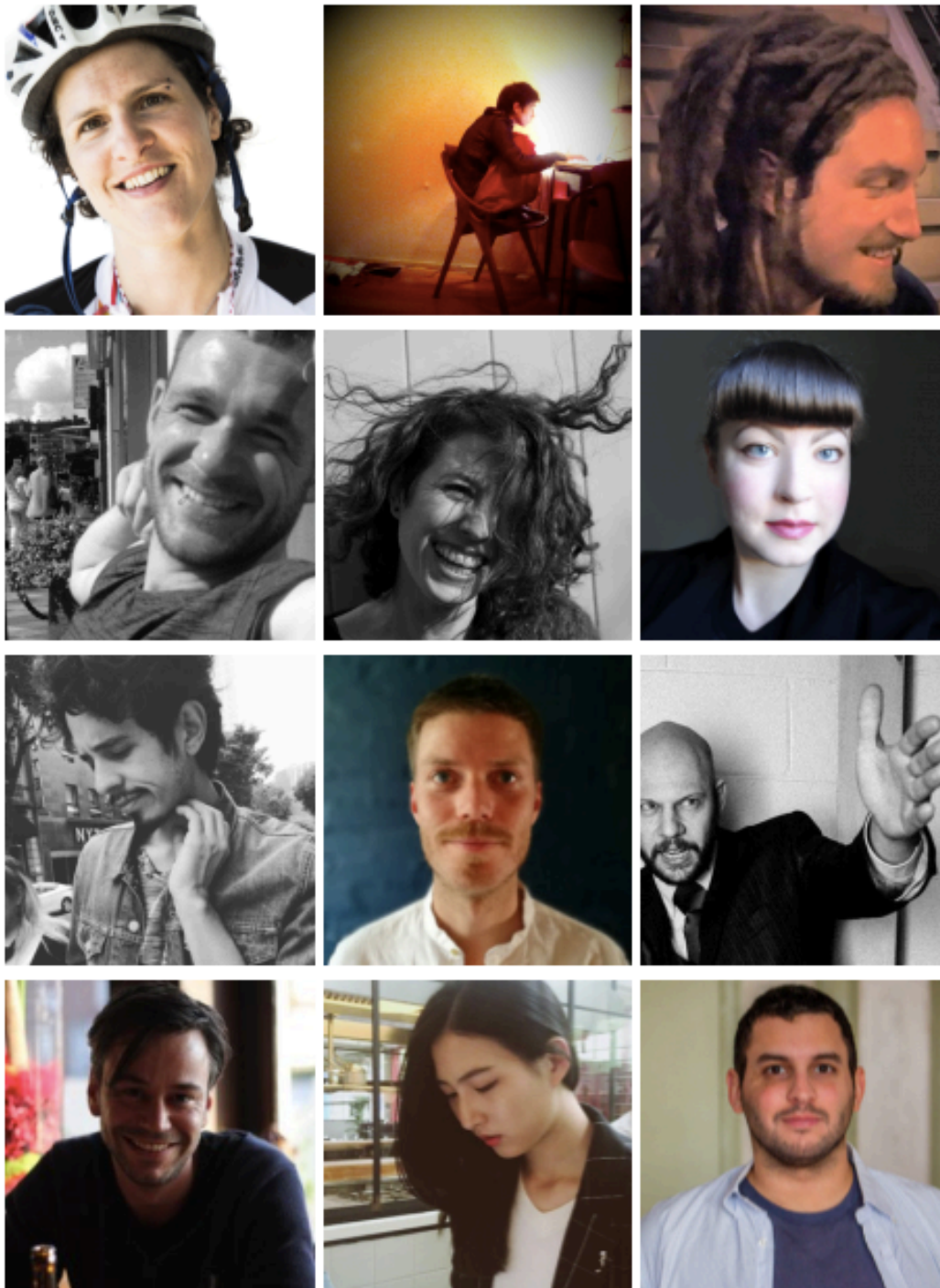
# **surveillance capitalism & the future of data activism**

**stefania milan | @annliffey**



European Research Council  
Established by the European Commission





# DAT ACT IVE

data-activism.net  
algorithms.exposed



UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM







‘ability to render into data many aspects  
of the world that have never been  
quantified before’  
(Cukier & Mayer-Schoenberger, 2013: 29)

the process through which social reality  
is translated into data points and  
transmuted into value





more and more information is a  
constitutive force in society—one  
capable of shaping social reality







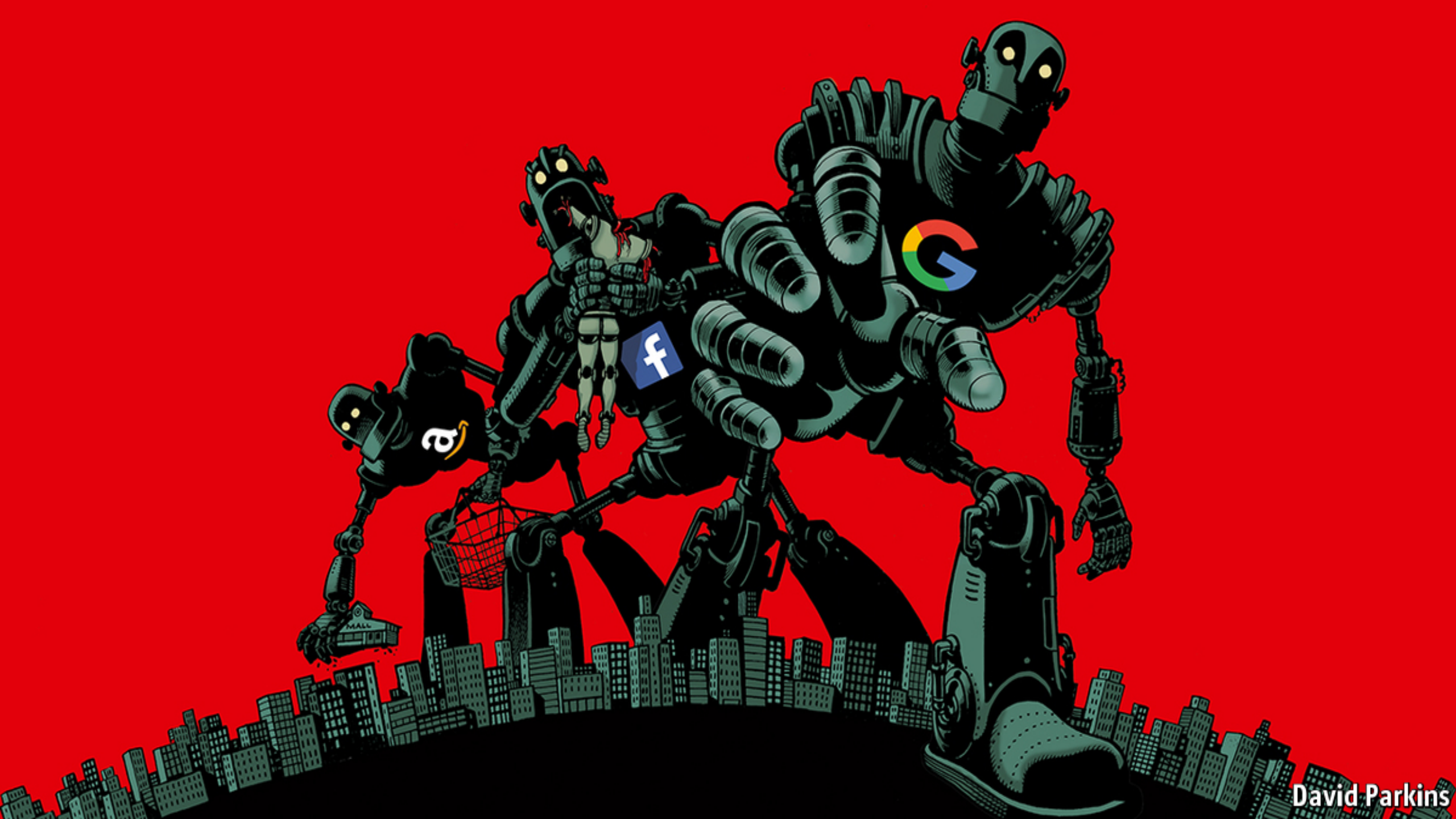


“Senator, we run ads” (Mark Zuckerberg, US Congress, 11 April 2018)









