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Using design fiction to generate a discussion about the role of technology in supporting citizenship behavior

Recently, the adoption of computers has enlarged the depth of civic participation with processes traditionally left to governing institutions. In this context, the Human-Computer Interaction research has integrated the implications of computation for public life and shifted the focus from users to citizens with a diversification of environments, devices and interactions of civic media. This method paper contributes a value-driven narrative on civic technology that expands existing research with a future-oriented approach and examines the use of design methods such as design fiction and participatory design in exploring civics.

A co-design workshop and a cultural probe study have been conducted to explore iteratively the qualities and values of civic ownership and to calibrate the discussion according to emergent themes. Based on the insights gathered, a discussion space has been developed where design fiction represents the entry point to an open exploration about the role of technology in supporting citizenship behaviour. The discussions take place exclusively online using a telecommunication software and an online collaborative platform. Eight assessment sessions (seven individual and one group setup) have been conducted which have actively engaged the participants to co-create their own position on citizenship in comparison to the fiction presented (better said, their personal understanding of the fiction) and search for their personal truth while engaging in the activities laid out in the discussion and being probed by questions from the researcher.