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## *About the Speakers and Topics: Symposium on Digital Sovereignty*

Tekkers Auditorium
Academiegebouw Rapenburg 73
2311 GJ Leiden, Nederland
Wednesday, 29 November 2023 09.30-16.15

*Digital sovereignty: unpacking the policy, decoding the concept*
dr. Jamal Shahin

*How to redesign and govern a digitized global society?*
prof. dr. Karen Maex

*The Dimensions and Limits of the EU's Digital Sovereignty Policy*
prof. dr. Giorgio Monti

*Public Values in the Digital Age:*
*Challenges and Opportunities for the Netherlands*
Azar Koulibaly

*SURF's Roadmap to open science*
Ron Augustus

*Current approaches to digital sovereignty in German academia*
dr. Jan Wöpking

*Governance to underline collaboration principles*
dr. Charon Duermeijer

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### Digital sovereignty: unpacking the policy, decoding the concept
Speaker: dr. Jamal Shahin,
Free University Brussels / University of Amsterdam

Digital Sovereignty has emerged as a driving policy angle for a number of political actors in recent years. These actors do not only include States, but also other actors such as regional organisations. In this sense, digital sovereignty as a policy objective aims to empower and legitimise actors, both new and old, in shaping the digital realm.

[However, conceptually, the term is essentially contested and has lead to confusion between policy actions and broader conceptual understandings of what it means to be digitally sovereign. This vagueness can be useful to launch a debate, but counterproductive in determining common policy actions. For example, in one sense the term 'digital sovereignty' is as oxymoronic whilst many see sovereignty as about autonomy, borders and control, 'the digital' has traditionally been seen as the medium for globalisation and the decline of borders.

This intervention will launch a debate about the state of the art in academic debates on digital sovereignty, by looking at how sovereignty has been reshaped in the digital age. It will propose a set of choices that we need to address in order to understand how the term can be constructive in building our digital future.

**Jamal Shahin** is the Programme Director of the Advanced Master European Integration and Chair in Digital Sovereignty at the Brussels School of Governance. He is also a Senior Lecturer at the University of Amsterdam and Professorial Fellow at the United Nations University-CRIS in Bruges. He received a PhD in Politics from the University of Hull (2005), entitled 'The relationship between the Internet and governance in the EU'.

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### How to redesign and govern a digitized global society?
Speaker: prof.dr. Karen Maex, University of Amsterdam

**Karen Maex** is a civil engineer and professor at the University of Amsterdam, of which she was previously rector magnificus. She was also the first female vice-rector of the Belgian university KU Leuven, appointed to the Science & Technology group.

Extensive use of platforms although efficient, might become a threat for the public value of knowledge and impact our society in a broader sense. They also impact and reshape the societal fabric. With digitalization and related globalization, a large part of current challenges of society have become complexity questions, reflected in the processes for creating and sharing scientific knowledge. The design of democratic, public governance structures, however, has lost effectiveness in this digital revolution. To that end we need to find ways to redesign the public space and its interference with the private space. The design of democratic, public governance structures, however, has lost effectiveness in this digital revolution. To that end we need to find ways to redesign the public space and its interference with the private space.

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### The Dimensions and Limits of the EU's Digital Sovereignty Policy
Speaker: prof.dr. Giorgio Monti, University of Tilburg

Digital Sovereignty became a buzzword during the von der Leyen Commission in the context of a world that is retreating from open multilateralism. Its principal manifestation is in a variety of industrial policy tools which seek to promote self-sufficiency of EU industry and at the same time safeguard fundamental rights. In this discourse, open access to knowledge is not central. At the same time, we can observe certain policies that could be explored further to enhance digital sovereignty understood as the capacity to access open sources of knowledge. Some of these are at domestic level (e.g. data sovereignty policies feed on some cities) because of the EU's lack of competences, others are found in the EU's data policy but these remain aspirations, finally one can explore how far more well established EU policies might be harnessed to sustain a wider conception of digital sovereignty that encompasses the user.

**Giorgio Monti** is Professor of Competition Law and the Tilburg Institute for Law, Technology and Society and a joint editor of the Common Market Law Review.

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### Public Values in the Digital Age: Challenges and Opportunities for the Netherlands
Speaker: Azar Koulibaly, JD / Microsoft

**Azar Koulibaly** is an accomplished legal professional and currently serves as the Associate General Counsel and General Manager of Corporate, External & Legal Affairs for the Netherlands and Switzerland at Microsoft. He is based in Amsterdam, where he leads the company's legal and government affairs teams across both the Netherlands and Switzerland, providing support for commercial transactions, government relations, and regulatory, counsel on public policy issues such as cybersecurity, competition, privacy, and international trade. Azar joined Microsoft in 2013 and over the past 10 years he has held a variety of senior roles at Microsoft in Europe and in its U.S. Prior to joining Microsoft, Azar worked in private practice in Seattle, practicing primarily in the field of Mergers and Acquisitions. Azar was born in the United States but spent the majority of his childhood living in the Netherlands. He graduated from Northern Arizona University with a B.S. in Political Science and received his Juris Doctorate from the University of Virginia School of Law.