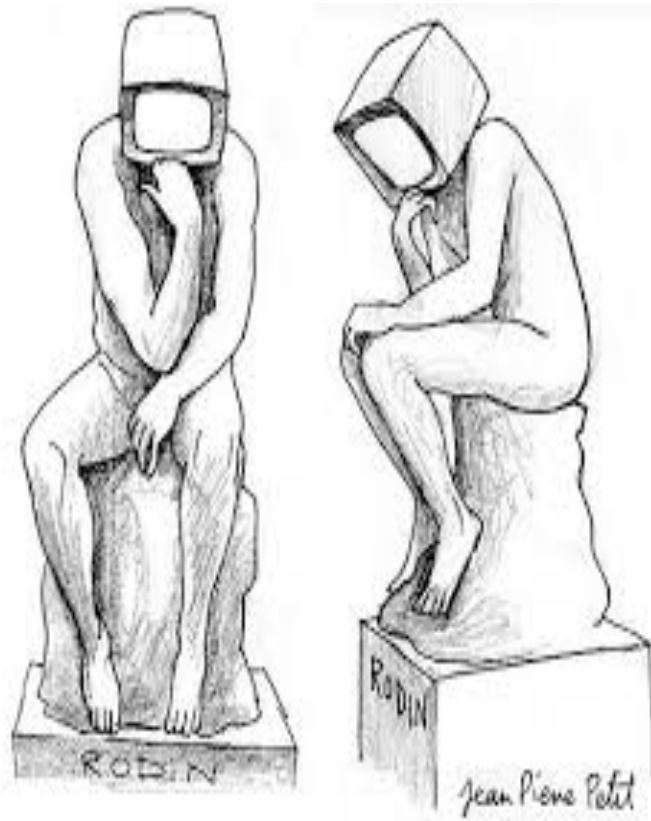
David Parkins





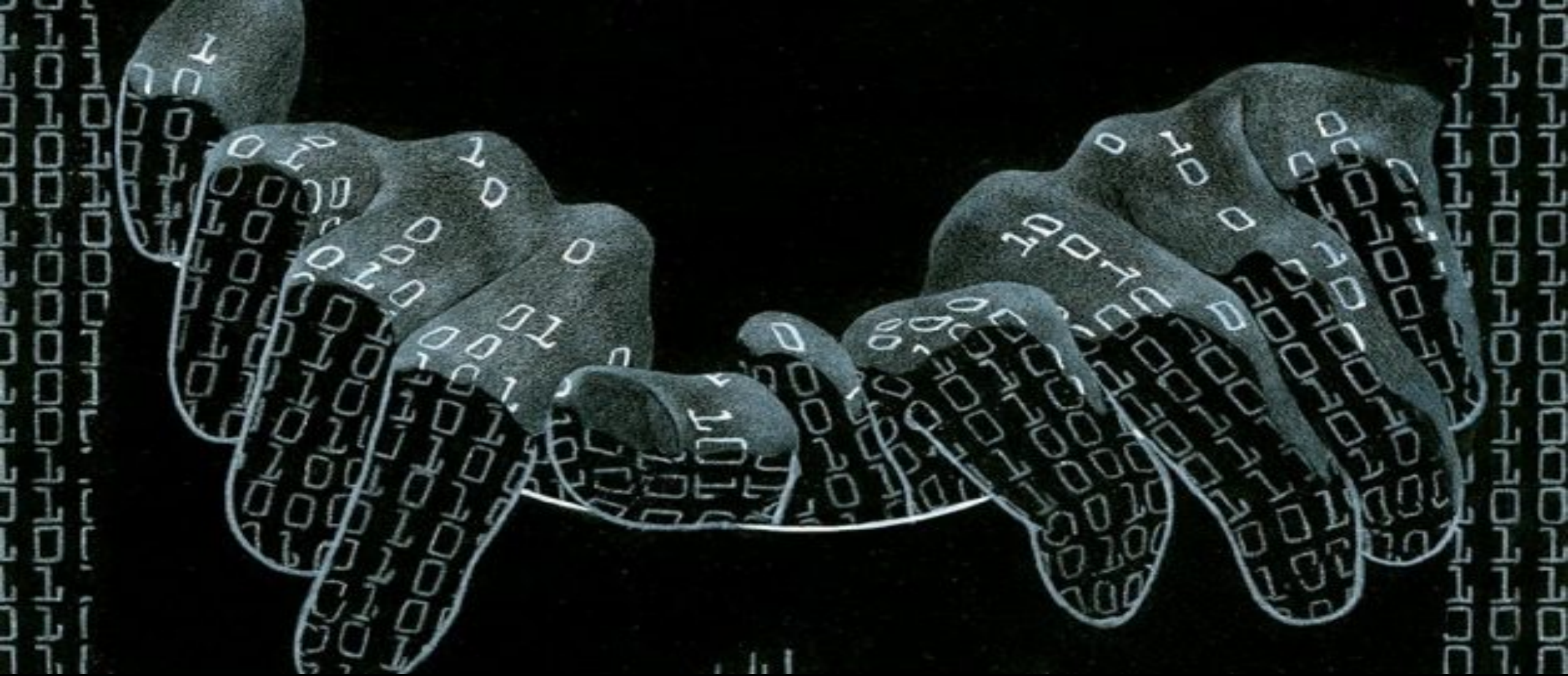
Cambridge  
Analytica





data capitalism





or a new system/ideology: *surveillance capitalism* (Zuboff, 2015)....



which the latitude and longitude lines form a rectangular grid. Other projections in this family include the Lambert, Gall, Behrmann, Edwards, and Peters projections. In the present case the "cylinder" is assumed to wrap round the globe and cut through it at 37½° north and south. In order to preserve the equal area property the shapes of the landmasses become progressively flattened towards the poles, but shapes between 45° north and south are well preserved.

