

(Beyond) Official Document Utopias

Narrare, Narrative Studies Seminar
14 February 2023

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Current research project

- “Speculative social science fiction of digitalization in higher education: Towards a humanized digital future”
- Funded by the Academy of Finland
- More at <https://carde.group>



***Our journey so far
with the research
of digitalization***



Critical Document

Discourse Analysis

- Critical discourse analysis of intergovernmental and governmental, international and national documents
- Reports and working papers from the OECD, World Economic Forum, UNESCO, EU, International Labour Organization, Finnish Ministry of Education, Finnish National Agency for Education, Finnish Government, Microsoft (with McKinsey & Co, educational influencers), Google (e.g. with The Economist)
- Digivision 2030 initiative documents: “Finland as a model country for flexible learning, and a global pioneer in higher education” (<https://digivisio2030.fi>)

<https://netn.fi/node/8405>

NIIN&NÄIN LEHTI JUTTUARKISTO KIRJAT VERKKOKAUPPA YHTE

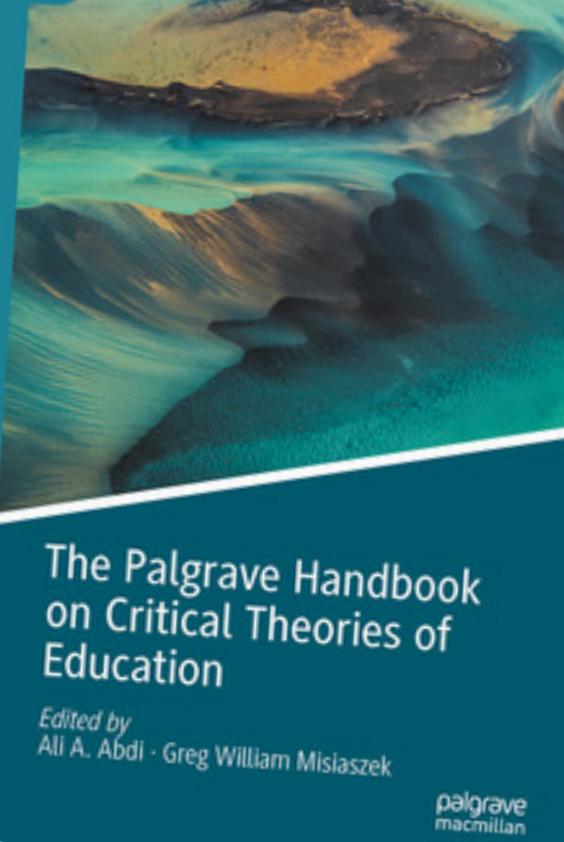
Suoranta, Juha, Teräs, Marko

”Suomesta joustavan oppimisen mallimaa” – Digivisio 2030 -hankkeen ja korkeakoulutuksen digitalisaation kriittinen analyysi

niin & näin 4/22

Liite	Koko
Suoranta & Teräs - "Suomesta joustavan oppimisen mallimaa" - 224-06	214.47 KB

Tietoyhteiskunnan strategioita ja tietoyhteiskuntamalleja on laadittu Suomessa jo 1990-luvulta. Niissä informaatioteknolojia on pidetty koulutuksen ja jopa koko Suomen pelastuksesta. Osana Juha Sipilän hallitusohjelmaa (2015–2019) Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö käynnisti vuonna 2017 uuden korkeakoulutuksen ja tutkimuksen visiötön, *Ehdotus Suomelle 100+*. Sen yhtenä tuloksena perustettiin korkeakoulukentän kattava koulutuksen digitalisaatiohanke Digivisio 2030. Hankkeessa tavoitellaan kansallista digitaalista ”palvelualustaa”, joka tarjoaa opinnolliset tietovarannot kaikkien käyttöön. Arviomme mukaan Digivisio 2030 -hanketta ja yleisemminkin koulutuksen



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<https://doi.org/10.1787/df80bc12-en>
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Some sources: UNESCO

- UNESCO. (2020). *Responding to COVID-19 and beyond, the Global Education Coalition in action*. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374364>
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Some sources: Finnish Ministry of Education (OKM)

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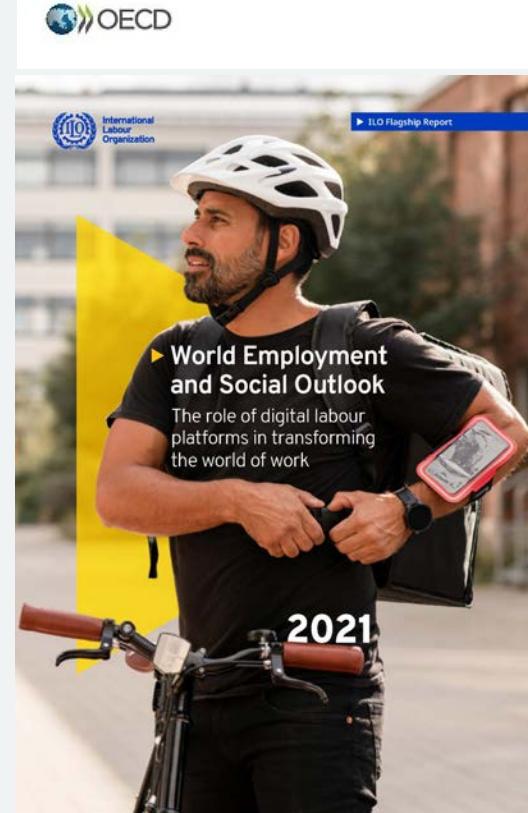
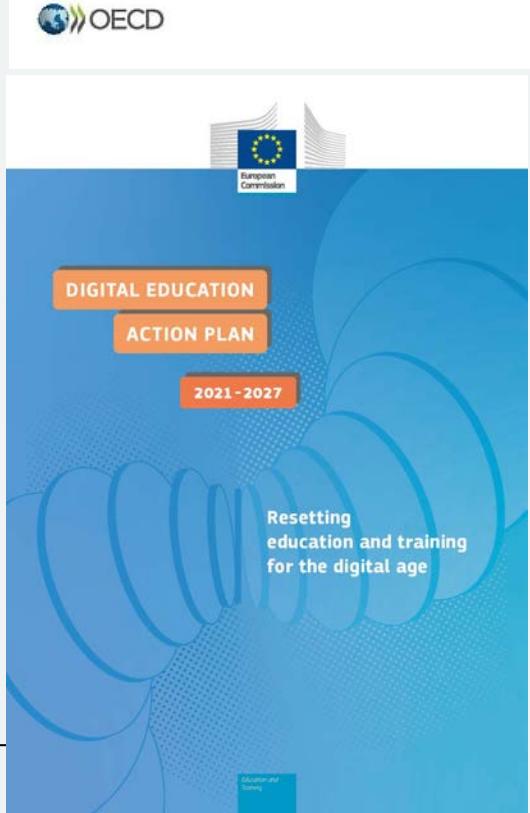
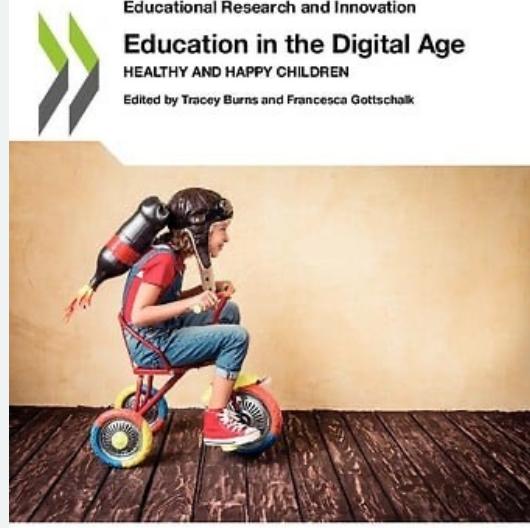


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Future visions





The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022



To recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and deliver global sustainability, we need an urgent rescue effort for the SDGs. We must deliver on our commitments to support the world's most vulnerable people, communities and nations. Creating a global economy that works for all will require bold action. Greater investment in data infrastructure is needed to efficiently target investments now, anticipate future demands, avoid crises from descending into full-blown conflict and plan the urgent steps needed to achieve the 2030 Agenda.

