Critical Digital Literacies:
Developing agency & sustaining hope in troubled times

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Link to slides & resources:

https://bit.ly/**AMICAL-Cronin**

AMICAL consortium map

Adapted from: https://www.amicalnet.org/members

How are you feeling…
on this last day of AMICAL 2022?

(type in the Chat, if you wish)

Image: Tim Mossholder (Unsplash)

Context: a time of crisis

- COVID-19 pandemic

- Climate crisis

- Austerity

- Deepening inequalities, multiple & intersecting

- Datafication; surveillance capitalism

- Rising authoritarianism

- Reasonable expectations of ongoing instability

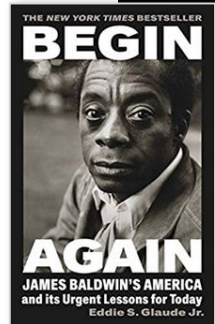- Multiple challenges & tensions within higher education

- …

"*after times*"

interregnum

disruption and splintering of old ways
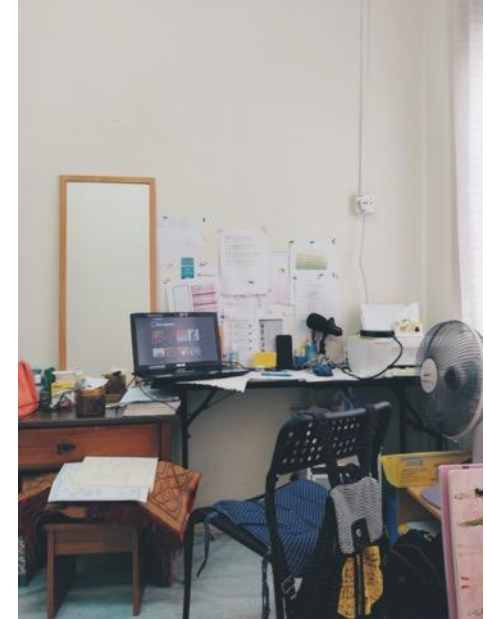
what was before and what is coming into view

Eddie Glaude (2020)

During **Covid lockdowns** and **campus closures**…
Teaching & Learning & Support continued

Images: CC0 (L to R) by Andrew Neel, Dollar Gill & Humairah L.
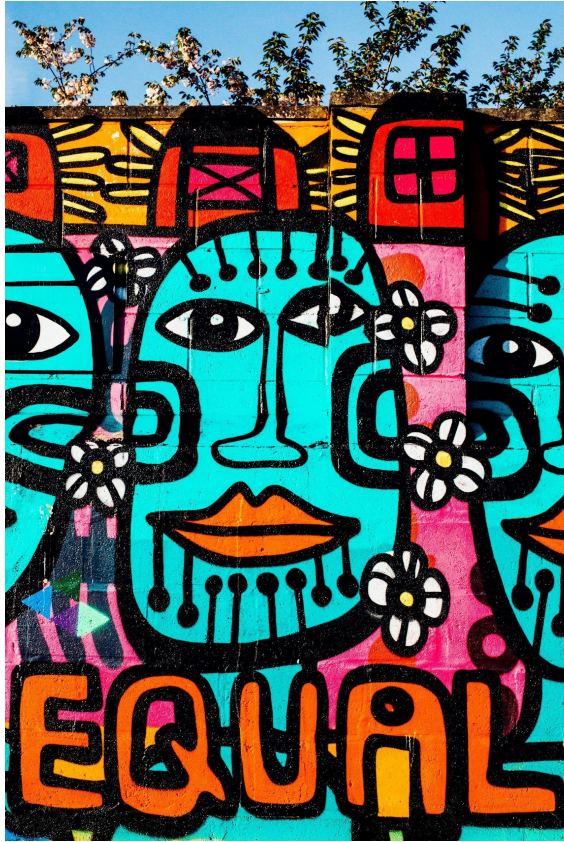
Image: CC0 by Oliver Cole

" Digital structures and practices are unevenly distributed and experienced within social structures, which are in turn **refracted into universities**…

[which] **reproduce** these structures and practices, while knowledge production and dissemination… shape and reframe social practices.

Laura Czerniewicz (2022)

Understanding the power dynamics, inequalities and oppressions at work in and through digital technologies stands as a precondition to educating fully literate, fully competent digital citizens and technology users.

Jennifer Ross, et al. (2022)

Critical

Digital

Literacies

Critical

Information

Media

...

Digital

Data

...

Algorithm

Literacies

Critical

Information Media ... Data **Digital** Algorithm ...

Literacies

Critical

Information   Data   ...

