DLi @ CORNELL TECH

Digital Life Initiative

Date

Tues 27 March

Time

Gather at 4.30pm

Presentation from 4.45pm - 6.00pm

Venue

Room 301 | Bloomberg Center

Cornell Tech | Roosevelt Island

Guest Speaker

Beth Simone Noveck

GovLab

Title

Civic Technology & Democracy

www.dli.tech.cornell.edu

Digital Life
Seminar Series
Spring 2018

Biography

Beth Simone Noveck directs the Governance Lab (GovLab) and its MacArthur Research Network on Opening Governance. She is a professor in Technology, Culture, and Society at NYU's Tandon School of Engineering. Noveck's current research focuses on “people-led innovation,” namely the ability of communities and institutions to work together to solve problems more effectively and legitimately. She directs programs to promote effective public engagement in lawmaking (CrowdLaw), to help public institutions expert-source and implement innovative solutions to hard problems (Smarter Crowdsourcing) and to train civic leaders and civil servants in how to collaborate with their own communities (Civic Challenges).

Abstract

With rates of trust in government at all-time low, the legitimacy and effectiveness of traditional representative models of lawmaking, conducted by professional staff and politicians working behind largely closed doors, are being called into question. Disruptive technology offers the promise of opening lawmaking bodies, especially city councils, to new sources of expertise and opinion, and of making lawmakers accountable to the public beyond Election Day. Around the world, there are many examples of local legislatures and public authorities turning to the internet and new civic technologies to involve the public at various stages of decision-making, from agenda-setting to evaluation. We call such uses of participatory technology to engage the public in urban law and policy making process “crowdlaw.” However, despite pockets of experimentation, city councils are slow to implement public engagement, fearing that participation will be burdensome, at worst, and useless at best. Although crowdlaw could offer the potential for a two-way conversation that would channel more diverse opinions and expertise at every stage of the law- and policy-making cycle, there are many unknowns. This presentation explores which technologies could enhance lawmaking, and examines how to measure success and potential risk.