António GUTERRES
Secretary-General of the United Nations



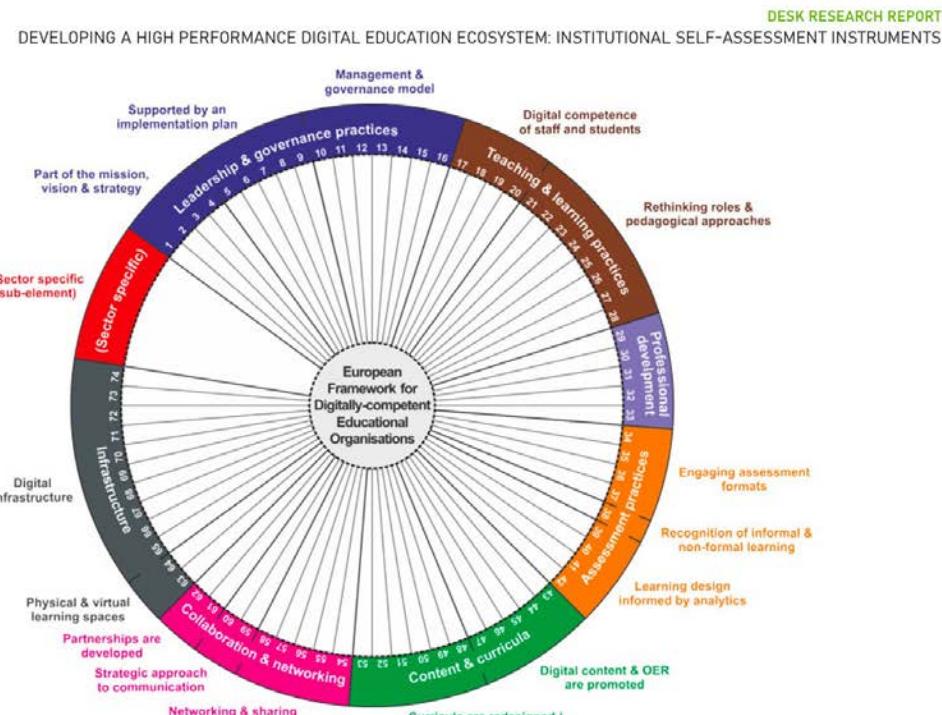
European University Association (EUA)

4.5. Key themes

The instruments cover a wide range of key themes, with the most common being:

- policy and governance, including strategy, leadership, vision and philosophy, digital transformation, organisational digital culture, administration, legal framework;
- financing and funding, including sustainability;
- IT infrastructure including systems, platforms, tools and their application, along with digital resources;
- course, programme and curriculum design, including assessment practices;
- professional development, digital skills and staff support;
- student training, development and support, including digital identity and well-being, digital citizenship, and integrity;
- accessibility and usability of digitally enhanced learning resources and environments;
- collaboration and networking;
- research and innovation;
- quality management;
- measurement of impact.

These key themes do not feature in every instrument. However, a significant amount of overlap was observed among instruments in terms of the key themes. For example, strategy, governance, infrastructure and resources are addressed in most instruments, while staff and student support, curriculum and assessment are in almost half.



Leadership and organisational culture as key themes run through many of the instruments, but the Commonwealth of Learning (CoL) Benchmarking Toolkit for Technology Enabled Learning is notable as it provides separate and quite detailed benchmarks to each of them. Organisational culture also permeates through JISC's model of the digitally capable organisation. Leadership is one of the key themes included in SELFIE and DigCompOrg (Figure 2) along with the value of collaboration and networking, with the latter not as obvious in other instruments designed for higher education. With the exception of HEInnovate, few of the instruments have explicit key themes that self-assess the wider research and innovation culture supporting DELT, which could be seen as yet another important gap.

European University Association. (2021). *Developing a High Performance Digital Education Ecosystem: Institutional Self-Assessment Instruments*. European University Association.

<https://eua.eu/downloads/publications/digi-he%20desk%20research%20report.pdf>



OPEUTUS-JA KULTTUURIMINISTERIÖ / EN / AREAS OF EXPERTISE / HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
/ POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENCE / VISION 2030

Higher education and research

Higher education institutions and science agencies
Policy and development in higher education and science
International strategy for higher education and research
Steering, financing and agreements
Higher education and degrees
Science and research
Statistics

Vision for higher education and research in 2030

The vision for the Finnish higher education and research in 2030 was drawn up in cooperation with higher education institutions and other stakeholders and was published in October 2017.

NB: This project has ended and the webpage will no longer be updated.

The purpose was to formulate a future scenario which enables the development of a high-quality, effective and internationally competitive higher education system in Finland by the year 2030.

In the course of this work, different alternatives and models for improving the Finnish higher education system were examined and their impacts and feasibility assessed. The development needs of the Finnish higher education and research were reviewed and the future desired state defined on the basis of the changes in the national and international operating environment.

The work was carried out in broad and open cooperation with the higher education institutions and their staff, students and stakeholders.

See also

[Roadmap for Implementing Vision 2030](#) PDF 736kB 31.1.2019

[Proposal for Finland](#) PDF 467kB 24.10.2017

[OECD report on collaboration among higher education institutions](#) PDF 1.1MB 17.11.2017



JRC SCIENCE FOR POLICY REPORT

DigComp 2.0: The Digital Competence Framework for Citizens

Update Phase 1:
The Conceptual Reference
Model

Riina Vuorikari, Yves Punie, Stephanie Carretero, Lieve Van den Brande

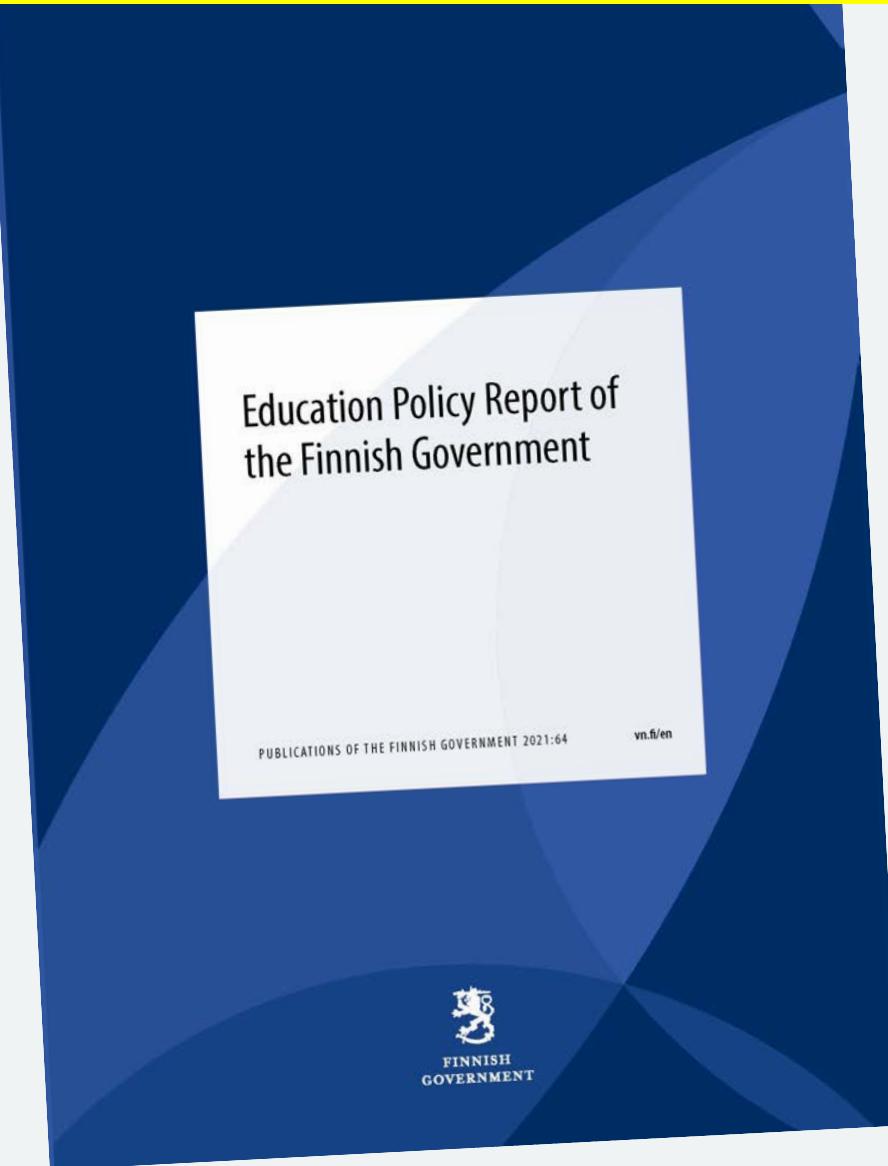
2016



REPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON THE FUTURES OF EDUCATION

**Future visions
and policies**

Education Policy Report 2021



Finland will be the world's leading user of digitalisation in higher education and continuous learning based on it. (p. 34)

Finland will be able to capitalise on knowledge produced in other parts of the world and global megatrends, including the potential created by digitalisation and artificial intelligence.

Technological advancement changes skills needs and influences the type of knowledge and skills the education system should produce. Due to the structural change in the world of work, which is accelerated by digitalisation, some tasks will disappear in the labour market; however, new tasks which often have higher skills requirements will replace them over the long term.



Future visions

Sitra, the Finnish Innovation Fund, is an independent public foundation which operates directly under the supervision of the Finnish Parliament.

SITRA

SITRA STUDIES 203

JANUARY 2022

WEAK SIGNALS 2022

Stories about futures

Mikko Dufva & Christopher Rowley



At home

Home is the place we know best, a place of our own in a world that can seem alien elsewhere. Home is also loaded with expectations, many of which we rarely think about unless forced to do so. This can happen when faced with a pandemic, moving house, or homelessness, for example. In the future, will "home" always be a physical location, or might the term be used to refer to one's body, a feeling or a setting?

