



**The future of collaborative technology and democracy**

**Aydin Thill | 27.11.2024**

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# 1\_Introduction



# 1\_Introduction

On one side, we see smart cities rising in authoritarian regimes.  
On the other, democracies struggle to digitise basic services.  
What's stopping us from catching up?

# 1\_Introduction

## Authors



### Audrey Tang

- Has been Taiwans first [Minister of Digital Affairs](#)
- Described as one of the "*ten greatest Taiwanese computing personalities*"
- Identifies as „*post-gender*"



### Glen Weyl

Economist at [Microsoft Research](#)

- Coauthor of the book *Radical Markets: Uprooting Capitalism and Democracy for a Just Society*

### Community

- The book is open-source
- Dozens of people contributed

# 1\_Introduction

## The Problem

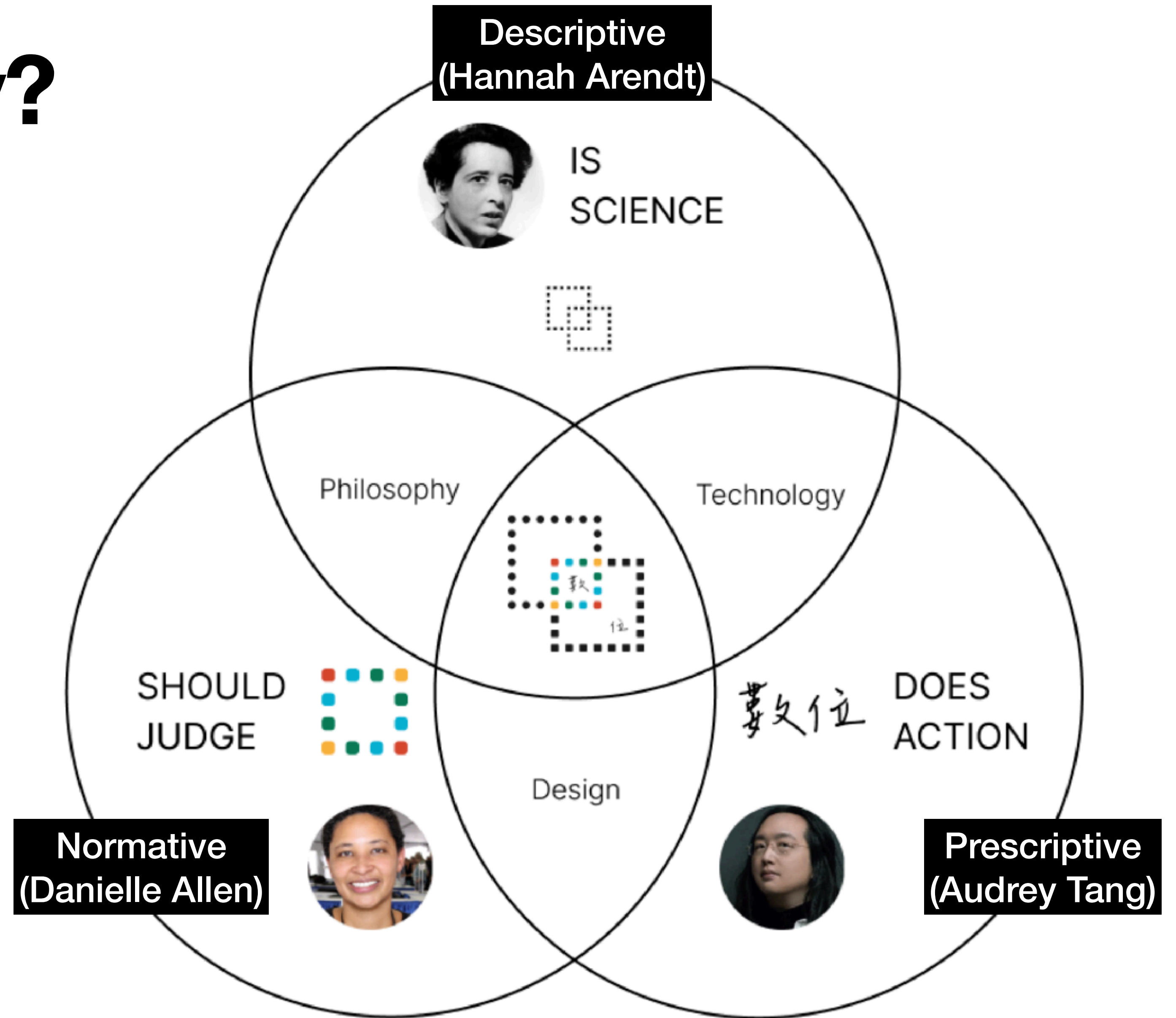
*Technology is at odds with democracy*

Can creative technologies reconcile this tension and lead us to a collaborative future?