...   Media   **Digital**   Algorithm

Literacies

Conceptualising Critical Digital Literacies

" We define **radical digital citizenship** as a process by which individuals and groups committed to **social justice** critically analyse the social, political and economic consequences of digital technologies in everyday life and collectively deliberate and take action to build alternative and emancipatory technologies and technological practices.

… the cornerstone is the insistence that citizenship is a *process of becoming* – that it is an active and reflective state for individual and collective thinking and practice for collective action for the common good.

Akwugo Emejulu & Callum McGregor (2016)

Conceptualising Critical Digital Literacies

" **Critical technological consciousness**… not only necessary for creating the mass demand that digital platforms and tools **strive to uphold democratic principles** but also for creating a body politic capable of **recognizing** the often-overlooked ways software can alternately impinge or advance democratic freedoms and **steering** them accordingly.

Given the universality and urgency of political issues related to digital tools and platforms, we should recognize the cultivation of critical technological consciousness as a **core responsibility of educational practices** today.

Erin R. Glass (2018)

Critical

Information   Data   ...

Digital

...   Media   Algorithm

Literacies

Critical

Information Data ...

Digital

... Media Algorithm

Literacies

Image: CC0 by Emily Morter
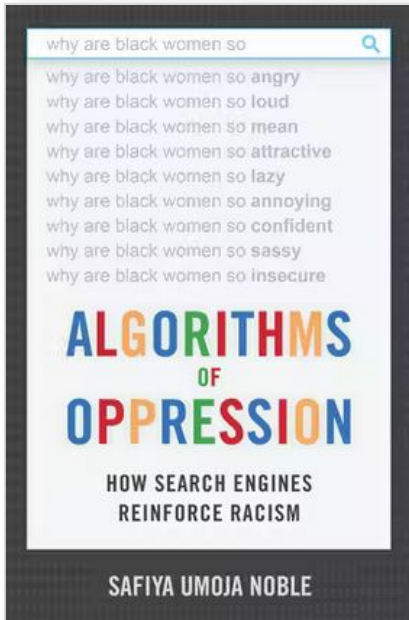
Datafication issues:

Privacy
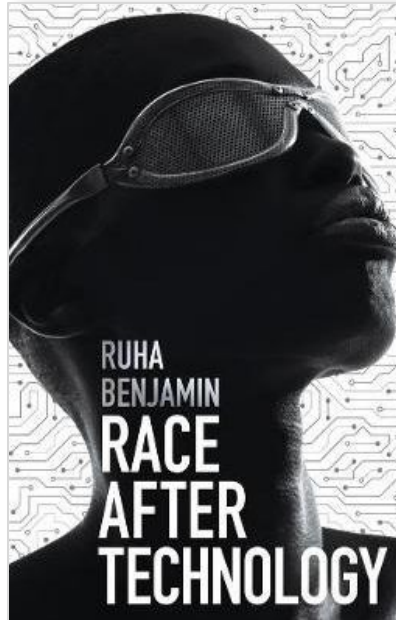
Data protection

Data ownership
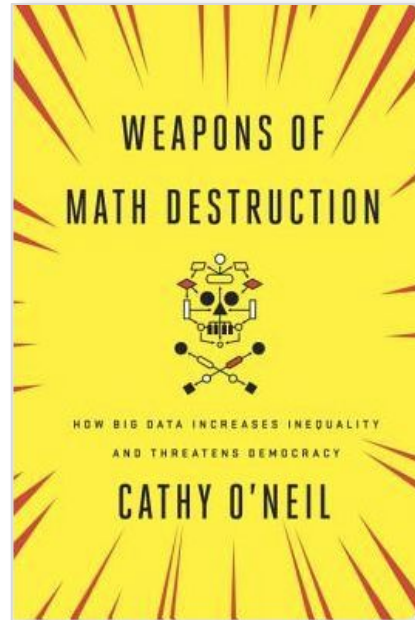
Surveillance

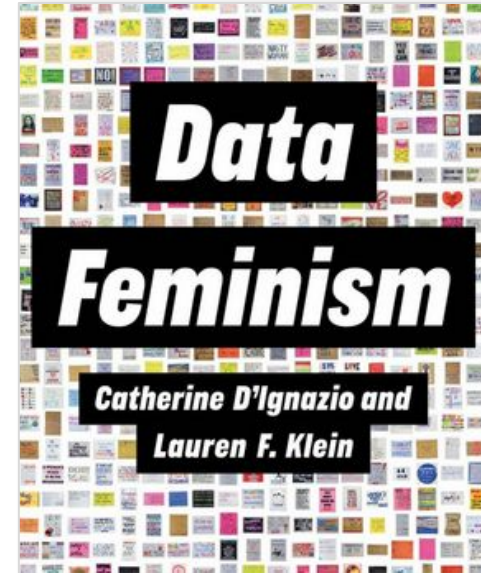Algorithmic bias/decisions

Analytics

Safiya Umoja Noble (2018)