At work

The future of work tends to be a favourite topic of foresight research. When talking about future scenarios for our working lives, it often feels as if the changes would be the same for everyone. But there is no such thing as a single future working life scenario, just as our working lives at present are not the same for all. What does work really mean now, and what will it mean in the future? Is it about having something to do, earning a living, or having the freedom to live a more relaxed day-to-day life?

In nature

The climate crisis, extreme weather conditions and loss of biodiversity are no longer things of the future: they are happening today. Our actions have shaped the environment into something never seen before. The good old days of stability are long gone, and we are embarking on an era of post-normal surprises. We are dependent on nature, but nature is not dependent on us. What direction will our relationship with nature take?

In the city

Urbanization has been a hot topic for a long time, both globally and here in Finland. Population is concentrated in cities more than ever, but of course cities are also much more than just where people live. People visit cities for work, to go shopping, attend cultural events and enjoy themselves. What will cities be like in the future? Whose hands will leave their prints in urban spaces?

Making decisions

The global decline of democracy has been apparent for the past 15 years. Democracy only works when people trust each other and the institutions and decision-makers in their society. What about at the individual level? What kind of decisions will we be making in the future, and how will we make them? What kind of assistive tools might we have, and what and who will we be able to trust when it comes to decision making?

In the metaverse

We used to talk about surfing the information superhighway; today's buzzwords are social media bubbles and the metaverse. What about tomorrow? What shape will the digital environment take in the future and what will we do there? The metaverse refers to an environment in which the digital and physical world become closely intertwined.

Mitä jos? Toisenlaisia tulevaisuuksia

Design Club Open Call
Kiiia Beilinson FEMMA Planning Pasi Kärkkäinen-Tunkelo Irene Suosalo Pekko Vasantola Dario Vidal

What if? Alternative Futures

9.9.2022–12.3.2023

Mitä jos voisimme tulevaisuudessa kommunikoida lajienvälistä, ottaa kaupungin haltuun tai mitata ja jakaa tunteita?

Pystymme helpommin kuvittelemaan sen, mitä jo on, kuin sen, mitä voisi olla. Ajattelemme tulevaisuutta helposti nykyhetken jatkumona, jossa asiat ovat usein vain nopeampia, isompia ja tehokkaampia. Tulevaisuus on kuitenkin yllättävällä tavalla yllättävä. Ei ole yhtä tulevaisuutta, joka vääjäämättä vöröy meitä kohti, vaan tulevaisuus on nykyhetken valintojen ja tekijöjen summa. Siksi tulevaisuus ja sen kuvittelu kuuluu kaikille.

Mitä jos? Toisenlaisia tulevaisuuksia -näyttely kutsuu vaihtoehtisten tulevaisuuksien äärelle. Näyttelyssä esillä olevat teokset ovat seitsemän luovan alan tekijän tulkinna toisenlaisista tulevaisuuksista, jotka toimivat näyttelyssä lähtöpisteinä erilaisten maailmojen kuvitteluille ja olemassa olevien oletusten haastamiselle.

... toisenlaisista tulevaisuuksista pohjautuu tulevaisustalo Sitralla, jossa on tunnistettu ja tulkittu tulevaisuuden näkökulmia ja tulevaisuuden tulevaisuuksista elämäämme. Teokset ...

What if we were capable of interspecies communication, could we imagine a city, or measure and share our emotions?

It is easier for us to imagine things that already exist than to envision those that might be. We often think of the future as a continuum of the present, with the same things but faster, bigger and more efficient. The future, however, surprises us in surprising ways. No single future is going inevitably upon us; rather, the future is the sum of the decisions and actions we take in the present. That is why imagining the future belongs to everyone.

The What if? Alternative Futures exhibition invites you to explore speculations of future. The six works in the exhibition present interpretations of alternative futures constructed by creative professionals. They offer us resources with which to imagine different worlds of tomorrow and challenge our current expectations of the future.

The exhibition exploring alternative futures is based on future fund Sitra's *Weak Signals* report, which identifies and interprets unexpected future phenomena, as well as their potential impacts on our lives. The works are organized according to the six themes through which weak signals were studied: at home, at work, in nature, in the city, making decisions and in the metaverse.

Design Club on Designmuseon yritysverkosto, jonka jäseniä ovat Design Museumin yhteistyökumppanit. Design Club on Designmuseon yritysverkoston toimintaa tukeva Design Club Open Call -näyttelysarja, jossa pääteissä esitellään valkutusta tarjotaan yrityksille mahdollisuus olla tukemassa uusia luovia avauksia. Tämän vuoden näytteillä teemana oli uusi tieto.

Design Museum Helsinki

kotonu...
Design Club on Designmuseon yritysverkosto, jonka jäseniä ovat Design Museumin yhteistyökumppanit. Design Club on Designmuseon yritysverkoston toimintaa tukeva Design Club Open Call -näyttelysarja, jossa pääteissä esitellään valkutusta tarjotaan yrityksille mahdollisuus olla tukemassa uusia luovia avauksia. Tämän vuoden näytteillä teemana oli uusi tieto.

Note on the authority and power of these documents

- An example from a Finnish National Agency for Education report
- 23 international sources on digitalization:
 - + 5 company websites/blogs
 - + 1 Market research website
 - + 2 Company and analyst websites/blogs (HolonIQ, Microsoft)
 - + 3 Newspapers and other publication websites/blogs
 - + 6 Intergovernmental organization and actor reports
 - + 3 Associations and non-profit organizations
 - + 1 Conference paper
 - + 1 Academic publisher website
 - + 1 journal editorial
 - + 0 Peer reviewed research articles



Key discursive statements

1. “The future is more uncertain than ever”
2. “Digitalization is disrupting/transforming [your field here]” (digitalization as challenge)
3. “There is huge potential in digitalization to transform [your field here]” (digitalization as potential)
4. “[Your field here] is outdated/not yet fulfilling its potential”
5. “Digitalization of [your field here] can ensure a better future”

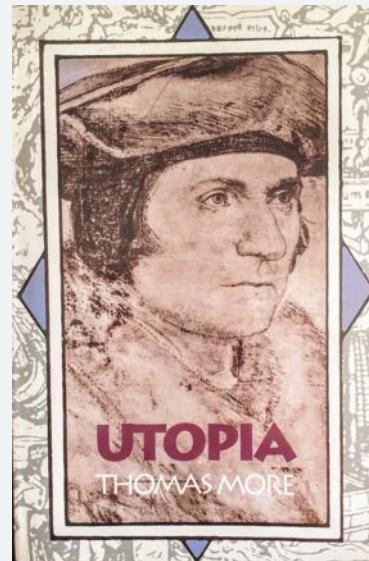


Utopian elements in the documents

“Utopia”:

Thomas More coined the word as the title and locus of his 1516 Utopia in a pun which conflates *outopos* or no place and *eutopos* or a “good place”. Consequently utopia is widely understood as an imagined perfect society or wishfully constructed place which does not and cannot exist.

(Levitas, Utopia as Method, 2013, p. 3)