# 2\_What is Plurality?

## The three pillars

„[...] technology for collaboration across social difference”





# 2\_What is Plurality?

Economic Equality  
Large scale Cooperation  
Mitigation of existential risk



## Digital Democracy

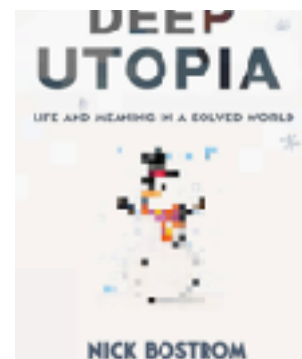
Plurality, digital pluralism, digital dignity, 21st century participatory democracy, fork-and-merge government, wiki government



Decentralisation  
freedom  
rights

## Synthetic Technocracy

AI Singularity, automated luxury communism, AI abundance, AI maximalism, Universal basic income, Post scarcity



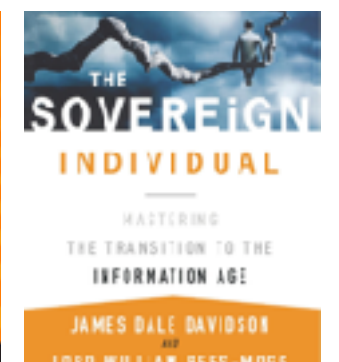
## Universalism

Economic efficiency  
Growth/Meritocracy



## Corporate Libertarianism

Individual sovereignty, exitocracy, neoreaction (NRx), dark enlightenment, anarchy-capitalism, Bitcoin maximalism, crypto maximalism, cryptopunk, bronze age mindset, techno libertarianism





# **2\_What is Plurality?**

## **The creative connection**

In creative technologies, we design systems that influence behavior, relationships, and even governance. Plurality gives us a framework to design with collaboration at the core.

# **3\_History lesson**

## **Uprise of the internet**

### **Initial promise**

- Tool for democratising information, fostering global connectivity, and empowering individuals.

# 3\_History lesson

## Uprise of the internet

### Key milestones included:

- Development of email, forums and search engines
- Social media's initial role in amplifying voices, such as during the Arab Spring
- Created platforms for creativity, collaboration, and global sharing of ideas

# 3\_History lesson

## The divide

- **Polarisation:** Social media algorithms promote echo chambers and misinformation
- **Centralisation of Power:** A few tech corporations (e.g., Google, Meta, Amazon) dominate data, communication, and infrastructure
- **Erosion of Trust:** Privacy violations, surveillance, and manipulation of public opinion undermine democratic norms.

# **3\_History lesson**

## **Contrasting Approaches**

### **Democracies:**

- Struggle to regulate technology effectively
- Face challenges in integrating digital systems

### **Authoritarian Regimes:**

- Rapidly integrate technology for surveillance and control (e.g., China's social credit system, Russia's facial recognition for protests).

# 3\_History lesson

## Revisiting Nelson's concerns

- 1. Pervasive surveillance and public distrust of government.*
- 2. Paralysis of government's ability to regulate or enforce laws, as they fall behind the dominant technologies citizens use.*
- 3. Debasement of creative professions.*
- 4. Monopolization and corporate exploitation.*
- 5. Pervasive digital misinformation.*
- 6. Siloing of information that undermines much of the potential of networking.*
- 7. Government data and statistics becoming increasingly inaccurate and irrelevant.*
- 8. Control by private entities of the fundamental platforms for speech and public discourse.*

# 4\_Implementation

## Case studies

### The Netflix Prize

- Netflix's 2009 challenge offered \$1 million to improve its recommendation algorithm by 10%