Algorithms of Oppression ([Wikipedia](#))

Ruha Benjamin (2019)

Race after Technology ([Wikipedia](#))

Cathy O'Neil (2016)

Weapons of Math Destruction ([Wikipedia](#))

Catherine D'Ignazio & Lauren F. Klein (2020)

Data Feminism ([open version](#))

Surveillance practices in higher education
(Beetham, et al. 2022)

- Rendering of student & educator activities as behaviours that can be "datafied"

- Inequalities of power between data owners/companies and those whose data is being collected, analysed, managed & shared

- Intensification of data-oriented digital platforms into HEI core activities and normalization of vendor-university (profit-making) relationships

" Whether educators want to **engage with data** or not, their work both generates it and guides students into environments that mine it.

Bonnie Stewart & Erica Lyons (2021)

Critical Digital Literacies as capabilities to…

- Navigate technical tools and practices

- Interrogate digital multimedia texts

- Design and create critical digital texts

- Engage with ethics, power structures and inequalities attendant with digital technologies and data

- Create/revise academic, public and online identities

- Cultivate "agential capacity"

What is a **challenge** that you've experienced regarding developing Critical Digital Literacies?
(self, peers or students)

type in the Chat, if you wish

Critical digital & data literacies

Understanding the power dynamics, inequalities and oppressions at work in and through digital technologies stands as a precondition to educating fully literate, fully competent digital citizens and technology users.

Jennifer Ross, et al. (2022)

Critical digital & data literacies

Pedagogy · Policy · Procurement

examples + resources

The National Forum

- Works across **diverse HE sector** in Ireland

- Fosters **collaboration** and innovation

- Develops **shared understandings**

- Provides **structure and coherence**

- **Builds evidence** to inform policy and practice

- Leverages **research/teaching** linkages

- Promotes and models meaningful **student partnership**

- Works **openly**

- Is **responsive** to evolving contexts

DISCs

DISCIPLINES INQUIRING INTO SOCIETAL CHALLENGES

https://discs.ie/

https://www.allaboardhe.ie/

National Forum-funded

'critical literacies' projects developed within the Irish HE sector:

- Cross-institutional collaborations
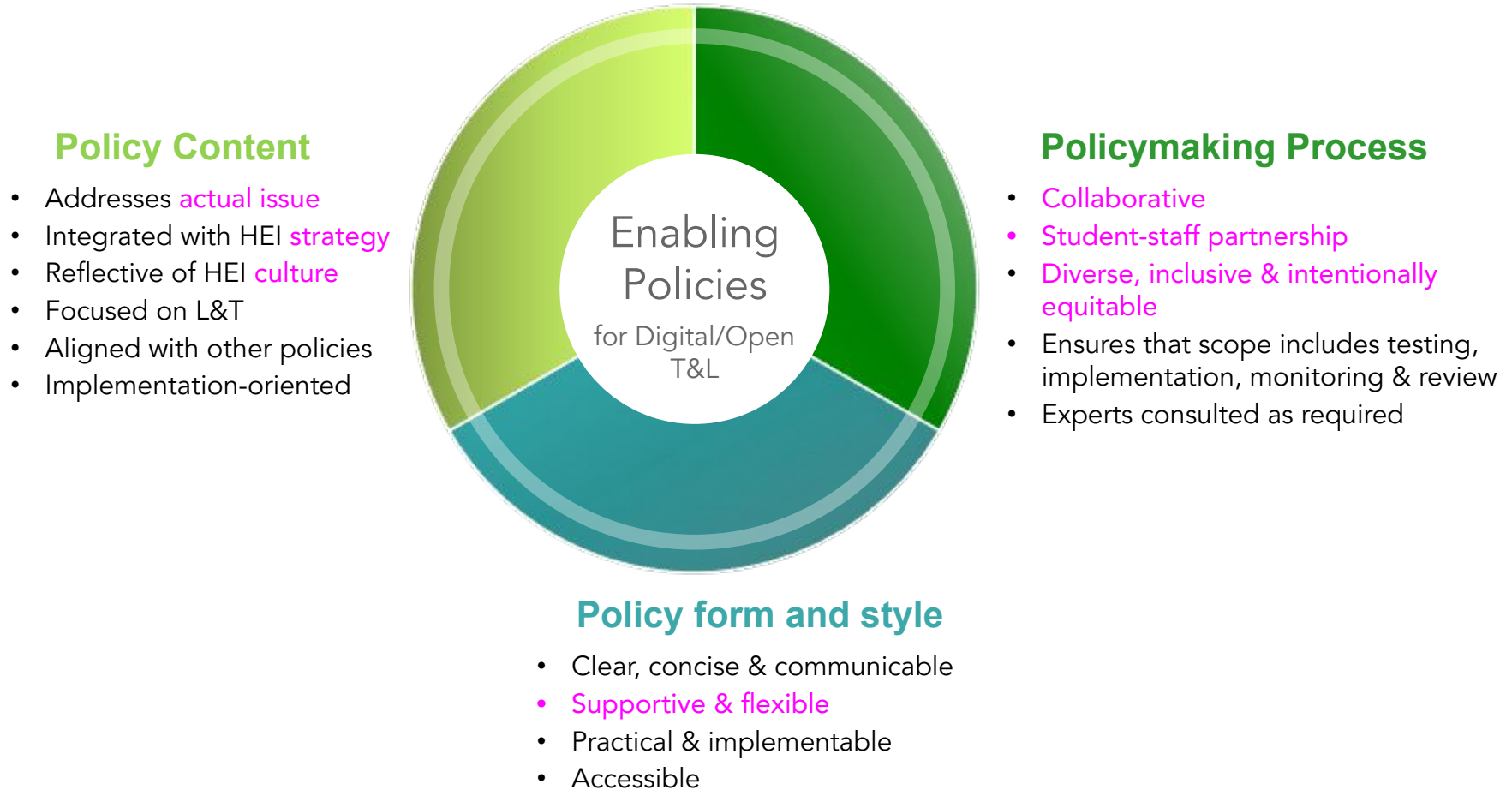- All resources published openly as OER