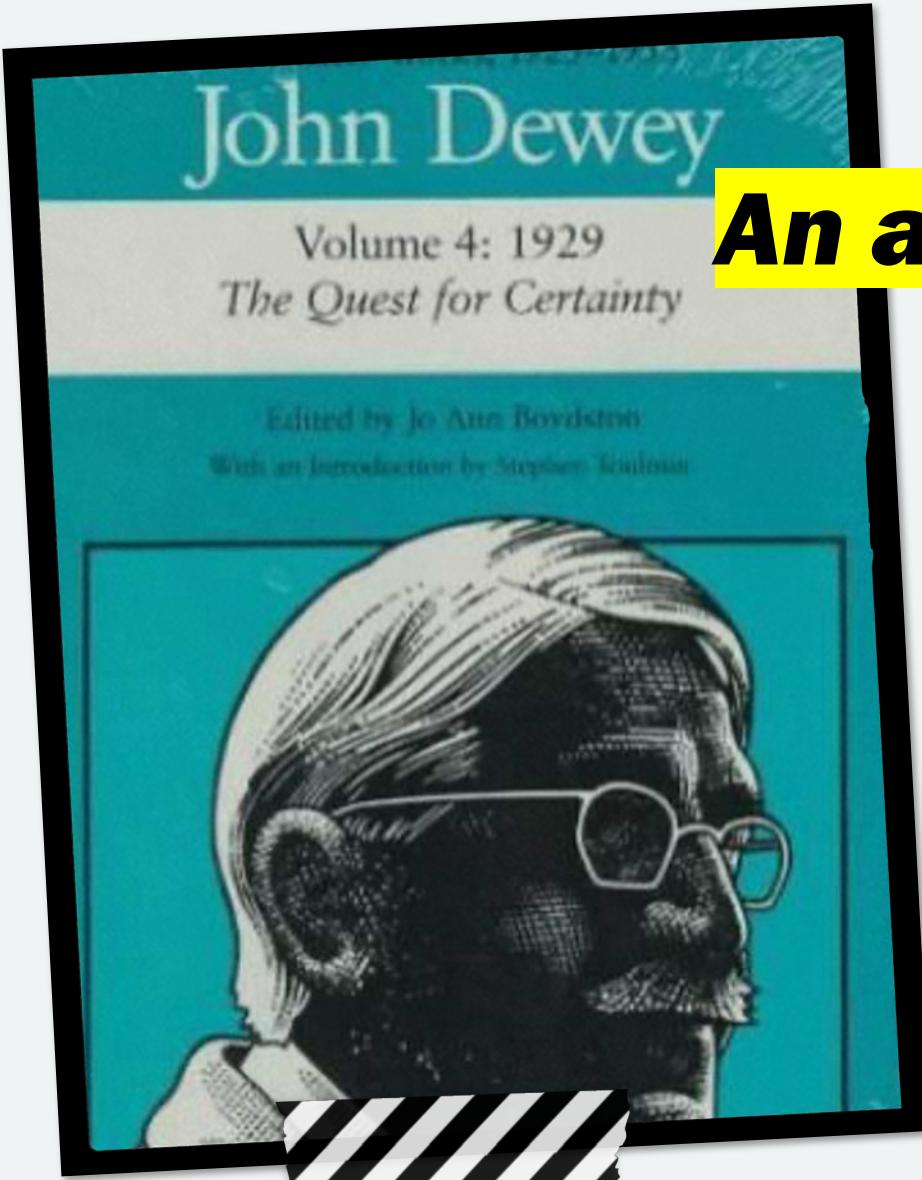


1. There is something wrong with the current state of things (also posing a sense of ‘crisis’)
2. (Technological) solutions or blueprints on how the world could be changed “better”
3. Implicitly defining what is desirable or “better”
4. But are they actually “pseudo-utopias”?

“Official Document Utopias”



- These documents build a picture of a future which can be *ensured* with digitalization/datafication
- Documents build the future they only claim to predict
- Possible futures become *a* future

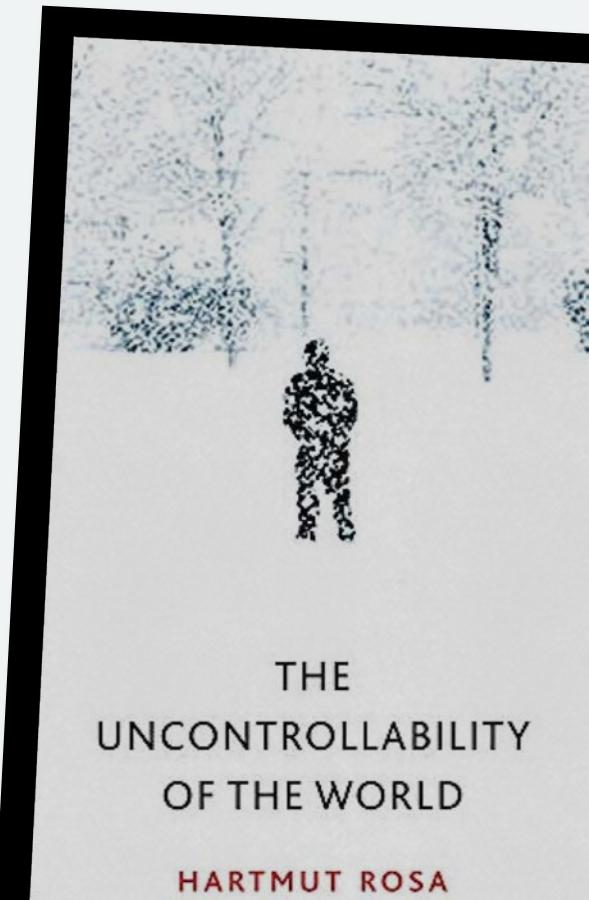


An age-old quest for 'certainty'?

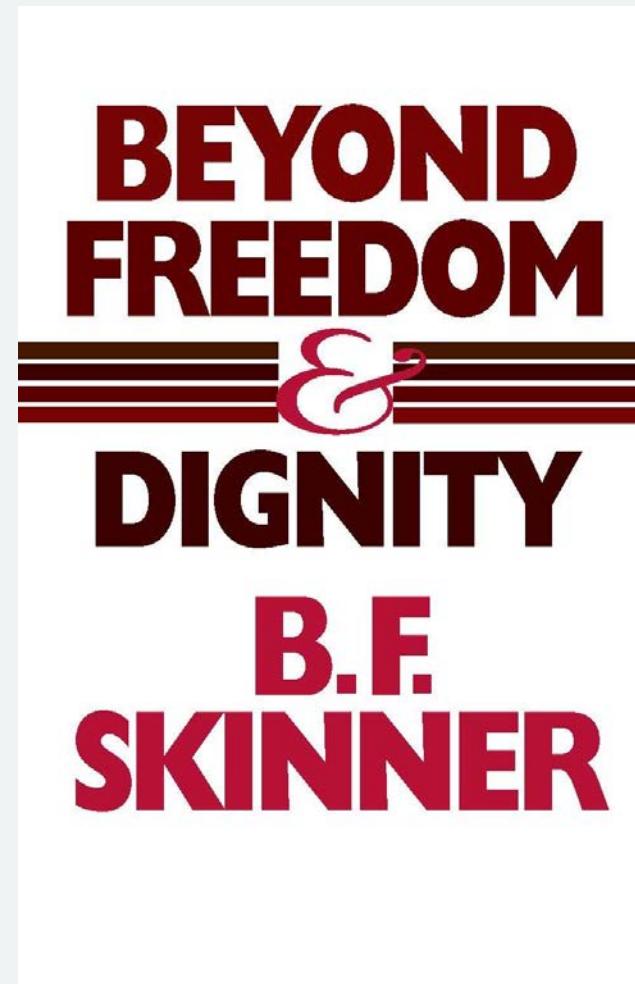
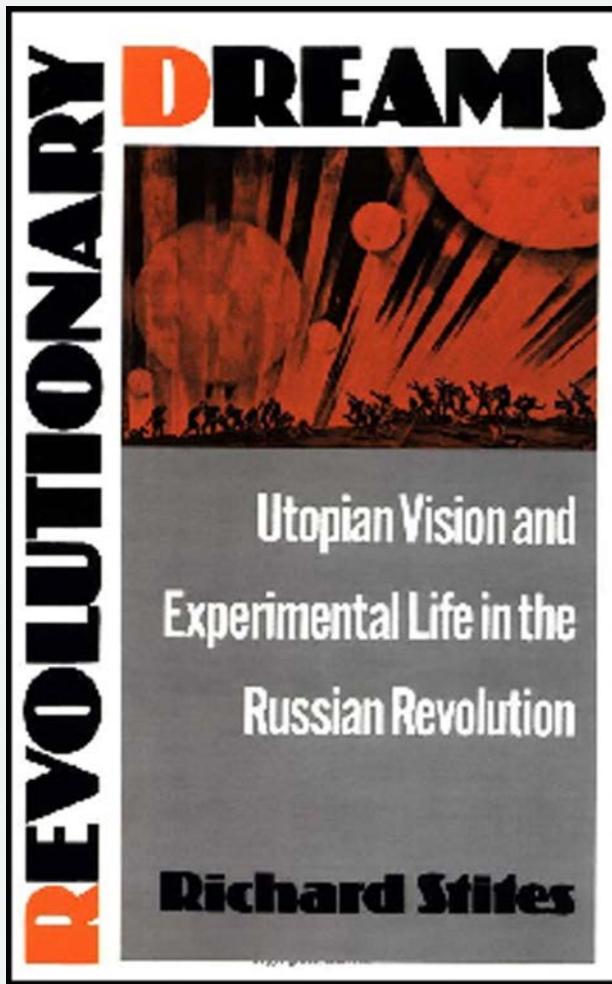
“Man who lives in a world of hazards is compelled to seek for security. He has sought to attain it in two ways. One of them 'began with an attempt to propitiate the powers which environ him and determine his destiny. It expressed itself in supplication, sacrifice, ceremonial rite and magical cult.’

“The other course is to invent arts and by their means turn the powers of nature to account; man constructs a fortress out of the very conditions and forces which threaten him.”

(Dewey, 1929, p. 15)



HARTMUT ROSA



**Technological
and science
utopias**





Pandora's Box, subtitled A Fable From the Age of Science, is a six part 1992 BBC documentary television series written and produced by Adam Curtis.

In summary...