# 4\_Implementation

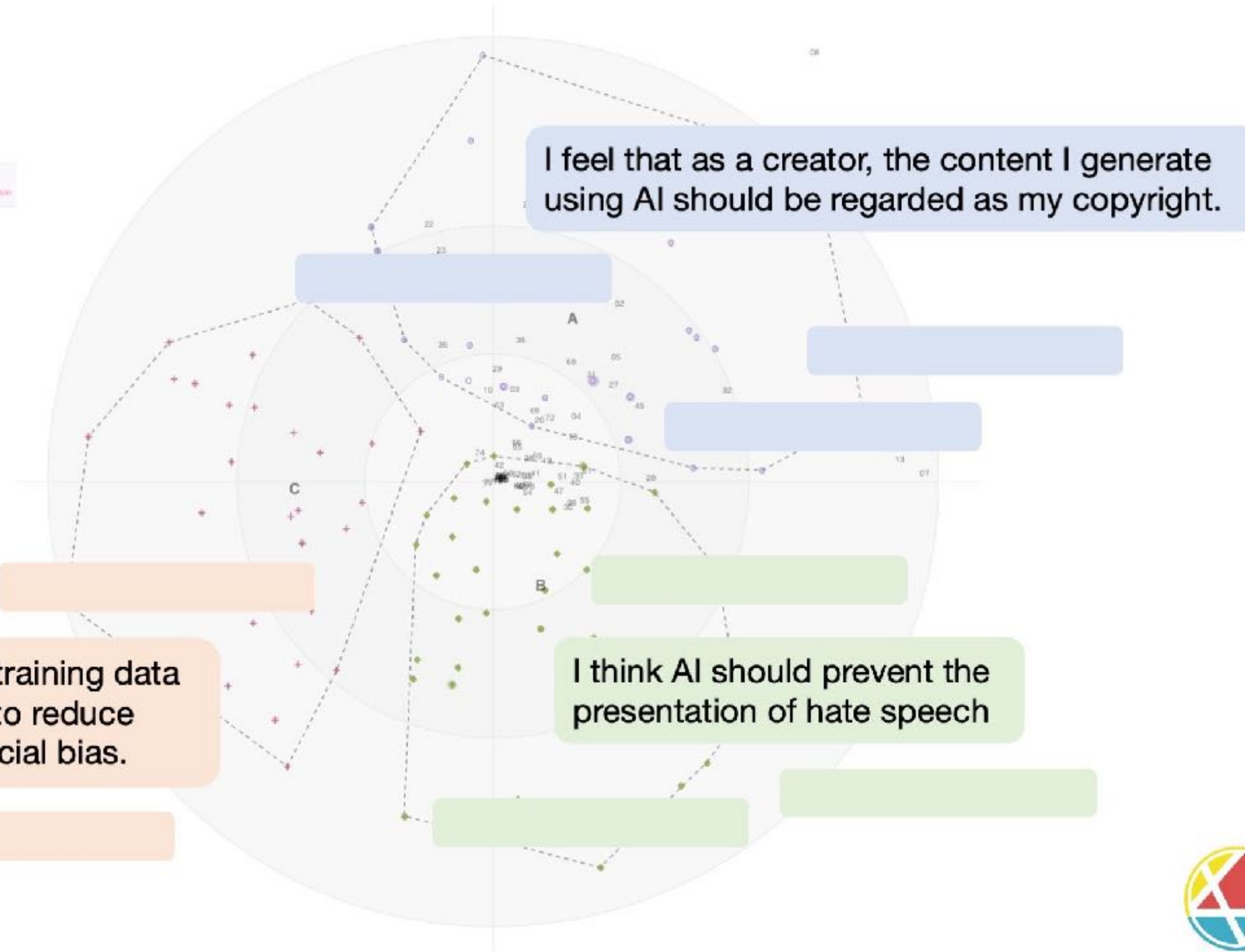
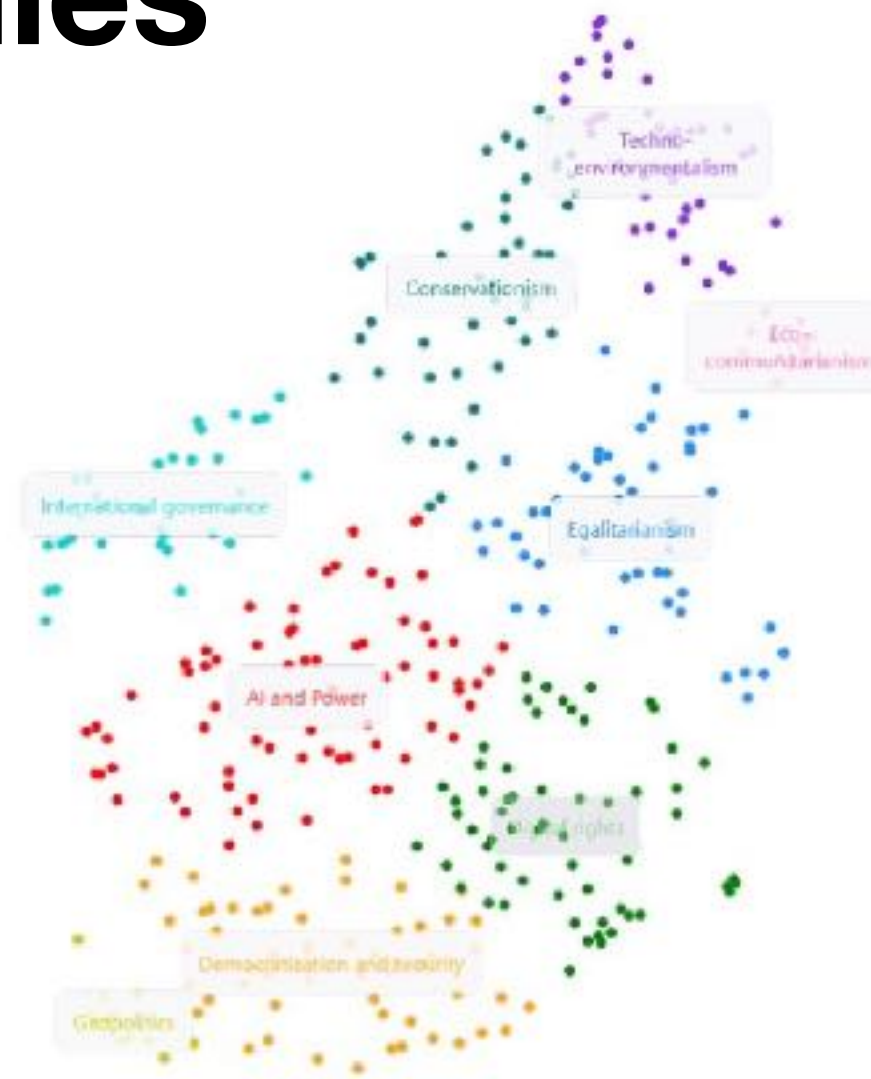
## Case studies