... or *data colonialism* (Couldry and Meijas, 2019)



three problematic elements of surveillance  
capitalism

#1 facial recognition tech

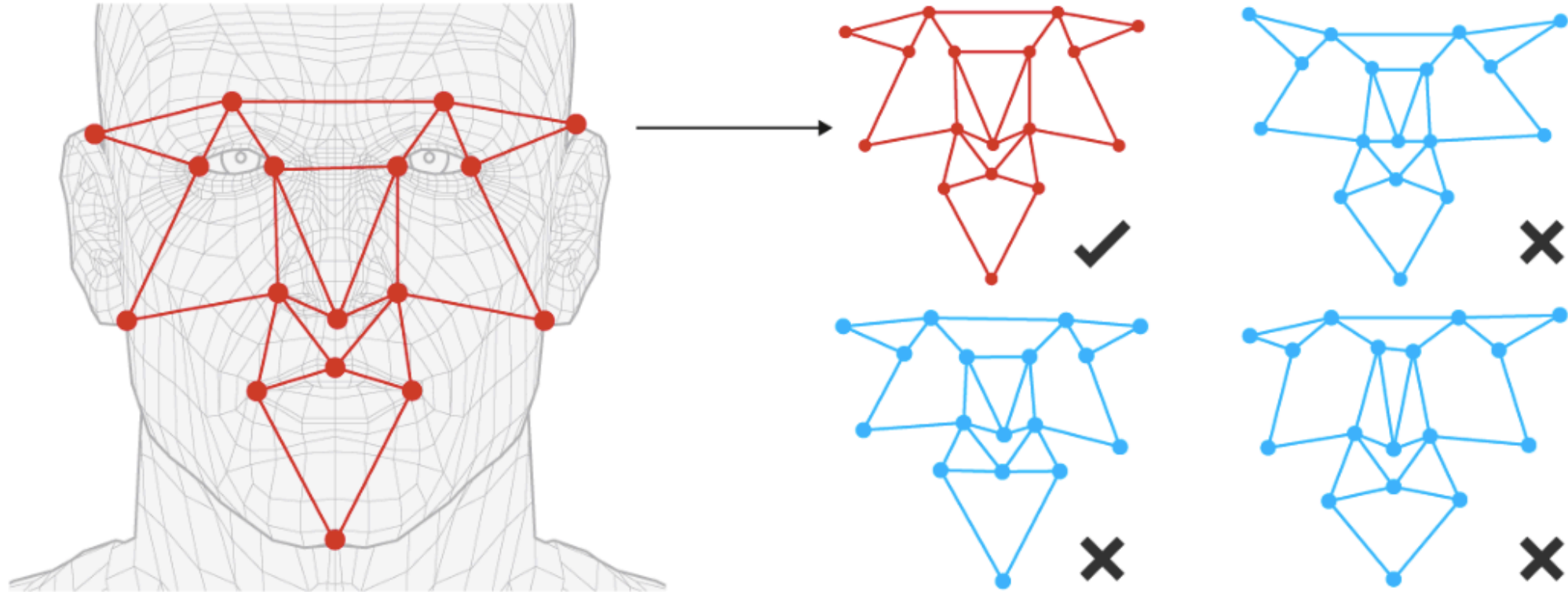
#2 AdTech

#3 enviromental impact



# #1 facial recognition

**Facial recognition can identify people by measuring dozens of distinguishable features on the face**



**1** Facial recognition software reads the geometry of a face captured from a photo or video to create a unique code or 'faceprint'

**2** Faceprints are compared with those on a watchlist and a computer ranks likely matches which are later verified by a human operator



## Facial recognition

**Vikram Dodd** *Police and crime correspondent*

Fri 24 Jan 2020 13.16 GMT



802

# Met police to begin using live facial recognition cameras in London

Civil liberties groups condemn move as 'a breathtaking assault on our rights'

● **What is facial recognition - and how do police use it?**



To uncover criminals and missing people (!)

According to the Met the 80% of citizens approves

But an independent research found out that the data have an accuracy date of 19%

Source: The Guardian, 24 January 2020

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/jan/24/met-police-begin-using-live-facial-recognition-cameras>

“This technology puts many human rights at risk, including the rights to privacy, non-discrimination, freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly.



“This is no time to experiment with this powerful technology that is being used without adequate transparency, oversight and accountability.”

## Facial recognition technology and the end of privacy for good

If you (or anyone else) has posted a photo of yourself online in a publicly available setting, you might already be included in an automated facial recognition system that enables authorities – and perhaps one day anyone with a smartphone – to identify and track you. Neil Selwyn and Mark Andrejevic ask if this is the sort of digital society we want – and if not, what we should be doing about it.

**This is technology that doesn't just strip its targets of anonymity, but also allows for new forms of tracking, making it possible to collect information about people's movements throughout the course of the day, including, for example, which shops, clinics, or homes they visit, and when – and all the personal information that might be inferred from this activity.**