Pandora's Box, E1: The Engineers' Plot (36:41)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h3gwyHNo7MI>



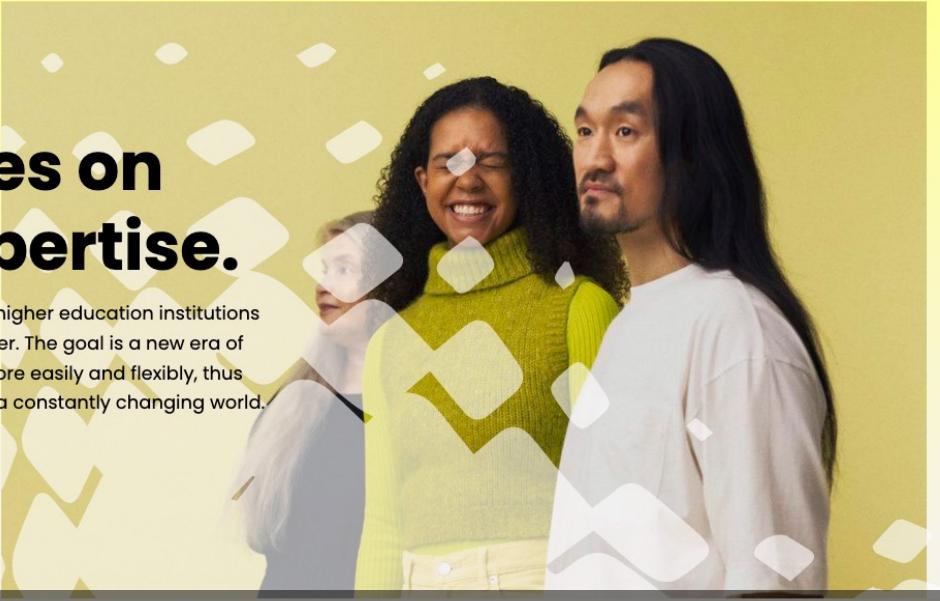
Digivisio 2030: Operationalizing a technological utopia?

DIGIVISIO

Take part ▾ About us ▾ EN ▾

Finland lives on diverse expertise.

In the Digivisio 2030 project, all Finnish higher education institutions are building a future of learning together. The goal is a new era of learning where each of us can learn more easily and flexibly, thus accumulating the expertise needed in a constantly changing world.


<https://digivisio2030.fi/en/frontpage/>

- Funded by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture
- Digivisio 2030 is a joint project whose aim is to create a future for learning that benefits higher education institutions, learners and our society as a whole.
- All 38 Finnish higher education institutions have signed the project's participation agreement, and the project office was established at the end of 2020.
(<https://digivisio2030.fi/en/basic-information-on-the-digivisio-2030-project>)



Digivisio 2030: Operationalizing a technological utopia?

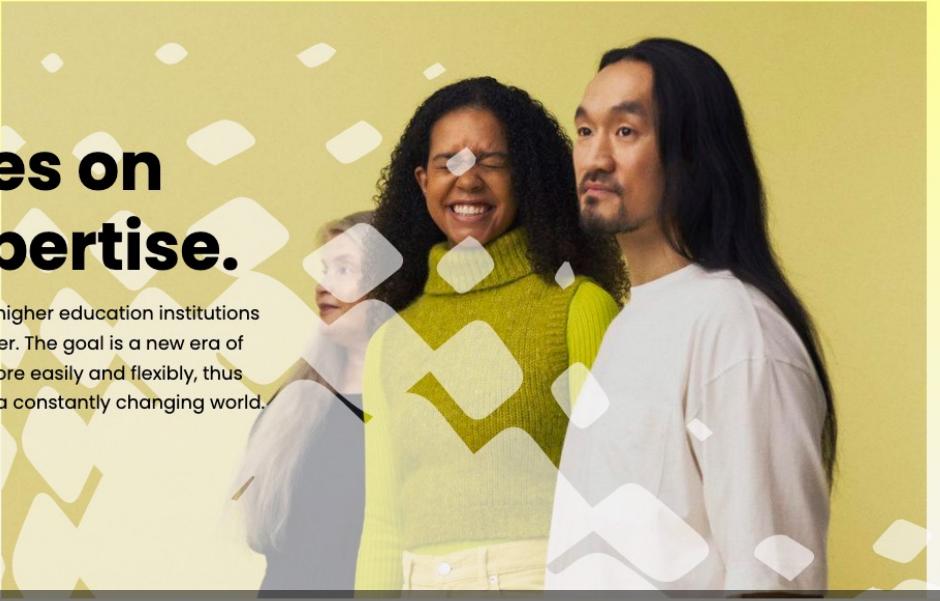
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 Play video



<https://digivisio2030.fi/en/frontpage/>

4 “promises” of Digivisio 2030

1. Learners have access to their own learning data and profile as well as the latest information on the trends and needs in the labour market.
2. Learner’s benefit at the centre of development
3. Higher education institutes become open communities led with information
4. National learning data reserves are opened for use by individuals and society. This brings international competitiveness for the whole of Finland. Nationally shared and refined information about learners, competences, learning and study contents becomes a unique success factor.



A national digital service platform

The objective of the program is to create, as mutual and stakeholder cooperation, by 2030

1. A National digital service platform that

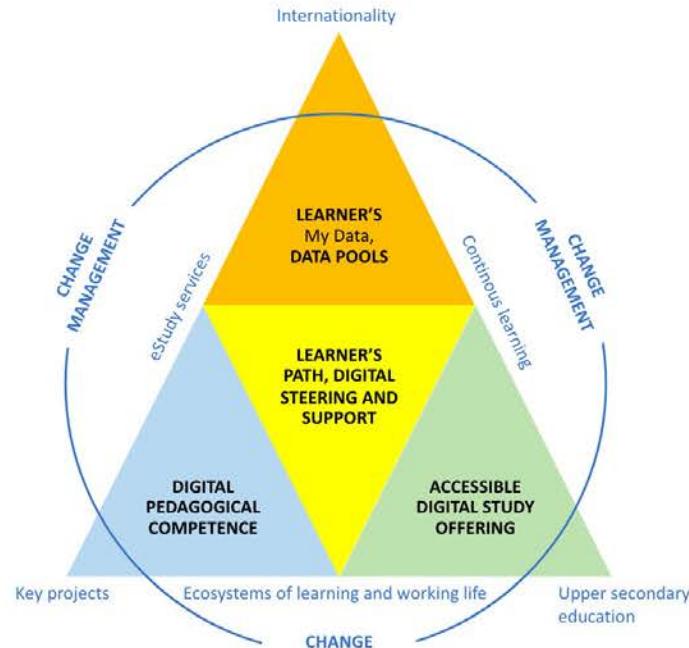
- a) enables the compatibility of digital services between higher education institutions,
- b) provides the learner's "my data" service and integrates the accumulation of the learner's competence before and after the higher education institution to the learning and career path and
- c) improves the compatibility of the actors' IT services and lowers the threshold for utilising national solutions.

2. Guidance based on digital pedagogics, the learner's path and shared data, which

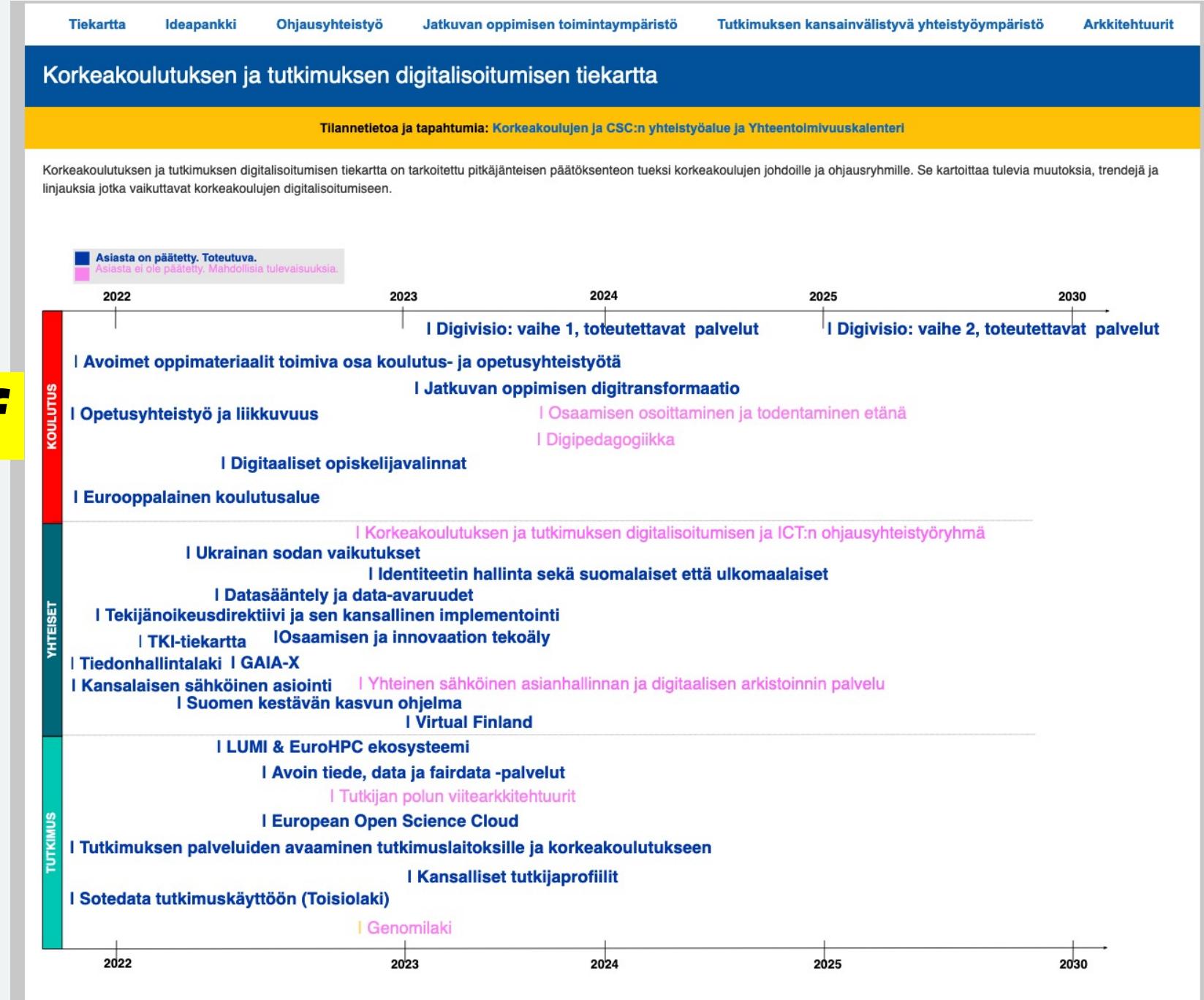
- a) supports studies and student well-being regardless of time and place and in an accessible manner,
- b) Brings AI solutions as an aid in guidance, and
- c) places the learner's benefit at the centre of development.