What are the ways in which people, institutions, and companies in the Netherlands could choose to define Digital Sovereignty, and how those different definitions align with The Netherlands' public values and societal goals? There are ways in which the Netherlands could ensure that its continued adoption of new technological advancements aligns to those values and goals while also providing flexibility to capture the benefits of the modern digital economy. The speaker will discuss the role Microsoft can play as it seeks to support various parts of Dutch society (including individuals, and the public and private sector) as they seek to maximize the benefits of the increased pace of technological innovation (e.g., AI) and scientific advancement in a principled and responsible manner.

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### SURF's Roadmap to open science
Speaker: Ron Augustus, SURF

In a world of exponentially growing data volumes, new research methods and techniques like AI and VR, an alleged reproducibility crisis, and the demand for science to be more democratic, transparent and inclusive, SURF is developing a roadmap contributing to make open science the norm. New entities like local and thematical digital competence centers, new communities and OpenScience.nl are changing the existing Dutch landscape in a European context. Together with SURF's members, this roadmap is aimed at supporting a digital cognition.

**Ron Augustus** has been Chief Innovation Office (CINO) at SURF since September 2020. As CINO, his role is to drive innovation in higher education and research in the Netherlands within SURF in collaboration with its members and other stakeholders. After studying Business Administration at Erasmus University Rotterdam, Ron worked for 19 years in various positions at Oracle, then 9 years in the Senior Leadership Team of Microsoft Netherlands. In his last position there, as Customer Success Lead, he was responsible for architecture and adoption of Microsoft Teams in the Netherlands. In the role as CINO at SURF he combines his background in technological innovation with his passion for education and science.

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### Current approaches to digital sovereignty in German academia
Speaker: dr.Jan Wöpking, German Universities U-15

Digital sovereignty is a topic that is attracting more and more attention in the German scientific landscape. The experiences during and after the corona pandemic have had a particularly catalytic effect here. This presentation will give a brief insight into the state of the debate in German academia, followed by examples of current and planned projects that are developing new ways of handling data with sovereignty.
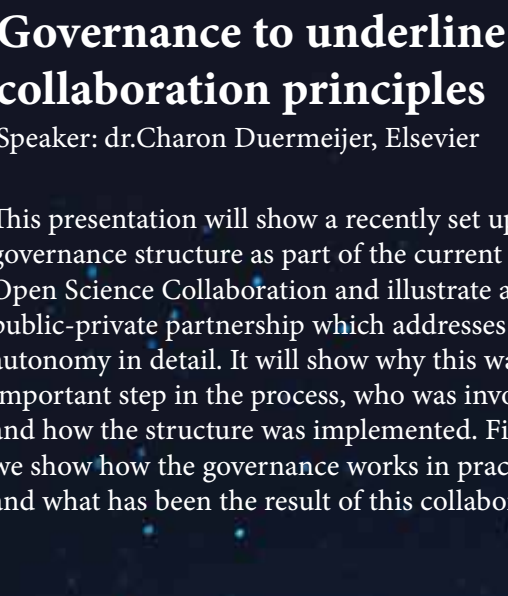
**Dr Jan Wöpking** serves as Managing Director of German U15, the association of fifteen leading, research-intensive universities in Germany. Before this role, he was Head of Strategy at a large research institution. He studied philosophy and business informatics in Jena, Berlin, Paris, and London, among other places. He completed a PhD at the Excellence Cluster Topoi at Freie Universität Berlin. In his work, Dr Wöpking bridges the fields of science, innovation, and politics. He is committed to creating the best conditions for research universities, so that they can thrive as centers of societal progress—championing groundbreaking research, excellence in teaching and entrepreneurial spirit. In a time of complex crises and geopolitical tensions, Dr Wöpking is particularly invested to promote international cooperation between top universities.

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### Governance to underline collaboration principles
Speaker: dr.Charon Duermeijer, Elsevier

**Charon Duermeijer** is currently Director of Content Acquisitions at Elsevier. She has a PhD in Geophysics from Utrecht University. Over the past 20+ years, she has held various externally focused management positions for Elsevier, within publishing, sales and academic relations. She is also an executive board member of STT (Stichting Toekomstbeeld der Techniek/Netherlands Study Centre for Technology Trends), where future explorations are carried out at the interface of technological developments and their possible influences on society. She recently set up a mentorship program for Elsevier in collaboration with UAF (Foundation for Refugee Students). She is intrinsically motivated in her daily work to understand what drives different people and organizations and has a passion for translating obstacles into solutions.

This presentation will show a recently set up governance structure as part of the current Dutch Open Science Collaboration and illustrate a public-private partnership (which addresses digital autonomy in detail). It will describe in this way an important step in the process, who we involved and how that structure was implemented, whilst we show here the governance works to create and what has been the result of this collaboration.