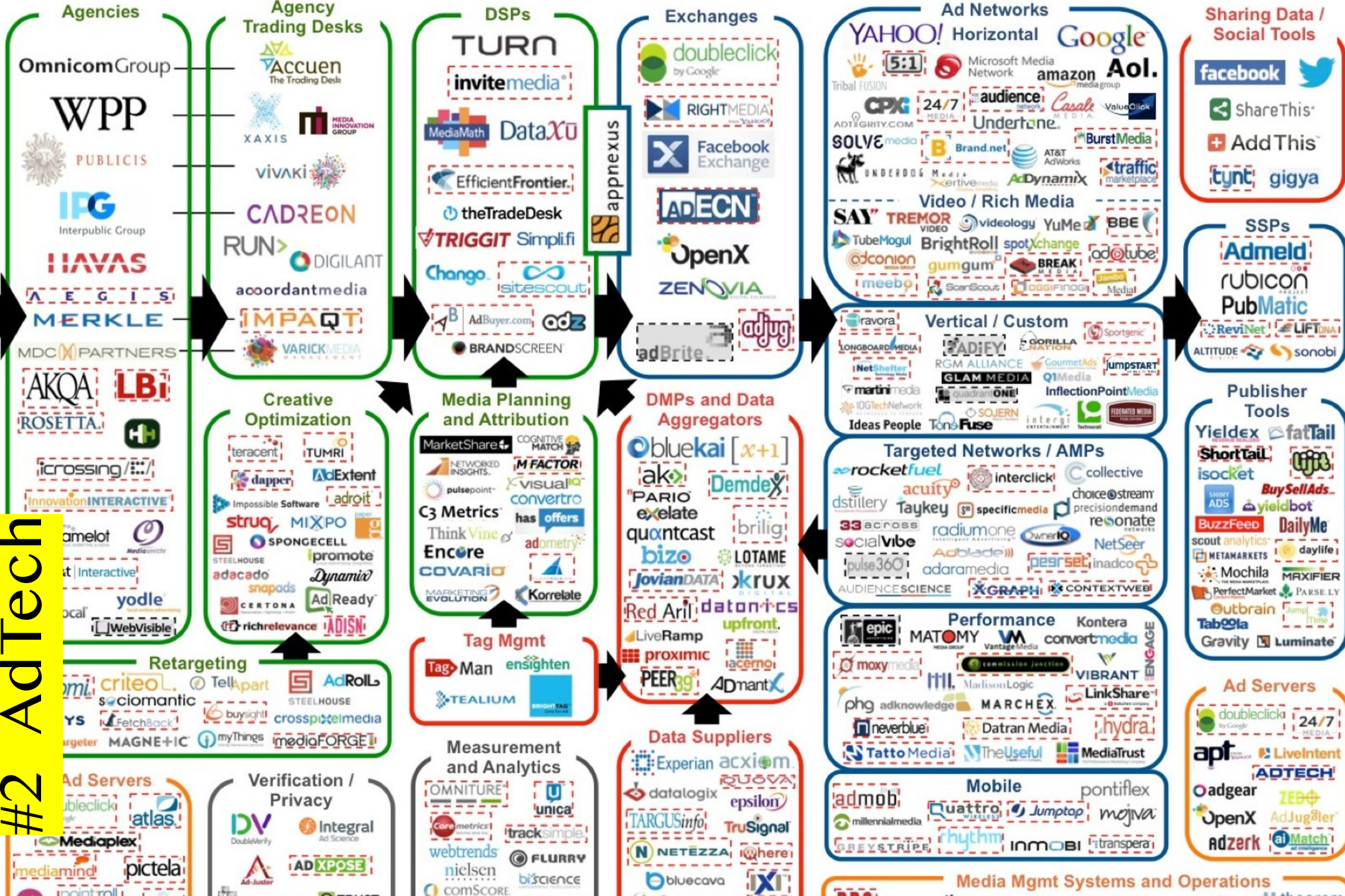




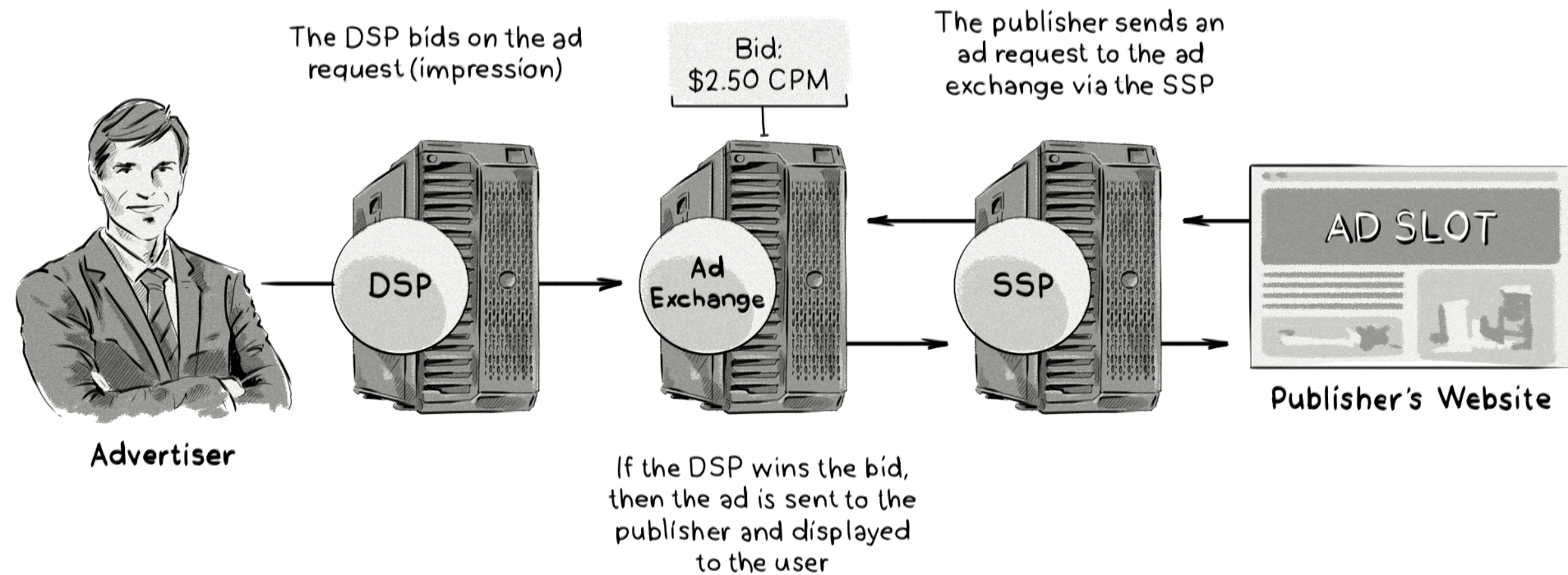
MARKETER

#2 AdTech

PUBLISHER  
CONSUMER







# Three GDPR Complaints filed against Grindr, Twitter and the AdTech companies Smaato, OpenX, AdColony and AT&T's AppNexus

Jan 14, 2020



Link to the main page of the Norwegian Consumer Council: <https://www.forbrukerradet.no/out-of-control/>



FEATURE

# Why data centres are the new frontier in the fight against climate change

As we continue to generate more data than ever before, how can we stop the data centres that house this information from destroying the planet?



By Charlotte Trueman

Staff Writer, Computerworld | AUG 9, 2019 7:26 AM PDT

Recent predictions state that the energy consumption of data centres is set to account for 3.2 percent of the total worldwide carbon emissions by 2025 and they could consume no less than a fifth of global electricity. By 2040, storing digital data is set to create 14 percent of the world's emissions, around the same proportion as the US does today.

For example:

1MB = 7,072gr CO2

3/4G 1MB = 35,46 gr CO2

5G?

1 smartphone = 62 minerali;  
372 passaggi in manifattura



#3 environmental impact  
of the tech/data industry

# CO2GLE

A project by **Joana Moll**

**CO2GLE** is a real-time, net-based installation that displays the amount of CO2 emitted on each second thanks to the global visits to Google.com.

GOOGLE.COM EMITTED **26545.55** KG OF CO2 SINCE YOU OPENED THIS PAGE




# DEMOCRACY



what consequences for our democratic societies?

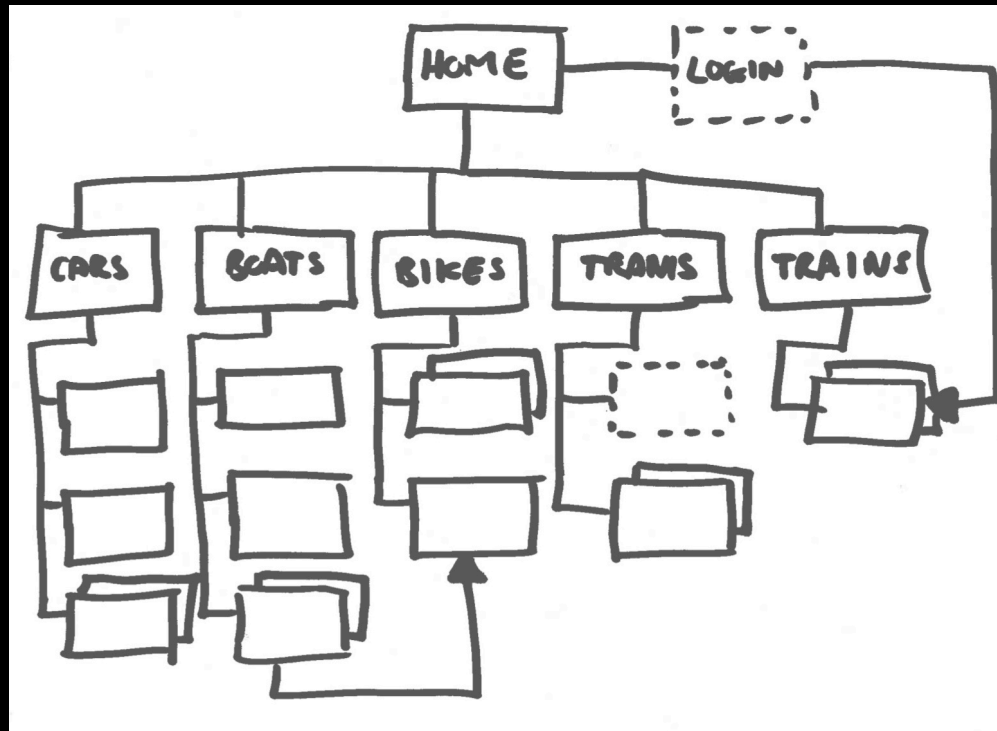




datafication accelerates the crisis of liberal democracy

- #1 the private mediates the relation between citizens and state
- #2 surveillance and monitoring alter the “social contract” and trust
- #3 algorithmic personalization produce polarization (filter bubble?)
- #4 etcetera etcetera

