Launch event for the Leibniz ScienceCampus – Postdigital Participation – Braunschweig

TRAFO Hub Braunschweig

21 November 2019

On 21 November 2019 Professor Eckhardt Fuchs, director of the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, opened the launch event for the Leibniz ScienceCampus – Postdigital Participation – Braunschweig. Academics, politicians and representatives from numerous social interest groups attended the event, which was held in the imposing industrial heritage surroundings of the TRAFO Hub in Braunschweig. In keeping with the ScienceCampus's regional focus, the host for the evening's entertainment was André Ehlers, a presenter for local radio station *Radio38*. Professor Matthias Kleiner (president of the Leibniz Association) opened the speeches by emphasising the importance of humanities in the academic community and the particular significance of the role played by the Georg Eckert Institute within the Leibniz Association. In his speech, Rüdiger Eichel, head of the department for Research and Innovation at the Lower Saxony Ministry of Science and Culture, pointed out that the challenges facing science and academia today are unlikely to be solved by individuals and more likely to be met by (interdisciplinary) research groups. For this reason he especially welcomed the establishment of the Leibniz ScienceCampus which brings specialists from a range of disciplines together to implement cooperative projects on a mutual theme. The head of culture and science for the City of Braunschweig, Dr Anja Hesse, in turn highlighted the importance of the venture for Braunschweig and the surrounding region as a centre for science and research as well as for transregional research.

Reflecting the name *Postdigital Participation*, the speeches were followed by project presentations that actively involved the guests, who were given the opportunity to contribute their own ideas to the research projects and thus to actively participate in shaping their design and orientation. As a result those present were able to network and establish contacts with people who will shape the future activities of the ScienceCampus.

Projectpresentations

The following projects hosted stands at which guests were invited to get involved using VR glasses, tablets, glass walls and even recycled doors:

Digitale Medien und Bildung. Analyse, Reflexion, Gestaltung

(Digital Media and Education: Analysis, Reflection, Design)

Project leaders: Prof. Felicitas Macgilchrist (GEI), Prof. Ina Schiering (Ostfalia) and Dr Andreas Weich (GEI)

On this stand the early career scholars group for 'Postdigital Media Constellations in Schools' discussed the subject of 'Digital Media and Education' with guests and asked for their thoughts and ideas on what they considered to be worth preserving in schools with regard to digital media and what should be changed. Two examples were provided to illustrate current challenges. The first was the cover of a strategy paper issued by the KMK (Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the German Länder) titled 'Education in the Digital World' (*Bildung in der digitalen Welt*), which showed a tablet being used to photograph a blackboard: Andreas Weich, coordinator of the early career scholars group, asked whether this image demonstrated the most creative use of digital media in a school context. The second example referred to a German School Abroad that has innovative cultural ideas and media practices, but where the pupils themselves only rarely have the opportunity to participate in these innovative formats because they are bound by the German curricula, which leave little scope for such new ideas. Guests were encouraged to share their ideas through a range of formats: writing on tablets, a collaborative whiteboard and cards that were pinned on a board as well as using chalk pens on a large glass wall. This last option proved to be the most popular medium and produced diverse and interesting contributions: technical requirements such as the need for an increase in digital devices (e.g. 'a smart TV in every classroom') were highlighted as well as didactic and cultural aspects (e.g. 'moving away from the 45-minute lesson structure' or 'critical thinking').

Menschen, digitale Intelligenz & Wiederverwertung – gemeinsam Stadtleben gestalten

(People, Digital Intelligence and Recycling – Shaping Urban Life Together)

Project leaders: Prof. Wolf-Tilo Balke, Prof. Folke Köbberling, Prof. Susanne Robra-Bissantz (TU Braunschweig)

Behind the project '*People, digital intelligence and recycling – shaping urban life together'* is an interdisciplinary team from three faculties at the TU Braunschweig: architecture, computer science and information management. The aim of the project is to support 'low threshold' participation in urban life by citizens. This bottom up

approach should enable people to implement their own ideas for the city. Ideas trialled by the university for the last four years within its own 'Sandkasten' will now be expanded beyond university boundaries and introduced into the city. The 'Sandkasten' produced projects such as a sustainable music festival and campus furniture made from Euro pallets. Now the question is: which projects will be created for the city?

The project group, led by professors Susanne Robra-Bissantz, Folke Köbberling and Wolf-Tilo Balke, not only wants to address this question theoretically, but also to realise ideas that benefit citizens and involve them.

Professor Robra-Bissantz is a specialist in information management who researches collaborative processes in the participative shaping of urban coexistence. These processes are then mapped onto an IT platform which is used to create products that can also be made available offline. Professor Köbberling directs the Institute for Architectural Art (*Institut für architekturbezogene Kunst*) and focuses on research into the recycling of materials for interior design. Professor Balke from the Institute for Information Systems (*Institut für Informationssysteme*) works at the intersection between physical activities and digital participation. He is designing a system that brings people and materials together and that considers other participative aspects on a structural level, such as fairness, transparency and safety.

