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Organized by [Willi Eichler Akademy](#) from 28 to 30th of march 2023 in Berlin, Germany.

Partners presents : [Ceméa France](#), [Ceméa Belgique](#), [Framasoft](#), [Solidar Foundation](#), [Willi Eichler Akademy](#), [Center for Peace Studies](#)

Absents : [Fédération Italienne des Ceméa](#)

29 March - Reception at the Brillat Savarin cookery school



x Meeting with students from the Brillat-Savarin cookery school - Discussions and reflections on the Tik Tok social network

In the morning, the school's students produced films via the Tik Tok medium on the questions:

- What are the effects of global warming on my job as a cook?
- What influence does the European Union have on my job as a cook?

During this production time, the participants of the ECHO Network project had an initial large group discussion on their personal and professional use of Tik Tok.

Out of 18 people interviewed, two people had already used Tik Tok (but did not keep the application) and do not use it anymore. One person claimed to be a Tik Tok user as they receive links to the application to play videos from the application. No organisation use Tik Tok as a social network for communication to date (on professional level).

The group's exchanges around the Tik Tok network:

- Despite not being familiar with the application, it is important to know about it and know how to use it when working with audiences who use it and when we offer training on media and digital issues.
- Questions about the moderation of the network, with a lot of online harassment, distribution of violent videos, discriminating content (towards girls/women and minorities).
- Questions about the fact that this application is a Chinese one (forbidden to be used by the member of
- Should we register (as a popular education and/or political organisation) on Tik Tok to target young people or should we focus on the idea that young people leave the network?
- Questioning of associations on the idea of having social networks to communicate: which targets?
- Concerned about the question of data collection from this social network and the question of censorship.
- A network that can support young people in creating content. Easy to use.
- To what extent is the Tik Tok network an informative network?

- Defending the idea that Tik Tok is a political tool and that as educators we have to participate in what is happening on the network (e.g. "In 68, the paper newspaper was rejected by some people but it was the tool to spread political ideas).
- A wider discussion than young people. Tik Tok is a network used by the very young (<18 years) and the over 50. More related to a question of knowledge of use of networks and the origin of sources (« fake news »)
- Questioning about consumption and creation on Tik Tok (what percentage of users create on Tik Tok and what percentage of people are only consumers?)
- "We have the world in our pocket" but what kind of world do we want to look at?

Metaphorical testimony: "Every tool is a knife", which can be useful or dangerous.

After each participant had spoken about their personal use and their individual vision of this medium, the participants exchanged views on the network:

« Everything is influent, everything is politic »	Digital pollution	Alternatives
<p>Different visions of the use of the media for political and commercial purposes.</p> <p>Do we want to take care of each other or destroy each other?</p> <p>The social media have been great platforms for political struggles but they remains marketing tools first, the aim of which is consumption</p>	<p>Exchange around the digital pollution of the Tik Tok network (streaming which consumes a lot of energy).</p> <p>Relationship with Open Source (which would be less polluting since less data is collected). Discussion about the "ethical alternatives of social networks" with the Fediverse (Mastodon in particular).</p>	<p>But questioning "Why always look for alternatives?" and considering reasoned use where there is not always a need. Since to build an equivalent alternative to Tik Tok would mean committing a lot of money since a lot of energy is needed to run the service (which would be difficult with an open source model where data is not harvested).</p>

x - Presentation of the Tik Tok videos by the students of the Brillat Savarin school

In a short time, students were able to produce a video quickly via the Tik Tok medium (short format/ striking images/ short texts).

Both videos used the same format: no text, no "camera face", music and a montage of short sequences with "striking" images. Despite the fact that the students are only a few users of the application, technical knowledge on video production.

Connection between Tik Tok and Instagram (visibility of videos on Instagram).

Video "The effects of global warming on my job as a cook".

Striking images of floods, tsunamis... and "meanwhile in the kitchen": massive use of plastic, food waste, high energy use via ovens and hobs.

Video "The EU measures

According to the creators of the video, European restrictions are currently too strict, which encourages food waste.

Food recycling ("second hand food") should be encouraged.

Following the presentation of the videos, exchanges between the students and the ECHO Network participants:

- Students were between 18 and 30 years old: diversity of profiles represented.

Importance of **specifying which "young people"** we are talking about when we use this term. Specificities of young people according to their environment (city, countryside, studies...)

For the students of the school we met, Tik Tok is a network used by the very young. Little use of the network by the people we interviewed.

- The short format of Tik Tok **does not send a relevant political message** according to several testimonies.

It is necessary to identify which group we want to target. The 'Tik Tok mass' may not be relevant, while targeting with a specific medium may be. For example, culinary students will use more Youtube and Instagram - for the presentation of dishes - to have access to certain recipes, culinary knowledge. And they will use very specific networks (that only people studying cooking will use).

- Discussions about the fact that our brains are now programmed to watch short formats, and predict what users want to consume.

Short media about cooking recipes are used more for amateur cooks (recipe for home cooking, but not for professional cooks who cook for large quantities).

- Among the students, many testimonies express the danger of the network due to the content present (violent images, discrimination, sexism...) and few people who produce content about the people interviewed.