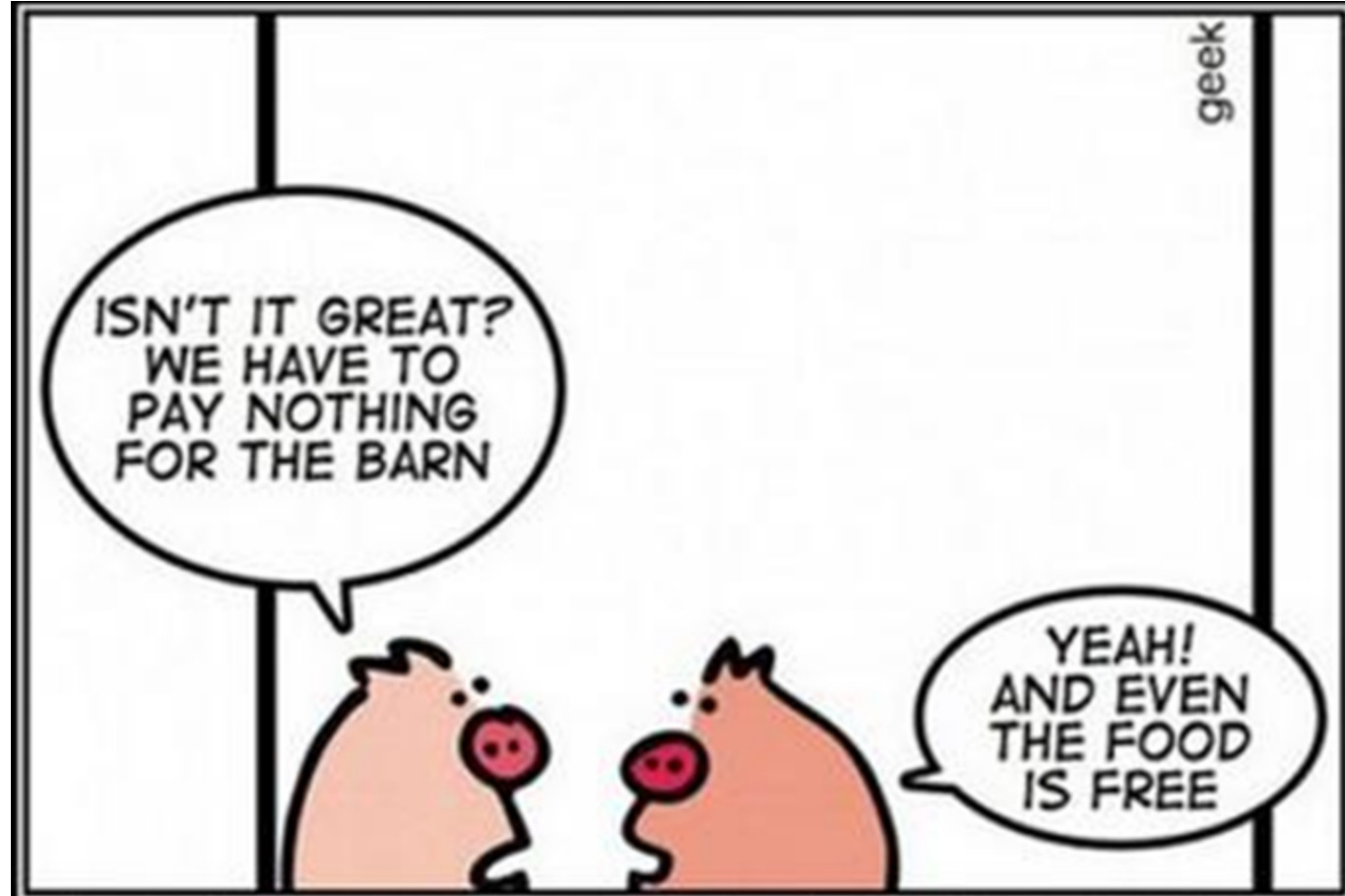




the information architecture of datafication—databases, platforms, apps, clouds—is changing the definition of public sphere, participation, and citizenship







geek





UNS GEFÄLLT ALLES.









democracy

SYSTEM FAILURE







datafication reformats citizens and democratic participation



big data = big control?  
big data = new opportunities?





# data activism

mobilizations taking a critical  
stance towards  
massive data collection

emerge from hacker and open  
software movement, but involve  
**ordinary users**

enabled and constrained by  
**software**

# Codes are Magic spells

....the Command line is your wand and Algorithms your signature.



Devdutt Sheno [Follow](#)

Sep 13, 2016 · 4 min read

```
Macintosh HD — top — 80x24
Processes: 210 total, 2 running, 9 stuck, 199 sleeping, 901 threads   23:30:03
Load Avg: 1.40, 1.75, 1.00  CPU usage: 4.15% user, 4.40% sys, 91.44% idle
SharedLibs: 1648K resident, 0B data, 0B linkedit.
MemRegions: 31278 total, 1892M resident, 117M private, 564M shared.
PhysMem: 5893M used (1191M wired), 10G unused.
VM: 523G vsize, 1026M framework vsize, 0(0) swapins, 0(0) swapouts.
Networks: packets: 12105/8925K in, 11907/1964K out.
Disks: 80156/2205M read, 21235/425M written.

PID  COMMAND      %CPU  TIME    #TH  #WQ  #PORT  MEM    PURG    CMPR  PGRP  PPID
592  screencaptur  0.0   00:00.02  7    5    55+   1952K+ 20K+   0B    262   262
590  mdworker     0.0   00:00.01  3    0    44    2032K  0B     0B    590   1
589  mdworker     0.0   00:00.01  3    0    44    1572K  0B     0B    589   1
588  top          1.7   00:00.51 1/1   0    22+   2860K  0B     0B    588   584
584  bash         0.0   00:00.00  1    0    15    588K   0B     0B    584   583
583  login        0.0   00:00.01  3    1    28    1228K  0B     0B    583   482
574  auditd       0.0   00:00.00  2    0    25    560K   0B     0B    574   1
567  System Prefe 0.0   00:03.23  3    0    270   39M    8364K  0B    567   1
561  systemstatsd 0.0   00:00.01  2    1    19    1040K  0B     0B    561   1
560  com.apple.We 0.0   00:01.42  9    0    229   25M    0B     0B    560   1
558  com.apple.We 0.0   00:05.07 15    3    224   151M   1716K  0B    558   1
555  bash         0.0   00:00.00  1    0    15    604K   0B     0B    555   554
554  login        0.0   00:00.01  3    1    28    1176K  0B     0B    554   482
550  bash         0.0   00:00.00  1    0    15    608K   0B     0B    550   549
```



We're an open community that anyone is invited to join! We're looking for researchers, coders and citizen activists to join us and to help gather and understand financial data.



Surveillance

WHO'S WHO

- [Learn more on PIs home page.](#)

6,023,777 financial transactions.

Search global government spending



# HACKS HACKERS

from **charles heller** **PLUS**

### MILITARY SHIPS IN VICINITY



**"LEFT-TO-DIE" BOAT TRAJECTORY**

## MILITARY SHIPS

0 35 70 140 210 KM



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© 1999 Blackwell Science Ltd

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5. Regarding the number of publications by the ILS/IFRA group, under 50% of the total number of the cited documents are from journals for library literature. For the books, 40%.


<sup>1</sup> The authors are grateful to the National Science Foundation (NSF) for support of this work. The authors are also grateful to the National Science Foundation (NSF) for support of this work. The authors are also grateful to the National Science Foundation (NSF) for support of this work.

On the other hand, because the  $10^{10}$  Mpc<sup>3</sup> volume of the SDSS has the greatest luminosity in the infrared (and also the greatest  $z'$  selection ratio), more than two-thirds of the total  $z'$  selection is due to the infrared.

Finally, the way other things are appearing in the news may not be helpful either. For example, the fact that the economy is in a recession may not be helpful either.

2. Regarding the location of your website, please use the following information to identify where you wish to connect to the service provided via the Internet. Indicate the service provided and the following information, which you may wish to add to the Internet application form if you wish to connect to your site at a later date.