3. Support for change management for higher education institutions, so that we can

- a) introduce the national digital service platform
- b) digitize student administration processes and admission to higher education institutions,
- c) support the development of higher education institutions into open communities managed by information, and
- d) make data available for individuals and society.



Roadmap for digitalization of Finnish higher education and research



Connection to EU data markets

“GAIA-X is a major European initiative for trusted data sharing. It has already strong support from German and French governments and close links to European Commission. More than 300 organizations from various countries are already involved in GAIA-X. Still, the project is open to new European interested parties to join us in its development.”

<https://wiki.eduuni.fi/display/CSCTICTOR/GAIA-X>

CSC – IT Center for Science is a Finnish center of expertise in information technology owned by the Finnish state and higher education institutions.

<https://www.csc.fi/en/about-us>

SITRA

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ARTICLES 4 min

Gaia-X builds foundation for data markets

Jointly agreed standards and technological solutions, open interfaces and rulebooks will play a key role in the data economy of the future. These are built in the GAIA-X project – a major opportunity for Finnish companies, whether industrial corporations, SMEs or startups.

WRITER

Laura Halenius
Project Director, A roadmap for a Fair Data Economy, Sitra

PUBLISHED
February 17, 2021

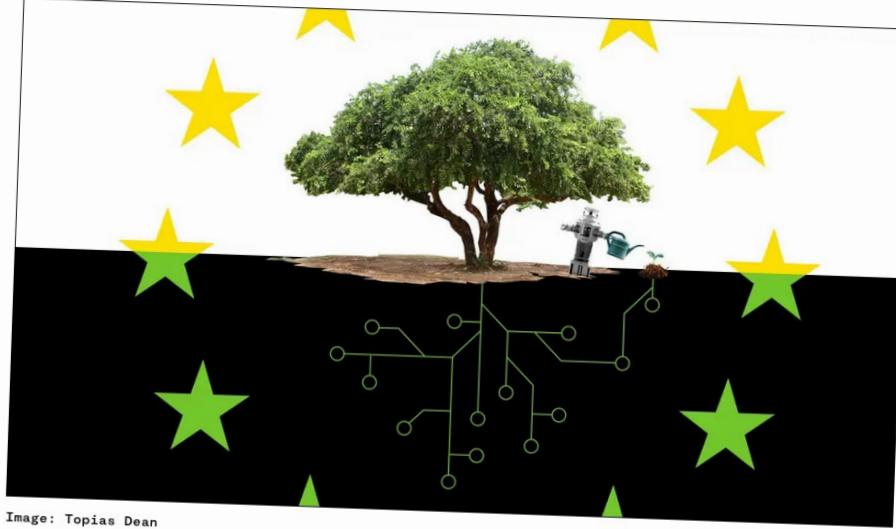


Image: Topias Dean



Critiques of Digitalization



- +20 years of service
- From optimism to the sense of bureaucracy
- Outcome has been alienation of one's work and loss of the sense of agency instead of being eager to develop

Research Article

The life and times of university teachers in the era of digitalization: A tragedy

Hanna Teräs  , Marko Teräs  & Juha Suoranta 

Received 22 Apr 2021, Accepted 26 Feb 2022, Published online: 03 Mar 2022

 Download citation

 <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439884.2022.2048393>

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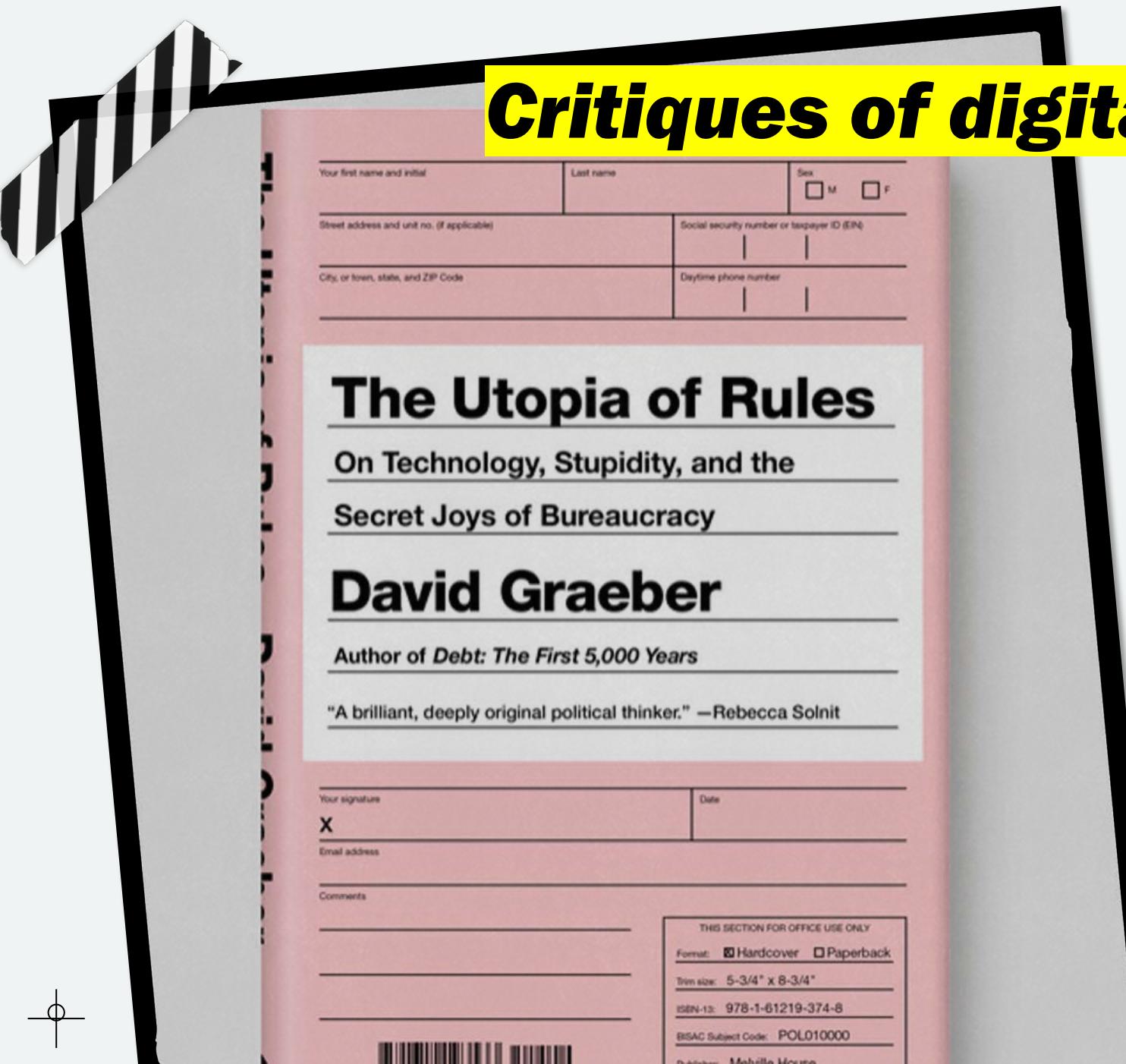
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ABSTRACT

Although digitalization has become an everyday phenomenon in higher education (HE), there is still limited understanding on how HE teachers experience the digitalized work environment. In this article we utilize narrative research methodology to share HE teachers' voices, addressing the following questions: What is the lived experience of being a teacher in digitalizing higher education? How has digitalization shaped the work environment in higher education? What meaning do HE teachers make of digitalization? The research participants are six university teachers with significant work experience. The findings are reported in the form of a classic tragedy narrative, which reveals that the rise of managerialism and neoliberalization in HE has changed teachers' work and the role of digital tools play in it, and teachers are experiencing an increasing sense of alienation. In conclusion, we elaborate these experiences theoretically and paint a picture of today's digitalized work environment in HE.

