



SPT2013

Technology in the Age of Information

ABSTRACTS

4 - 6 July 2013



SCHOOL OF
ECONOMICS &
MANAGEMENT
LISBON



Laboratório
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Centro de Investigação em Sociologia
Económica e das Organizações

FCT Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia
MINISTÉRIO DA CIÊNCIA, TECNOLOGIA E ENSINO SUPERIOR

Governance and the technologies of information

Luciano FLORIDI
University of Hertfordshire, UK
luciano.floridi@philosophy.ox.ac.uk

Jean---Gabriel GANASCIA
University Pierre and Marie Curie, France

Ugo PAGALLO
Faculty of Law
University of Turin, Italy

Peter---Paul VERBEEK
Department of Philosophy
University of Twente, The Netherlands
p.p.c.verbeek@utwente.nl

Pieter VERMAAS
Department of Philosophy
Delf University of Technology, The Netherlands
p.e.vermaas@tudelft.nl

The post---Westphalian Nation State developed by becoming more and more an Information Society. However, in so doing, it progressively made itself less and less the main information agent, because what also made the Nation State possible and then predominant, as a historical driving force in human politics, namely Information and Communication technologies (ICTs), is also what is now making it less central, in the social, political and economic life across the world.

ICTs fluidify the topology of politics. They do not merely enable but actually promote (through management and empowerment) the agile, temporary and timely aggregation, disaggregation and re---aggregation of distributed groups around shared interests across old, rigid boundaries represented by social classes, political parties, ethnicity, language barriers, physical barriers, and so forth.

This is generating a new tension between the Nation State, still understood as a major organisational institution, yet no longer monolithic but increasingly morphing into a multiagent system itself, and a variety of equally powerful, indeed sometimes even more politically influential and powerful, non---Statal organisations. Geo---politics is now global and increasingly nonterritorial, but the Nation State still defines its identity and political legitimacy in terms of a sovereign territorial unit, as a Country.

The panel will discuss how new informational multiagent systems (MAS) be designed in such a way as to take full advantage of the socio---political progress made so far, while being able to deal successfully with the new global challenges (from the environment to the financial markets) that are undermining the legacy of that very progress. It is not an easy task. But the hope is that the panel will

contribute to identify solutions, resolve problems, and anticipate difficulties in this vital area of human interactions.