Guide to Developing Enabling Policies for Digital/Open Teaching & Learning

- Based on broad sectoral consultation & partnership

- Defines 'enabling' policies & outlines 5 step guide to policy development

- Focuses on diverse, inclusive & intentionally equitable policy process

- Includes case studies & policy examples from Irish & international HEIs

- Published CC BY

National Forum (2021)

Definition of Enabling Policies

Policy Content
- Addresses actual issue
- Integrated with HEI strategy
- Reflective of HEI culture
- Focused on L&T
- Aligned with other policies
- Implementation-oriented

Enabling Policies
for Digital/Open T&L

Policymaking Process
- Collaborative
- Student-staff partnership
- Diverse, inclusive & intentionally equitable
- Ensures that scope includes testing, implementation, monitoring & review
- Experts consulted as required

Policy form and style
- Clear, concise & communicable
- Supportive & flexible
- Practical & implementable
- Accessible

Developing critical data literacies

Image: CC BY-NC Alexandra Kuhn datapraxis.net

“ Whilst data are often said to be 'collected' as if pre-existing, thus reflecting reality, the processes through which data are generated and communicated are neither neutral nor devoid of adverse effects... Data are political.

Caroline Kuhn, et al (2021)
Understanding data: Praxis & Politics

“ Stratification between surveiller and surveilled — and between those who have and don't have agency over how they are surveilled... these dynamics are reshaping the social life of entire neighborhoods, communities, and cities.

Chris Gilliard (2020)

Collaboratively co-created open resources

Image: CC0 <ins>James Sutton</ins>

" Open pedagogy orients student scholarship to **public audiences** and to **public good**. In its conception, its process, and especially its exhibit and open presentation, *And Still We Rise* brought what students had been learning in the classroom to the campus community — and beyond, with the online exhibit — as **a project for racial justice**.

Joshua Beatty, et al. (<ins>2020</ins>)
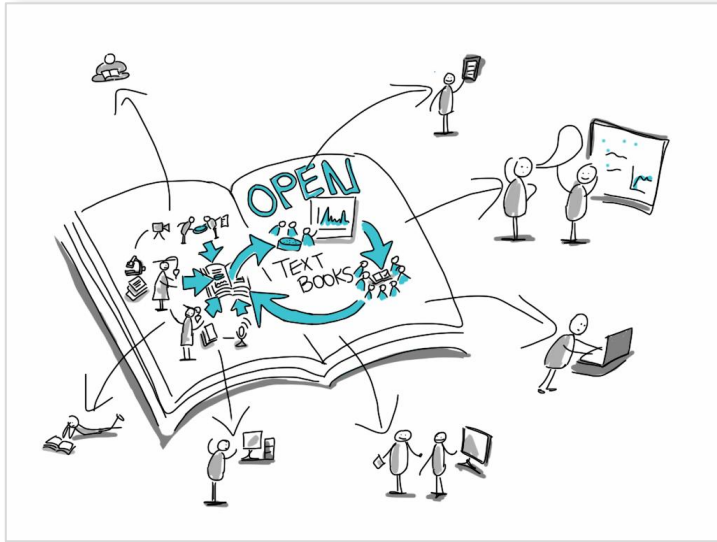'And Still We Rise' project, SUNY Plattsburgh

Co(creating) open textbooks

Image: CC0 Giulia Forsythe

> Open textbook moves beyond the idea of a textbook as simply being the content provided to students… giving marginalised voices expression and students power over how knowledge is created in order to transform universities in line with the Global South's call for social justice.