 **KEYWORDS:**    

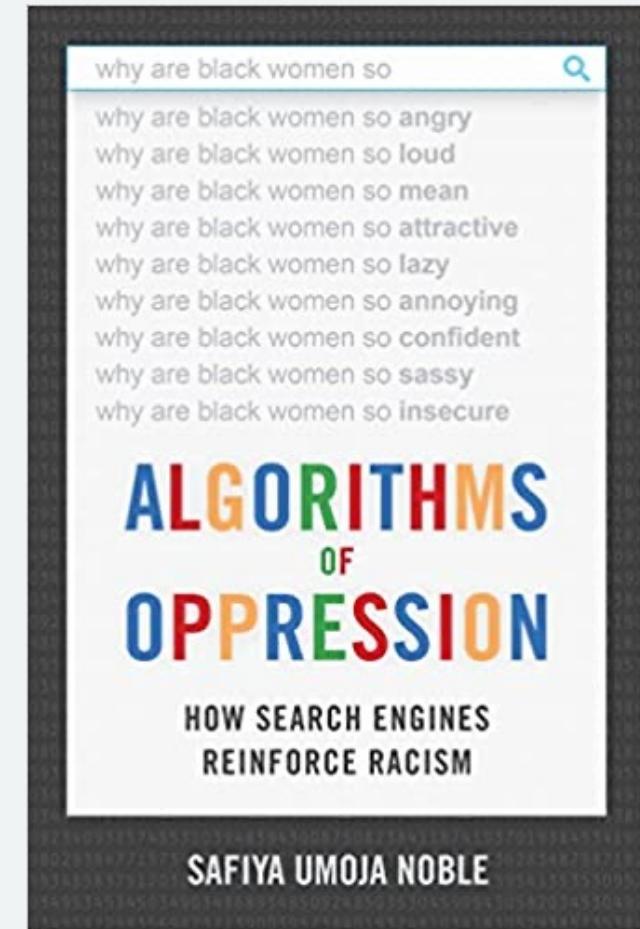
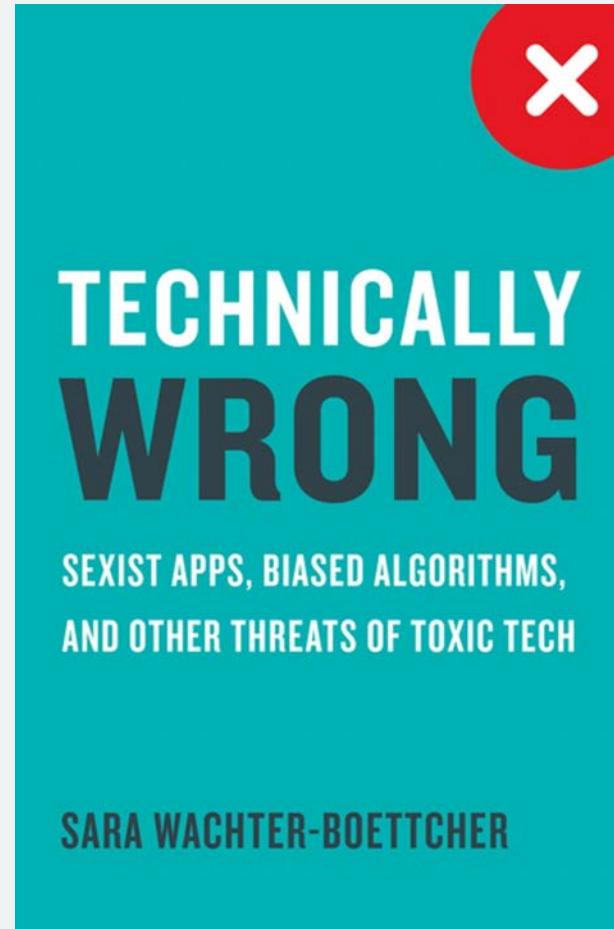
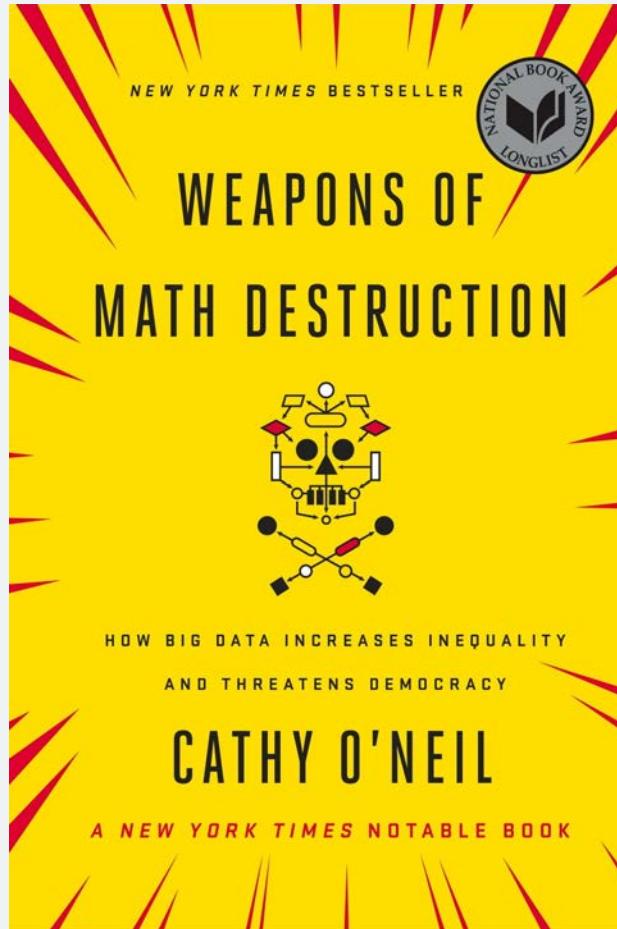
Critiques of digitalization: “It’s really about bureaucracy”



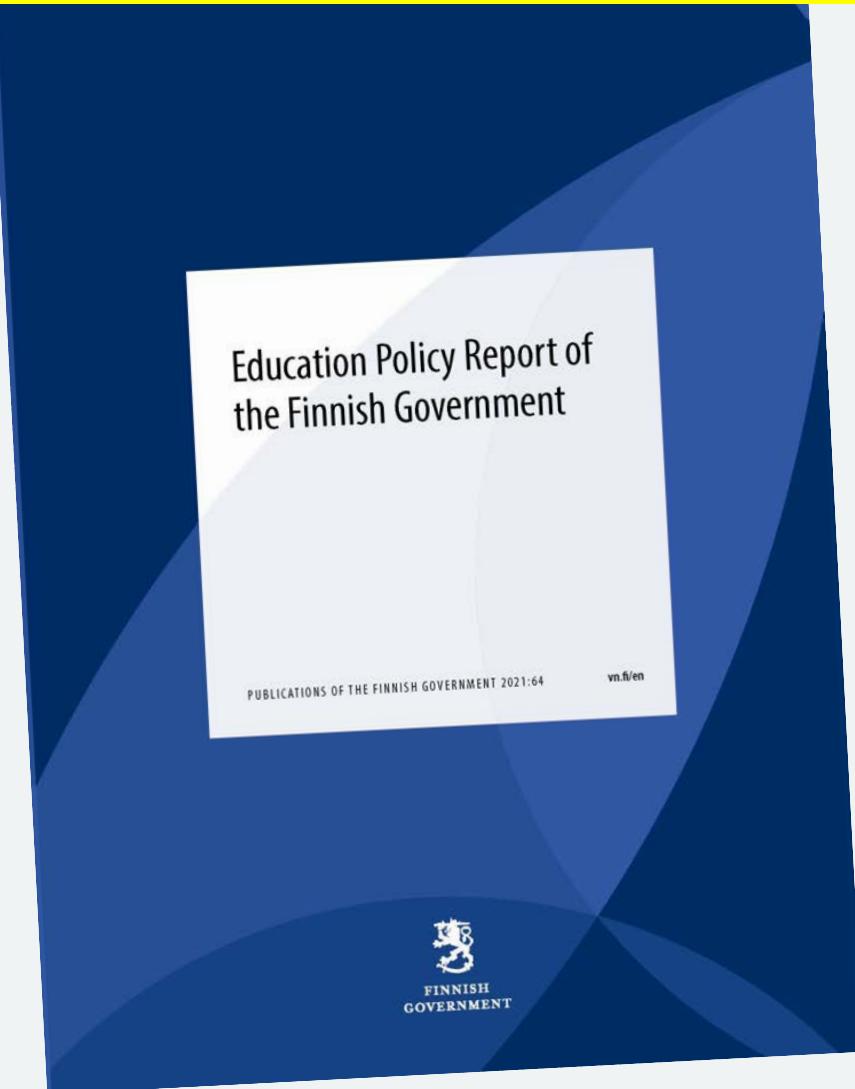
“All bureaucracies are to a certain degree utopian, in the sense that they propose an abstract ideal that real human beings can never live up to.”