**CameraV:** The easiest way to capture verifiable photo & video proof, securely & privately  
Learn more at <https://guardianproject.info/apps/camerav/> or get it on Google Play "CameraV"

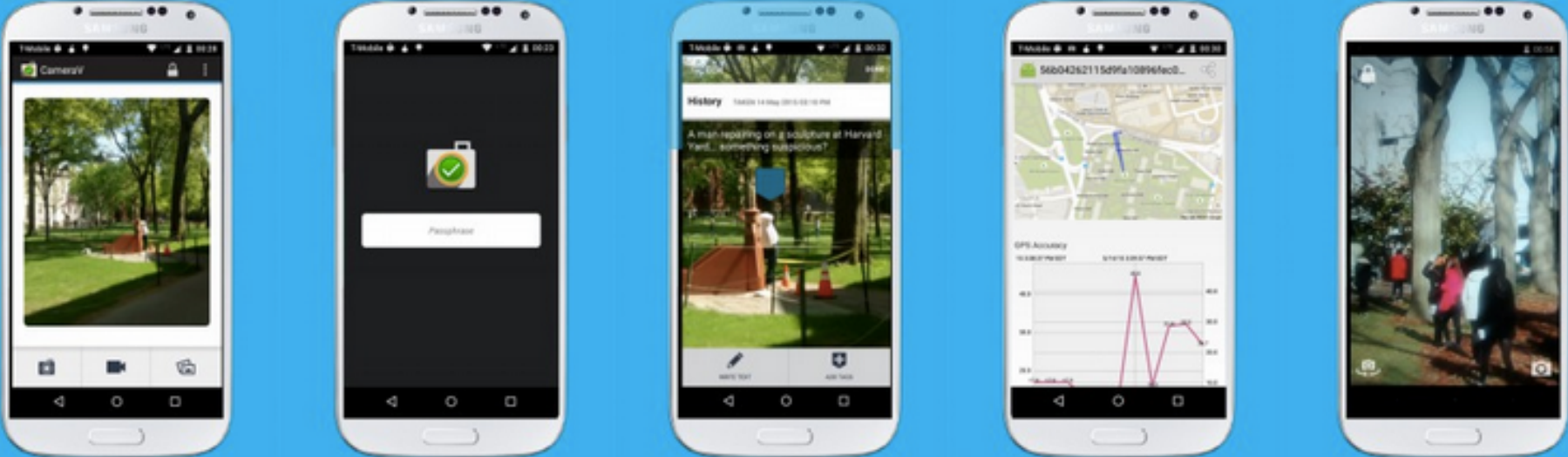
CameraV is easy to learn and simple to use (and insanely secure & powerful under the covers...)

All photos and videos you take with CameraV are password-protected and 100% encrypted on your device

With CameraV, you can add private notes and tags to any photo or video, and choose who you share with

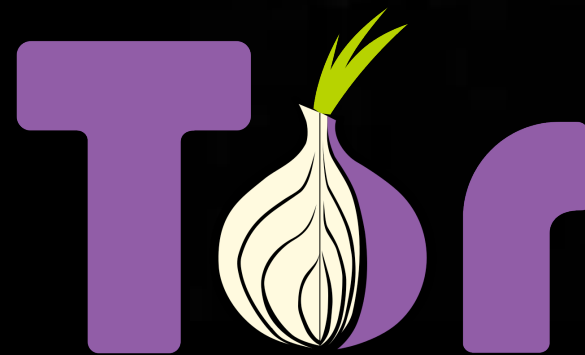
CameraV privately stores data from your device sensors and provides built-in tools to see and share it

CameraV has a built-in secure camera that is simple, streamlined and even supports selfies



‘Citizen-generated data around conflict continues to grow exponentially, but when it gets to newsrooms, human rights orgs, and courts of law, it is often impossible to verify. InformaCam provides a tool to address this shortcoming.’

*Harlo Holmes, The Guardian Project*



Ushahidi

CRYPTO  
PARTY





# #1 algorithms activism

why: our life is shaped by algorithms

then: we need to understand how  
algorithms work /open up the “black box”

**ALGORITHMS EXPOSED**  
— Break free of your filter bubble —

[Blog](#)[Team](#)[Output ▾](#)[Services](#)[Contact](#)

ALEX, a short-cut for “Algorithms Exposed. Investigating Automated Personalization and Filtering for Research and Activism”, aims at unmasking the functioning of personalization algorithms on social media platforms. From an original idea of lead developer Claudio Agosti, ALEX marks the engagement of [DATACTIVE](#) with “data activism in practice”—that is to say, turning data into a point of intervention in society.

Hosted by the University of Amsterdam’s Department of Media Studies, ALEX is funded by a [Proof of Concept grant of the European Research Council](#) (grant agreement no. 825974) awarded to Stefania Milan as Principal Investigator.



OUR VISION

# Individuals should be in control of their algorithm



Reality Check



Zuckless News



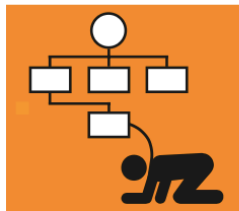
Analysis & Publications

# A tool for algorithm analysts to look into Amazon's personalization.



OUR VISION

# Watch a tech-company fu\*k your behavior data!



Algorithm Domination

Some of your data and what your master wants you to masturbate to



Collective test

joining the gang test, compare and measure personalized recommendations

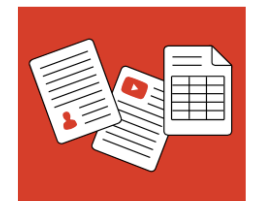


Behind the Scenes

See through our POV and play hard with our

OUR VISION

# YouTube has the power to influence a public debate - Let's expose it together!

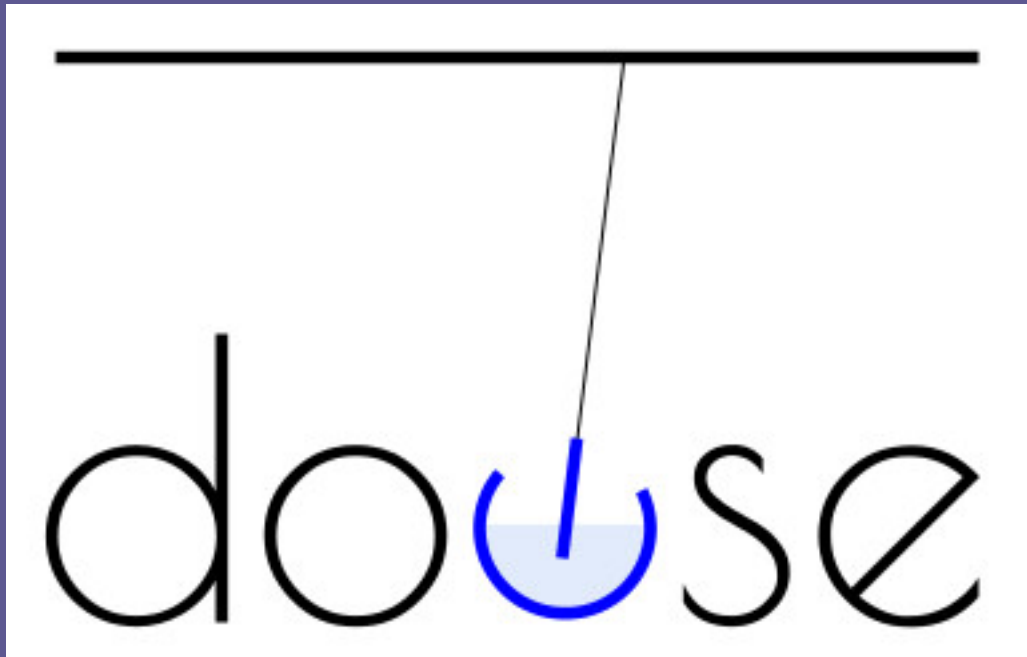


Play with data

tracking.exposed & algorithms.exposed

## #2 device activism

why: our social life is mediated by devices  
then: we need “better” devices!