The Tik Tok platform seems to be perceived as a means of creating "funny" videos but with little serious content, and **therefore not a platform for spreading political ideas.**

x **Feedback on the whole day from ECHO participants**

On contents	On form
<p>Interesting discussion / Discovering the testimonies about Tik Tok / Identifying the fact that out of the panel of people interviewed, few use Tik Tok, a network unknown to the panel.</p> <p>Prejudice of some people to think that students would have difficulty expressing themselves and exchanging, but quite the opposite: participation without difficulty.</p> <p>Exchange with students who bring hope through their commitment and creativity. No gap between our ways of conceiving social networks and means of communication.</p> <p>Group discussion too short, time limited (but as always).</p> <p>In the exchange we raised more questions (than before the day started):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Should we use Tik Tok to target groups of people as an organisation? - Questioning the business model of the platform - Is Tik Tok a political tool to use? <p>Through the exchange of links between global warming and cooking, for example.</p> <p>It is possible to create specific platforms (everything is possible according to Framasoft participants).</p> <p>Identify that although these students do not use the application, they know how to use it (because they are used to using digital tools on smartphones for example).</p>	<p>More time in small groups to be able to express themselves, and exchange in more depth with students for example (distribution of speaking time).</p> <p>We always talk from an 'adult' perspective, and it's interesting to have a broader view of what 'Young' means, more disparate.</p>

30 March - Reception at the Brillat Savarin cookery school

x **Project « Relect EU & US »**



Project presented by Susanne Drake. Project initiated after the COVID period, with the possibility of continuing online exchanges between students. Proposal with universities to build online political education time. Construction of a project around Germany and the United States of exchanges between students on different subjects with security and anonymity of the students.

Funded by the German Ministry of Economics and Ecology over 3 years (with funds still available from the post-war period). A programme that welcomes 60 students (30 from the US and 30 from Germany).

Among the themes addressed in the programme: Justice, Gender, Racism, Nationalism/Far Right, Slavery/Forced Labour

The desire to be able to discuss politics but via a secure platform where participants are anonymous.

Exchanges between students are done online via the Open Talk platform where each student has an avatar. Only the moderator (one person) is visible on camera, which makes it difficult for the moderator to see anything but avatars. Need to find different approaches to engage participation: podcast,

videos...

The students will meet at the end of the project. The American students chose to come to Koln and Brussels. The German students have chosen to go to Washington and New York. The tickets are at the students' expense (a contribution can be obtained) but the costs on site are covered.

x **Presentation of Open Talk platform by Sascha Zucca**

Plateforme où chaque étudiant-e a un accès avec une adresse mail, un accès au cloud pour partager des documents, et ses accès personnels aux salles de visio-conférences.



Open Talk est en développement depuis 2021. Depuis le début du projet « Reflect EU & US » il y a donc eu différentes modifications, améliorations de la plateforme.

x Discussions on the Open Talk platform with ECHO Network participants

Difficulty in moderating when you can't see your interlocutors.

No sign-up list, optional participation of students.

To apply for the Reflect "EU & US" programme, you have to fill in a form and define your preferences in terms of workshops.

The Ministry wishes to repeat this type of project with TransAtlantic partnerships.

At the end of the project, a booklet will be produced with the productions of the different workshops. All the resources will be available via an online bookshop. To access the resources you will simply need to create an account on the platform (free of charge).

The final conference of the "Reflect US & EU" project will take place on 29 September 2024 in Brussels.

What this project shows about the students:

Students want to lift anonymity as there is trust between participants.

Anonymity allows for freedom of expression and therefore to feel more comfortable in expressing their ideas.

Different societal views on certain issues (different states in the US represented, as well as Germany): the death penalty, the carrying of weapons...

x Open Talk trial with German and Hungarian students

ECHO Network participants attended a trial run of the Open Talk platform between students from the Brillat-Savarin School and Hungarian students, moderated by Nini Tisiklauri, on the topic "**What expectations for the European Union?** »

To start the discussion, a video presentation of the "[Conference for the Future of Europe](#)" was shared with the students.

The students then had the opportunity to interact online with each other on different topics related to the European Union (feeling like a European citizen, values of the EU, their links to media and social networks as a means of connection, interaction...).

Exchanges between students:

- Different feelings on the question "Do you feel European?"
- Different links to the European institutions (already visited an institution or not, knowledge of the different European institutional mechanisms, European studies...)
- Different feelings on the possible action on a European scale according to the people (knowing the real information from the fake ones, for example on the inflation situation in Europe).

Conclusion: Idea that the use of Open Talk allows students to exchange freely on political issues despite the centralisation of the media in their country.

x Intervention of Peer Heinlein

"Independence and real digital sovereignty is impossible without open source".

Expert in security and open communication

Defending open source within NGOs, as an independent and secure tool, allowing freedom of expression.

Digital sovereignty means having your own data "I keep it and take it with me wherever I want". This allows NGOs, for example, to detach themselves from the geopolitical and global economic influence of large corporations.

Unlike the dependency on companies such as Microsoft, where if the company goes bankrupt, my data disappears at the same time as I can no longer use the service.

Reminder of open source software on the transparency of the system and the potential not free of charge of the service since the company that hosts my data does not sell it. It is therefore a different economic system.

Anecdote: Microsoft ended up sharing the code of its software with European parliamentarians, but with very limited rules: limited time and one person at a time in a room where the code was displayed on paper.

If we consider open source software, we defend the idea of decentralisation, i.e. there would be local data hosting systems: perhaps beneficial to the European economy? Economic sovereignty of large digital companies.

Discussions with participants on open source software, data protection issues, cyber attacks, data encryption...

x Intervention of Maik Assendorf

Green Party representative in Parliament.

He is part of a digital working group that is looking at making digital uses "sustainable". Some technologies could limit greenhouse gas emissions but beware of the rebound effect¹ of technologies. Parliamentarians have no choice in their use of digital tools. The computers are under Windows, but they can then use their own tools?

It is difficult to envisage national programmes concerning the use of digital tools since they are decentralised in the Lander. Difficult to centralise data as in France, for example, as there are fears about collecting data on a historical scale.

¹A definition of the rebound effect is provided by Thiesen et al. (2008)[\[1\]](#) as, "the rebound effect deals with the fact that improvements in efficiency often lead to cost reductions that provide the possibility to buy more of the improved product or other products or services."