### vTaiwan and Polis

- vTaiwan is a digital democracy initiative that facilitates public participation in policymaking using advanced digital tools
- Polis is a AI-driven consensus builder implemented in vTaiwan  
It analyses public input and visualises areas of agreement and disagreement

# 4\_Implementation

## Case studies



# 4\_Implementation

## Case studies

### g0v (gov-zero)

- A Taiwanese civic tech initiative promoting transparency and citizen engagement by building open-source tools to improve governance
- Born out of frustration with government opacity, g0v empowers citizens to create their own solutions.

# 4\_Implementation

## Case studies

### Notable projects realised by g0v

- **Open Budget:** A platform that visualises Taiwan's national budget for public insight
- **Real-Time Mask Maps:** During COVID-19, g0v developers created a map showing the availability of face masks across the country, reducing panic and misinformation

# 4\_Implementation

## Real-World Applications

- Adapting Models like g0v and vTaiwan Globally
- Encouraging cross-team collaboration within organisations to solve complex challenges
- Using collaborative tools to bring students and educators together to solve real-world problems
- Encourage the use of open-source tools

# 4\_Implementation

## Takeaways for Individuals

- Engage with Open-Source Communities
- Design systems that prioritise user empowerment, transparency, and ethical data practices
- Push for tools like Polis or participatory platforms in organisations and local governments
- Encourage the use of open-source tools

# Conclusion



# Conclusion

- internet of beings

# Conclusion

- internet of beings
- shared reality

# Conclusion

- internet of beings
- shared reality
- collaborative learning

# Conclusion

- internet of beings
- shared reality
- collaborative learning
- human experience

# Conclusion

- internet of beings
- shared reality
- collaborative learning
- human experience
- **Plurality**

# Conclusion

**Thank you**

# Questions

## Question 1

Taiwan, under constant pressure from the PRC (China) through misinformation campaigns and the threat of annexation, has demonstrated remarkable resilience by uniting its diverse population around democratic values. This urgency has driven Taiwan to integrate advanced technologies into its political and social systems effectively.

When you think about the places you're most familiar with (e.g. Germany, Columbia, South Africa, Switzerland), do you see signs that their systems are becoming outdated in their integration of technology? Why or why not?"



# Questions

## Question 2

What do you think it would take for these places to follow in Taiwan's footsteps? Do you believe the ideology of Plurality is realistic and achievable in these contexts, or is it too idealistic to be implemented broadly?

# Questions

## Question 3

Examples like the Netflix Prize, vTaiwan, and g0v illustrate how technology can foster collaboration and problem-solving. What lessons from these case studies could be applied to your local context, and what challenges might arise when trying to replicate them?