## #3 automation activism

why: AI is the future but it is scary

then: we cannot stop it, let's shed light on problems and make it better



CAMPAIGN TO **STOP**  
KILLER ROBOTS

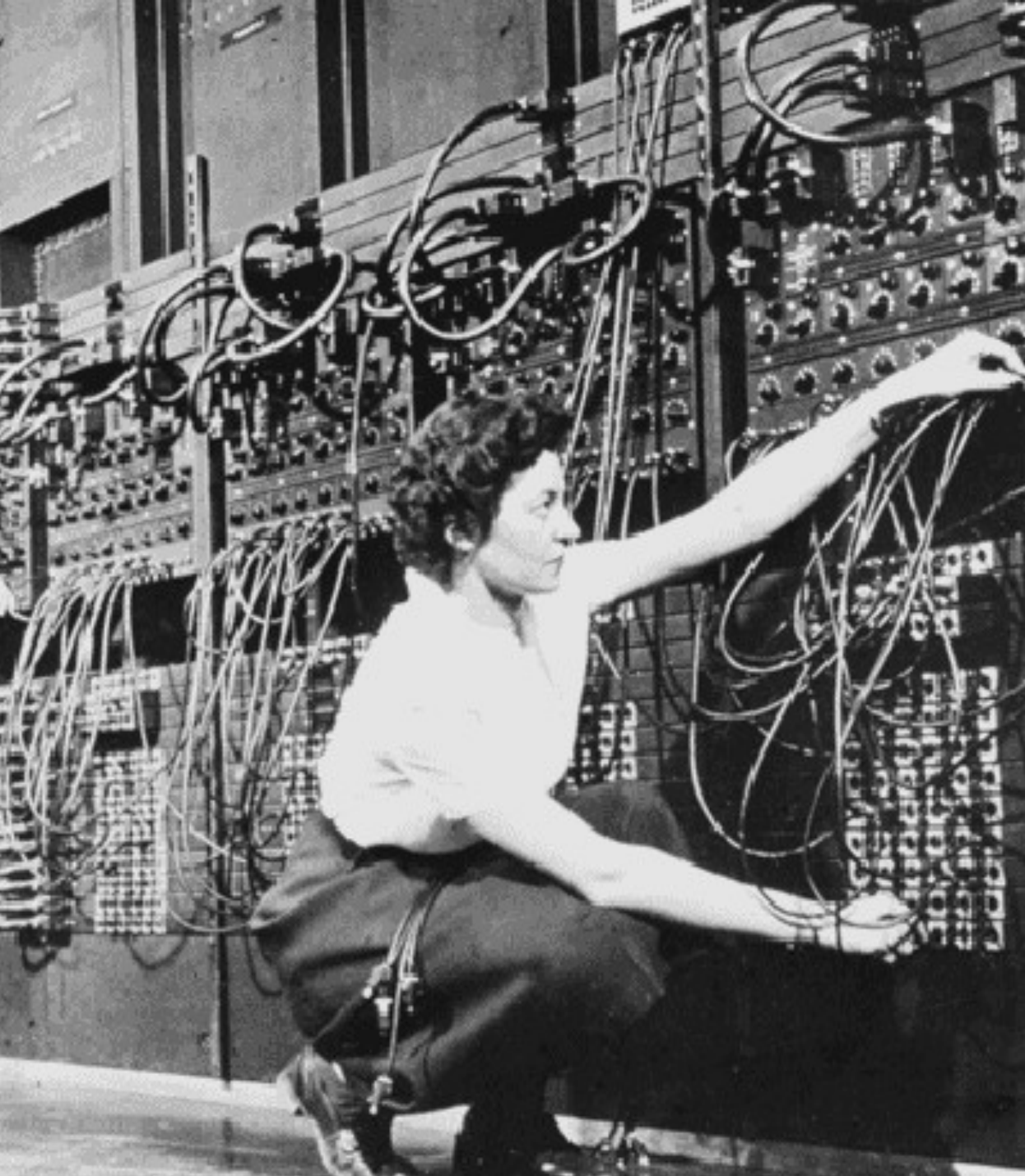
PRIVACY  
INTERNATIONAL

ARTICLE 19

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Privacy and Freedom of Expression  
In the Age of Artificial Intelligence

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European Research Council

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[stefaniamilan.net](http://stefaniamilan.net)  
[data-activism.net](http://data-activism.net)



six tips in no particular order



The background of the slide is the cover of the book 'A Cyborg Manifesto' by Donna Haraway. The cover features a dark, abstract, and somewhat chaotic image with splatters and a central figure that appears to be a woman's face or a cyborg head, rendered in a high-contrast, almost stencil-like style. The overall color palette is dark with some lighter, splattered areas.

#1 think the technological as political

IN A CYBORG MANIFESTO DONNA HARAWAY CRITICIZES TRADITIONAL NOTIONS OF FEMINISM, PARTICULARLY ITS EMPHASIS ON IDENTITY, RATHER THAN AFFINITY. SHE EXPLORES THE POTENTIAL OF THE CYBORG CONCEPT IN ORDER TO CONSTRUCT A POSTMODERN FEMINISM THAT MOVES BEYOND DUALISMS AND THE LIMITATIONS OF TRADITIONAL GENDER, FEMINISM, AND POLITICS.

## A CYBORG MANIFESTO

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIALIST-FEMINISM

DONNA HARAWAY

‘Technology is not neutral. We’re inside of what we make, and it’s inside of us. We’re living in a world of connections—and it matters which ones get made and unmade’ (1997)





#2 nurture your privacy

#3 reclaim agency



technology

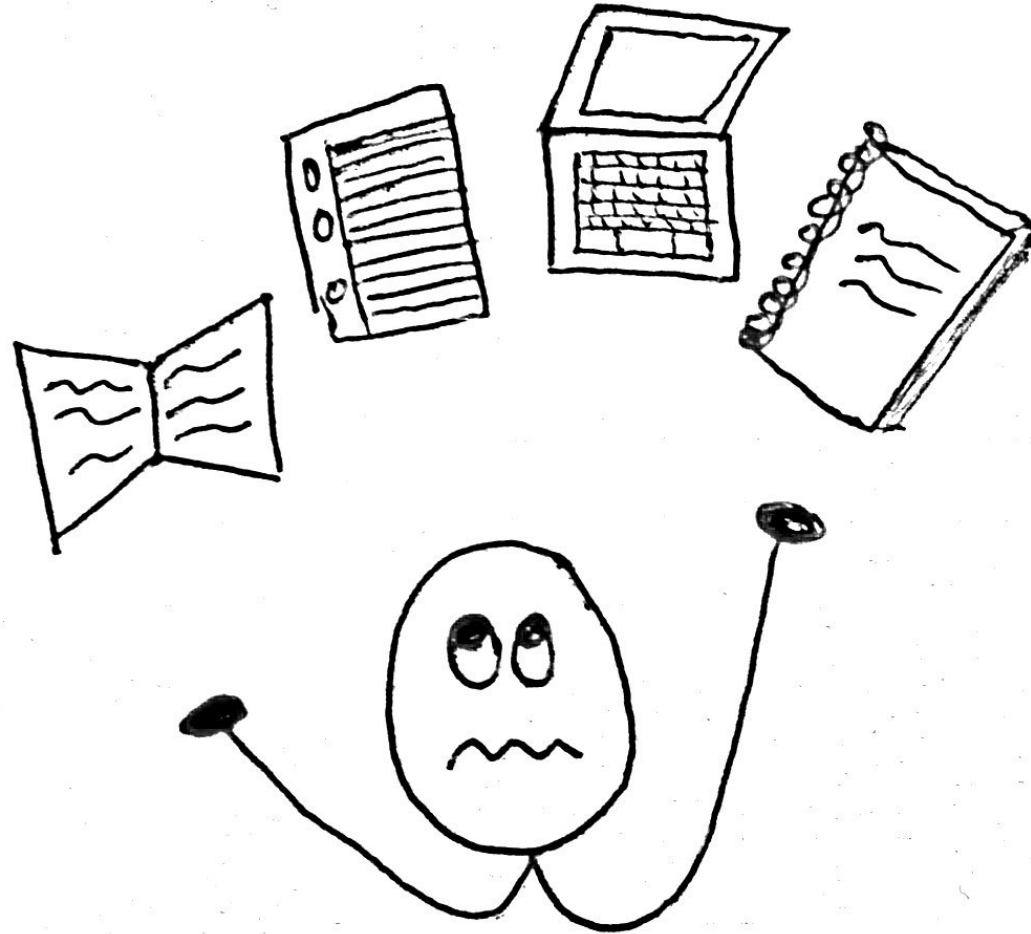
cf. the ancient Greek noun *technê*  
craft, making or craftsmanship...

