

INNOVADE publishes an Interdisciplinary Knowledge Base on Digital Democracy

An extensive study examines foundations of digital democracy and how digital technologies can shield democratic institutions but also expose them to new risks

Brussels, 15 September 2025 – Around the world, democracies are navigating a period of uncertainty. Political debate is increasingly moving online, creating new spaces for participation but also new risks such as echo chambers and the spread of fake news and misinformation. Governments are introducing digital tools into decision-making processes, while the speed of technological change, combined with declining trust in institutions and the spread of misinformation, increases the complexity of politics and society. There are big opportunities and risks. The new developments can either accelerate democratic erosion or open the way to more resilient and inclusive models of governance.

The INNOVADE project has released its **Interdisciplinary Knowledge Base on Digital Democracy**, led by Professor Christian Fuchs from Paderborn University with contributions from Beyond the Horizon, Fundación Cibervoluntarios, Hybrid Core, and KU Leuven. The report presents **foundations of the analysis of digital democracy**. It offers a comprehensive overview of **how digital technologies are influencing democratic practices**. It covers areas such as models of (digital) democracy, the digital public sphere, online participation, open governance, digital activism, e-voting, and possible future models of democracy. It also analyses threats including misinformation, and the manipulation of information and electoral processes. By combining research with practical insights, the Knowledge Base provides a solid foundation for those who want to design democratic systems that are both inclusive and resilient.

Commenting on the report, Christian Fuchs said, *“If we want to properly shield digital democracy, then we need to know what it is that we want to defend. The questions arise: What is democracy? What is digital democracy? Understanding and advancing digital democracy requires a good understanding of what democracy and digital democracy are all about. This report provides conceptual and analytical foundations for answering these questions”*.

The study concludes with **ten recommendations**, highlighting the need to connect participatory and deliberative approaches with constitutional safeguards, to strengthen open governance, and to develop strong responses to foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI). With its clear structure, figures, and tables, the 300-page **report** is accessible and easy to use. It is **freely available** (<https://zenodo.org/records/17079016>) and intended as a reference for policymakers, researchers, practitioners, and citizens interested in improving democratic governance.

INNOVADE’s coordinator Fatih Yilmaz commented, *“The Knowledge Base is a timely and necessary contribution to the debate on digital democracy. As digitalisation reshapes the ways citizens engage with democratic processes, we must ensure that our institutions adapt without compromising democratic values. This resource equips policymakers, practitioners, and civil society with the analytical tools and frameworks needed to build inclusive, transparent, and resilient democratic systems fit for the digital age”*.

The launch of the Knowledge Base will be followed by a **Living Lab in Paderborn on 23–24 September 2025**, bringing together project partners, experts, and civil society representatives to co-create visions for

an “optimum digital democracy” and to contribute to the development of a Digital Democracy Grading Toolkit. The report will also be presented at **the Digital Democracy The Hague** (<https://ddth25.polisnl.org/en/>) on 9–10 October 2025, where 500 practitioners and experts will discuss how digital tools can support inclusive participation.

To continue the conversation, INNOVADE invites all interested stakeholders **to join a public webinar “Shielding Democracy in the Digital Age” on 21 October 2025 at 15:00 (CEST)**. The event will focus on three central themes of the Knowledge Base: *What is digital democracy?*, *How can open governance work in practice?*, and *What global trends will shape the future of democracy?* **The event is free and open to everyone. Registration** is possible here: <https://innovade-democracy.eu/events/shielding-democracy>



INNOVADE project

INNOVADE (INNOVative DEmocracy through digitalisation) <https://innovade-democracy.eu/> is a 36-month Horizon Europe Research and Innovation Action running from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2027. The project responds to the challenges and risks brought by digital platforms to democratic life and aims to deliver advanced tools and frameworks that enable inclusive, transparent, and effective e-participation across Europe. Building on existing knowledge and analysing emerging trends, INNOVADE develops scalable and replicable solutions to foster a digitally enhanced public sphere and strengthen democratic governance. A key feature of the project is its Living Labs methodology and pilots. INNOVADE ensures that its outputs address real community needs and result in practical, user-friendly applications that empower citizens to engage with government and influence decisions that shape their lives.

Get Involved

Policymakers, institutions, civil society organisations, and citizens are invited to engage with INNOVADE and help shape Europe’s digital democracy future.

To stay updated on INNOVADE’s progress, register for the newsletter at: <https://innovade-democracy.eu/newsletter>

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