(Graeber 2015, 26-7)

Critiques of digitalization: Democracy lost, bias, sexism, oppression, racism...



“Digitalization for sustainable development”



Solutions to these problems can be found by making better use of the potential offered by ICT in reducing emissions and increasing resource efficiency while creating markets for Finnish know-how in the design of software, energy-efficient equipment and data centres, among other things. (p. 95)

While new climate solutions are an immense opportunity for businesses, developing them will require strong and systematic digitalisation of society, education and research, RDI funding and enabling the exports of climate solutions. (p. 96)

Digitalisation also has links to sustainable development themes, which influence the future of education. Due to the enormous demand for energy caused by digitalisation, an international team of scientists points out in its recent overview of topical themes of the field that, over the last decades, not only have digital technologies been deployed globally in teaching but obsolete devices have also increasingly been disposed of in the name of educational innovations. (p. 84-85)



SCORCHED

BEYOND THE
DIGITAL AGE
TO A POST-
CAPITALIST
WORLD



EARTH

JONATHAN
CRARY

Critiques of 'digital' futures: Climate crisis

“It is remarkable that at a moment of unparalleled danger for the future of the planet, for the very survival of human and animal life, that so many people should voluntarily confine themselves in the desiccated digital closets devised by a handful of sociocidal corporations.

Pathways to a different world will not be found by internet search engines. Rather, what is needed is exploration and creative receptivity to all the resources and practices developed over the long history of human societies for thousands of years.” (Crary, 2022, p. 129)



Critiques of 'digital' futures: Climate crisis

The end of oil is the end of the production machine

It doesn't seem so as the availability of fossil fuels and belief in the potential of new technologies and alternative forms of energy is ever-present

(Salminen and Vadén, 2015, p. 11)



Critiques of 'digital' futures: "beyond the digital"

...instead of asking, what 'solutions' (in the shape of digital educational technologies) can we *invent*, we want to ask what 'solutions' (...) can we *destroy*?

A 'postdigital' mindset should be open to imaginaries that include both the dismantling of current systems, as well as entirely non-digital solutions.

Commentaries | Open Access | Published: 19 January 2023

Deliberately Destructive Speculative Design

[Lina Rahm](#) & [Jörgen Rahm-Skågeby](#) 

[Postdigital Science and Education](#) (2023) | [Cite this article](#)

188 Accesses | 2 Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

Why Deliberate Destruction?

A number of recent *Postdigital Science and Education* articles have discussed the strengths and limitations of future-oriented and speculative methods in education (Cerratto Pargman et al. [2022](#); Houlden and Veletsianos [2022](#); Suoranta et al. [2022](#); Traxler et al. [2021](#)). For example, Traxler et al. ([2021](#)) present an encompassing survey relating to the question of 'what's next?' Using epistemological positions emerging from studies of mobilities, futures, and the postdigital, the authors perform a joint, but also contrasting, reading of what futures could hold. Their conclusion is manifold, but one of the insights that stand out is that futures, and privileged positions from where we may project such futures, need to be scrutinized in themselves. But how can the 'not-yetness' of digital systems be studied?

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s42438-023-00390-z>



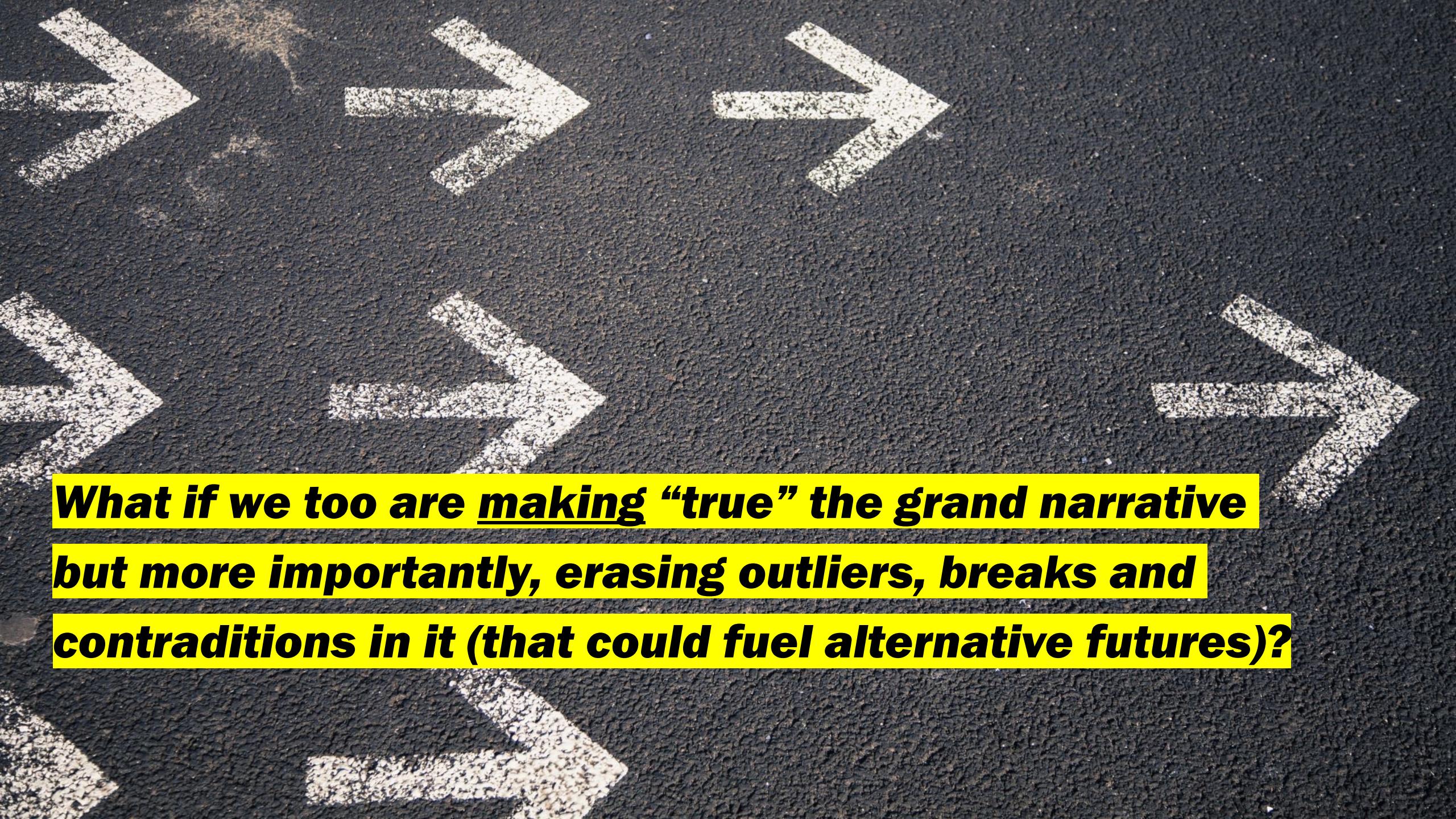


***Let's take a moment to
reflect...ourselves***





***Are we as researchers simply putting more
petrol into the fire and merely legitimizing
the grand narrative?***



***What if we too are making “true” the grand narrative
but more importantly, erasing outliers, breaks and
contradictions in it (that could fuel alternative futures)?***

Commentaries | Open Access | Published: 25 October 2021

Speculative Social Science Fiction of Digitalization in Higher Education: From What Is to What Could Be

Juha Suoranta, Marko Teräs, Hanna Teräs, Petar Jandrić, Susan Ledger, Felicitas Macgilchrist & Paul Prinsloo

Postdigital Science and Education 4, 224–236 (2022) | [Cite this article](#)

2830 Accesses | 10 Citations | 16 Altmetric | [Metrics](#)

Introduction: Unleashing Teachers' Imagination (Juha Suoranta, Marko Teräs, Hanna Teräs)

Digitalization and datafication are reshaping roles and practices in higher education. The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated this process through the massive increase in the use of educational technology (EdTech) (Teräs et al. 2020). As a part of this development, higher education is becoming increasingly data driven. Simultaneously, attempts to predict and prepare for future scenarios in education are driven by intergovernmental organization reports from OECD and UNESCO, in addition to national initiatives in digital education (Suoranta et al. 2022). In these future scenarios, datafication, big data, learning analytics, and artificial intelligence promise more efficient and predictable higher education.

Speculative fiction and utopian thinking as ways to imagine alternative futures

With Method of Empathy-Based Stories (Eskola 1984; Särkelä & Suoranta 2020; Wallin, Koro-Ljungberg & Eskola 2019) and Future Workshops (Jungk & Müllert 1987)

One last thought though...



What if

digitalization is not?



Thank you

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CARDE research group: <https://carde.group>