... connecting art and engineering (Braman 2004, 4)

... the “human ability to make and perform” (Shiner 2001, 19)



## #4 know your algorithms

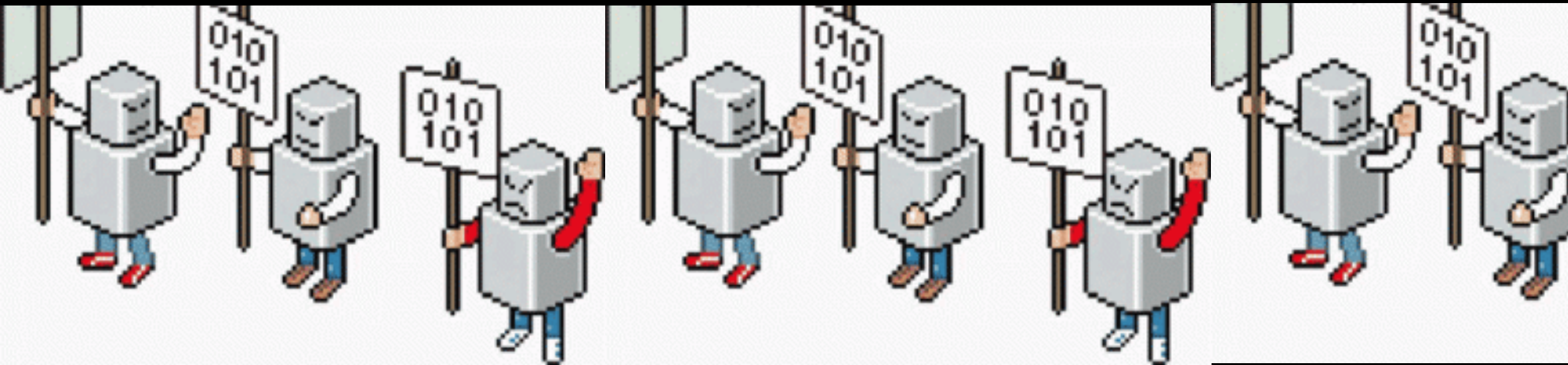


#5 don't let others 'beta-test' your democracy

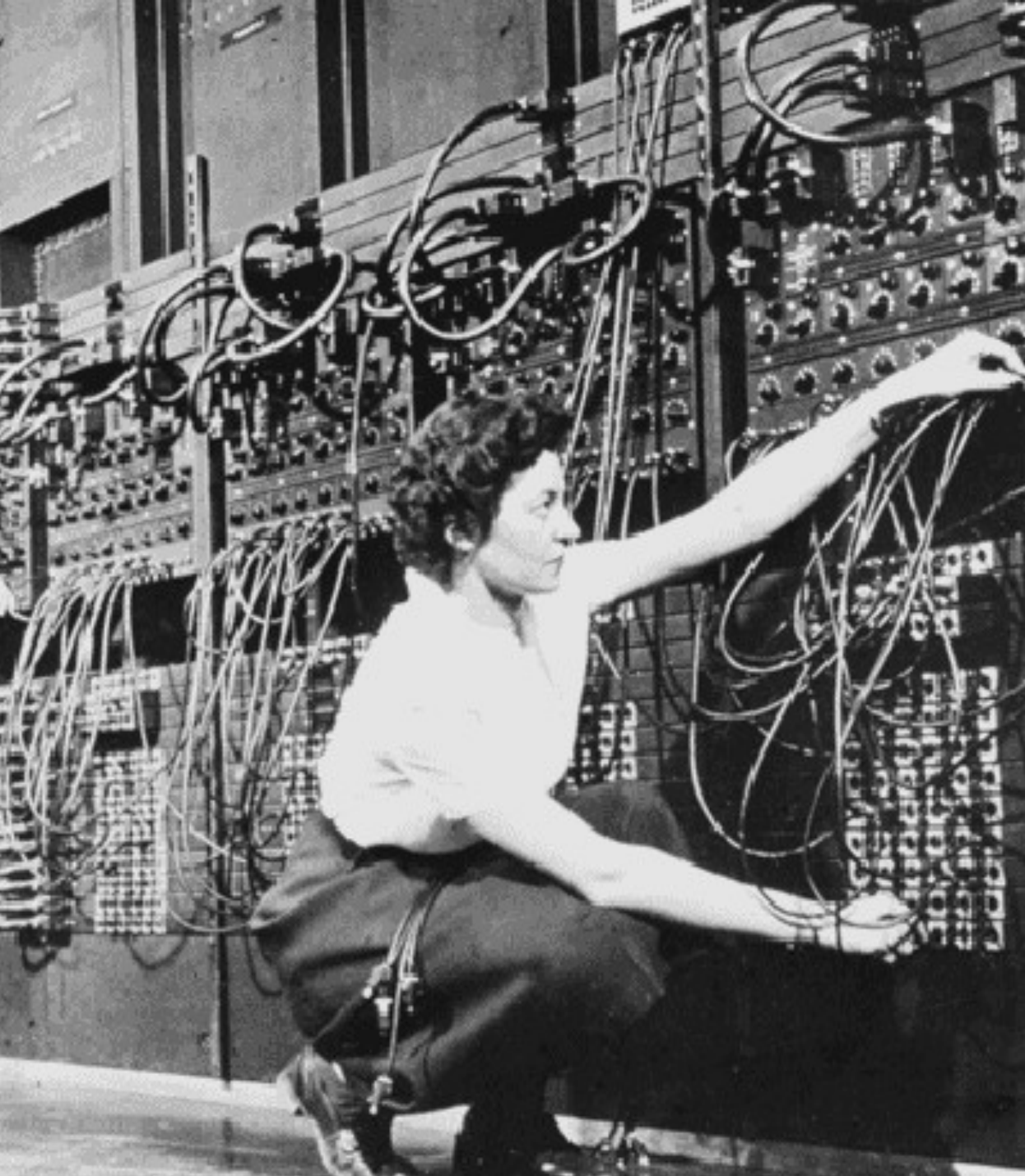




#6 demand good policies



(but beware of state over-reach)



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