Cox, Masuku & Willmers (2020)

> Interest in content diversification is particularly on the rise to address under-representation of women in leadership, STEM and the professions and embedding Indigenous and different cultural knowledges in the curriculum.

Lambert, et al (2021)

Embedding Digital Literacies in Teaching

Playing Games to Understand Fake News

Ethical EdTech: Explore Data, Privacy, and Identity

The AUC **Digital Literacies Toolkit** aims to facilitate the integration of digital literacies into courses by providing templates, guidelines, rubrics and additional resources for faculty members to adapt for their own courses.

This toolkit is an Open Educational Resource, meaning anyone can view it for free, and anyone can adapt what is in it, with attribution, for non-commercial purposes. (CC-BY-NC)

Center for Learning & Teaching, American University Cairo ([link])

Creating/editing Wikipedia articles

Building core competencies and transferable attributes with open knowledge

✓ Digital and information literacy skills
✓ Writing as public outreach
✓ Collaborative working
✓ Information synthesis
✓ Copyright literacy
✓ Critical thinking
✓ Source evaluation
✓ Data science.

Wikipedia as learning technology

Image: CC BY Lorna Campbell
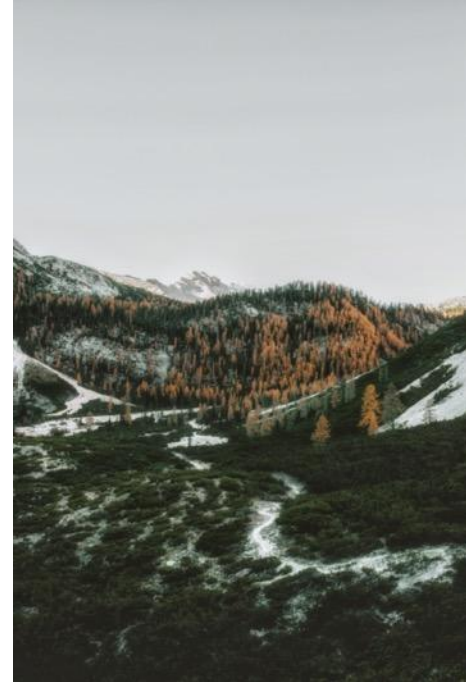
"
Don't cite Wikipedia, write Wikipedia.

Ewan McAndrew (2017)
Wikimedian in Residence, University of Edinburgh

"
Using Wikipedia… to empower students to think of themselves as authors and contributors to the information landscape.

Amanda Koziura, et al (2020)
Wikipedia Editing Project, Case Western University

Collaborative systemic approach

Embedding critical digital literacies in HE

- Engaging with ethics, power structures & inequalities
- Collaborative – across disciplines, functions, institutions, education levels, etc.
- Partnership & peer-to-peer learning (Student-Faculty-Staff)
- Contextualised (situated in local contexts)
- Strategic use of openness (to find, share, teach, assess…)
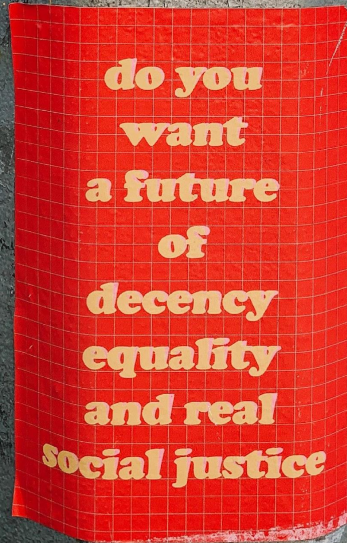- Integrated in the curriculum
- Embedded in policy, strategy & culture

"after times"

interregnum

disruption and splintering of old ways

what was before and what is coming into view

Eddie Glaude (2020)

> **"** We need to gather ourselves, for we are in the eye of the storm. We must find the courage to make the bold choices necessary for these after times.

(Glaude, 2020)

" Hope is invented every day.

James Baldwin

Thank you,

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