

TRACK 2

ENGLISH VERSION

Citizen science from below and above

Convenors:

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Bottom-up citizen science initiatives engage artists, students, hackers, journalists, entrepreneurs, and other “non-scientists” in techno-scientific activities, such as biohacking, online computer/video gaming, pollution monitoring, and wildlife species counting, among many others. As many of these initiatives serve public purposes (e.g., educational goals) and emanate within democratic and participatory countercultures (e.g., the open science movement), they challenge the authority of orthodox science. In its “purest” form, citizen science emerges as a reaction against industry, institutional science, and science policymaking, in so far as these institutes are seen to inhibit open knowledge sharing. On the other hand, some citizen scientists explicitly and deliberately link up with entrepreneurial and commercial endeavors. These dual dynamics unfold in a policy context that is conducive to the institutionalization of citizen science, as policy makers (in Europe and on the level of member states) hail citizen science as a means of “setting up future strategies of citizen engagement in the excellence in science”. This panel takes these observations as its entry point to ask how citizen science initiatives *from below* interact with institutional imperatives, discourses, and settings *from above*. Recognizing that citizen science embeds divergent, if not conflicting, assumptions about the means and ends of science and the role of the citizen/scientist in contemporary democracies, it approaches citizen science as a multifaceted practice that is shaped through a wide array of interrelated and unconnected mechanisms, programs and procedures, such as research and development processes, new technologies and systems (e.g. DIY technologies), science policy making, educational activities, science journalism, and contemporary art forms, among others. The panel invites papers that address the interaction between citizen science initiatives and institutional levels. Proposals on one or more of the following topics are welcome.

- The co-production of citizens, scientists, and citizen science.
- The discourses and practices of co-creation, openness, and sharing that sustain citizen science.
- The politics of citizen science (e.g. citizen science as counterculture; taming/domestication versus (re)wilding of citizen science).
- The role of institutes (Policy, Science, Media, Industry, etc.) as curators, facilitators, patrons, or challengers of a more collective, open science.
- The political economy of citizen science.
- Tools and methods to study the interplay between bottom-up citizen science practices and top-down science, technology, and innovation imperatives.

These topics demand empirical and conceptual scrutiny, as citizen science potentially reshapes the grounds on which science and society meet, and is reconfigured through processes of institutional uptake and “down take.”