

Paper Presentation at the PCE 2016 Conference New York City
July 20th - 24th, 2016
CUNY Graduate Center, 365 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10016

Identity and Identification - On Becoming a Person in the Age of Social Media, Biometrics and Big Data

Carl Rogers has described the conditions people need in order to develop towards self-determination and autonomy. Unfavourable social conditions can rob individuals the freedom of becoming and being as they truly are. Today the optimism which existed at the beginning of the internet age regarding digital freedom seems naïve. The uncontrolled mass storage of personal data on the web is changing both the way we think and the way we act.

Societies in Europe are developing in different directions with some countries increasing the pressure to conform and restricting the freedom of expression and data control. People in such situations react very differently- they may be concerned, they may be afraid. This may result in more self-control in some while others react with greater conformity or mistrust. In such societies people feel they are constantly observed, and developmental opportunities are limited due to a loss of autonomy.

While the digitalization of all aspects of our lives is rich in potential, it contains hidden dangers as well. For many it is not clear just how much personal data they reveal in their daily lives, and the right of each individual to determine the access to - and use of their data is interpreted very differently around the world. Many national authorities and international companies exploit the lack of both technical and legal clarity to collect enormous amounts of personal data.

Data protection is a central question in the twenty-first century. Just as we once fought for the freedom of the media, a fight which still continues today, we must now formulate and defend our basic rights with regard to personal data.

Dr. Robert Waldl

www.bois.at

Schottenfeldgasse 41/20, 1070 Vienna, Austria

phone: +43 664 233 27 49

E-mail: office@waldl.com