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# Green IT: Everything starts from the software

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## **Panel Title:** Governing and Being Governed by Commons-Based Peer (Social) Production

**Focus of the Panel:** Just a decade after Castells' (1996) seminal contribution on the significance of networks as alternative templates for organizing the production of goods and services in the late capitalism of the information age, the idea has been given a new push by Benkler (2006) and his *The Wealth of Networks*. The innovative character of Benkler's work pivots around the concept of *social production*, that is, commons-based peer production of information-based goods and services (e.g. open-source software production, Wikipedia) through open collaborative arrangements that bypass the institutional framework associated with markets and corporations. Social production is the joint outcome of several developments. Among them figure prominently 1) the publicly available and non-rival nature of much information, 2) the diffusion of information resources across the population 3) the distinctive character of computational technology and 4) the low capital necessary to sustain network associations over the internet.

The preservation of social production and its further social and economic embeddedness are heavily contingent on the degree to which they will continue to epitomize a radically different model of bringing together people and resources. This entails as much a cultural as a legal battle. The cultural battle is fought over the organizational arrangements that pattern and regulate the contribution individuals make to common-based projects, that is, who makes what, under which conditions and so forth. The legal battle is fought over the institutional environment of property rights and the degree to which information will remain publicly available. Social production requires a regulatory environment that would allow access to common resources in the most frictionless fashion. Perhaps the most distinctive characteristics of social production is its viral nature: it tends to propagate in all levels and forms altering and affecting not merely the ways of producing intellectual or cultural goods but also the ways in which regulatory institutions are produced. The ultimate trophy in this battlefield of production modes is about who will have control over our common regulatory resources.

### **Panelists**

- Jannis Kallinikos , Information Systems and Innovation Group (ISIG), Department of Management, London School of Economics.
- Giovan Francesco Lanzara, Department of Political Science, University of Bologna.
- Prodromos Tsiavos, Department of Informatics, Oslo University and ISIG, Department of Management, London School of Economics.
- Ole Hanseth, Department of Informatics, Oslo University.

**Structure of the Panel:** Jannis Kallinikos (Panel Chair) will introduce the theme of the panel and outline its relevance for the study of information systems and organizations. Giovan Francesco Lanzara will take up the issue of governance and feature the corresponding literature on Wikipedia. Prodromos Tsiavos will take up issues that relate to the regulatory environment that ensures the remixing, repurposing and expansion of common-based peer production as well as the infiltration of regulatory initiatives by the model of social production itself. Ole Hanseth will address the technological foundations of social production, i.e. the issue of generative technologies or how technological architectures may facilitate or constrain social production. The issues will be discussed drawing on examples from the emerging Mobile Internet and information infrastructures in health care.

The audience will be invited to ask questions and raise issues after each of the three panel presentations. The panel chair will finally summarize the key points raised by the three panel-

lists and invite the audience in a final discussion about the prospects facing social production.