

The Fourth Conference on National Dialogues, 11—12 June 2019
The House of the Estates, Helsinki

Peacetechnology in practice – how do digital tools support the work of peace actors

Objective of the session

The objective of the session is to showcase and concretize peacetechnology by demonstrating existing digital tools to an audience. In a series of demonstrations, the audience will get a hands-on understanding of the state of play in peacetechnology and assess the demonstrated tools with a set of key questions.

Background

The session aims to bring together the developers and users of peacetechnology. Too often technical experts and practitioners of peacebuilding form separate bubbles, where collaboration is near non-existent. This tendency causes inefficiency, which should be avoided in a field where resources are typically scarce.

The session is an opportunity for participants to share experiences about peacetechnology and compare what they have found useful or effective and where they have encountered challenges. Simulating scenarios and examples will aid in highlighting the potential and limitations in peacetechnology. Both supply and demand of peacetechnology – and the gap between the two – will be explored. For example, providers of the tools might often have inadequate knowledge of peacebuilding practices, facts on the ground or ethical aspects, whereas peace actors might not be up to date about the potential presented by technology for their work. Therefore, an exchange of ideas could really boost the use of peacetechnology in places where it is needed. Moreover, the foundational ethics concept of “do no harm” will be touched upon by asking, how to make sure the involvement in a specific context does always greater good than harm.

In the session, the demonstrators will shortly pitch their digital tool or practice, so that the audience can determine which demo-group they find most applicable and interesting. In demo-groups the demonstrators will further introduce their tools and encourage discussion about the potential role and utility of the tool in a concrete context. A set of key questions will guide the discussion, and a person from each group will be assigned to write down the findings. After the demo-sessions, the groups will summarize their discussion and ideas to all participants.

Key questions

- How the demonstrated tools could enhance the work of peace actors?
- Do the tools match the requirements of peace actors and could they be developed to better suit these needs?
- How could we enhance the collaboration between tech and peace bubbles?
- How to improve conflict sensitivity in peace technologies as ethical considerations should be mandatory when developing innovations for life-or-death situations?

Composition of the session

- Ms Roxaneh Bazergan, Team Leader, Mediation Support Unit, United Nations
- Mr Shmuel Elmakies, Software Engineer & Social Activist, Games for Peace
- Ms Talia Hagerty, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Economics & Peace
- Mr Mikaeli Langinvainio, CEO, Inforglobe

- *Facilitator: Ms Achol Jok Mach, Specialist, PeaceTech Lab Africa*