P4URB – Postdigital Participation in Formal URBan Planning Processes

Project leaders: Prof. Vanessa Miriam Carlow (TU Braunschweig)

The discussion concerning the potential for participation and civic involvement in people-centred urban development was the focus of the Institute for Sustainable Urbanism's (ISU) activities at the launch. Intensive conversations with guests discussed possibilities and challenges and were used as the basis for potential research questions. The ISU also presented content and findings from current research projects. The 'Move in the City' app (mic-app.org) is part of the BMBF project Data4UrbanMobility and is a platform that enables citizens to engage in research and urban development in the context of mobility by providing their movement data. Another project, METAPOLIS, generated a great deal of interest. It is an inter- and trans-disciplinary platform to promote sustainable development in the relationship between state and cities in Lower Saxony, and is supported by the VW Foundation. The project scientifically addresses different settlement types and their needs and requirements, in terms of sustainable development, but also allows future scenarios, based on further academic research, to be developed. The ISU examination of people's perception of their structural and spatial environment in the 'Eye-Tracking Spatial Experiences' project (BMBF/MWK) underlined the diversity of approaches and methods. It illustrated that digital and data-driven participation methods can reveal the potential for completely new formats (desired by many) and instruments for participation. This can lead to stronger civic involvement and activate completely new groups of people, in turn encouraging more sustainable development. The discussions

also demonstrated that it is not simply innovative technology that is required but also a better understanding of the 'social space' in which these different types of technology are embedded. The in-depth discussions and the number and variety of questions raised and suggestions put forward at the event illustrated the depth of interest that exists for cities and their development and underlined the pertinence of the project's goals as well as the importance for cities of the future of inter- and transdisciplinary research in the context of postdigital participation.

Per App zum Museum für Alle? Potentiale und Schwierigkeiten inklusionsfördernder Technologien im Museum des 21. Jahrhunderts

(Using Apps to Create Museums for Everyone? Possibilities and Problems for Inclusive Technology in 21st Century Museums)

Project leaders: Prof. Sandra Verena Müller, Prof. Ina Schiering (Ostfalia), Prof. Ruth Schilling (DSM)

The sub-project '*Using apps to create museums for everyone? Potential and problems for inclusive technology in 21st century museums*' is being carried out by an interdisciplinary research team from Ostfalia University led by Professor Ina Schiering (faculty of computer science) and Professor Sandra Verena Müller (faculty of social work), in collaboration with the Deutschen Schifffahrtsmuseum (DSM) Bremerhaven. The aim of the project is to identify how digital media can be used to encourage cultural participation by vulnerable groups, in particular people with intellectual disabilities.
A fellow member of the Leibniz Association, the DSM Bremerhaven – Leibniz Institute for Maritime History, is acting as a living lab at the centre of the project. The RehaGoal app was presented as an example of how such an app could be designed. This is a mobile application that allows structured processes to be mapped as workflows according to Goal Management Training principles. In addition the DSM Bremerhaven has also shared its approaches to digitisation from current exhibits: visitors can experience a 3D model of the whaling steamship Rau IX and take part in a virtual research expedition on the POLARSTERN using VR glasses.

MoSe 4.0 – Mobilität für Senioren *(ausgefallen)*

(MoSe 4.0 – Mobility for Senior Citizens)*(not present at event)*

Project leader: Prof. Dagmar Meyer (Ostfalia)

The MoSe 4.0 project focuses primarily on senior citizens with limited mobility and who are unable, or unwilling, to use public transport. Organising the transportation necessary to participate fully in everyday life can frequently involve considerable effort: appointments and recreational activities must be coordinated to enable a taxi or car service to be ordered in advance.

MoSe 4.0 will design an open concept for an intelligent online platform, which will allow potential service providers, car services, doctors, etc. to register in the system and to take over the entire organisational process for an appointment 'with one click'. The

user interface will be provided by an app for tablet or smartphones, optimised for the target group.

A user-specific configuration will take into account the various needs, limitations and capabilities of the user group. User-specific requirements (e.g. transportation of a wheelchair, need for someone to accompany the user to their destination) and contact data for regularly used service providers can be saved by the system. The system learns regular appointments and can send reminders or, if wanted, automatically make arrangements.

Podium Discussion and Summary

Following the small group discussions at the stands, the podium discussion enabled an exchange of ideas on a larger scale regarding the content and methodology of the ScienceCampus. This illustrated that the focus closely linking the individual research projects is their desire to explore the possibilities for social participation. This potential is rapidly changing in a world where our lives are shaped by hybrid digital and analogue technology and practices. For this reason it is necessary to reconceive participation in education and urban life and this can be achieved through cooperation in social living labs between cultural, social and technological sciences, and local and regional interest groups. The objectives linking these undertakings are to develop digitally supported forms of participation with local and regional foci and to shape public discourse regarding (post) digitality and participation.

The thought-provoking discussions, project presentations and potential partnerships aroused much interest in the exciting cooperation within the research association and the results they will produce over the next four years, and beyond.