Governing the Invisible Economy

Internship Project for CS 184

Organization: The Metagovernance Project

One-liner: design and build a decentralized digital governance system for DADA.art based on its Invisible Economy specification.

What is the problem? DADA is one of a new class of digital platforms that are distributing and decentralizing aspects of their governance and operations to the users of that platform. The problem here is to design, build, and test a workable system for community governance for DADA, whether it be a direct democracy, a sortition-based system, anarchy / do-ocracy, or something else entirely.

Why is it important? Digital self-governance is important because

1. digital platforms are important, and thus governing them is important.
2. online governance is tightly connected to offline governance. As we have seen in recent years, the politics of real space is tightly connected to the politics of digital spaces. But the politics of these digital spaces is still very underdeveloped.
3. digital platforms allow us to pioneer new forms of governance that are impossible or infeasible for offline communities. In particular, projects like DADA present an opportunity to pioneer a new class of "ownership economies" for different sectors of the economy and to understand how we might build a better, fairer, and more equitable Internet.

What data and other resources are available? Metagov has built a database, Govbase, that collects software projects and governance patterns in online communities as well as existing constitutions, codes for conduct, and other primary-source documentation of the governance of online communities. We are also familiar with a range of existing software tools for online governance that students will be able to interact with.

What constitutes success? This project will be considered successful if the students can (1) write a short paper detailing the governance challenges of DADA; ideally this paper will incorporate a mathematical and/or game-theoretic model of those challenges, (2) draft a *computational constitution* for DADA in response to those challenges, where a computational constitution is a combination of a traditional constitution and a software spec for the governance of DADA, and (3) prototype basic aspects of that computational constitution using existing, open-source software tools.

Mentors: Joshua Tan (computer scientist @ Oxford + Stanford, founder @ Metagov), Bea Ramos (artist, founder @ DADA.art)

Suitable for: students interested in digital governance and power, democratic theory and political economy, cryptocurrency, the digital art market, and the design of digital incentive systems.

Background

The Metagovernance Project is a non-profit research collective. We build standards and infrastructure for digital self-governance. Learn more about our people and our work at www.metagov.org.

DADA is a social platform where people speak to each other through drawings, creating collaborative art.