



FediVariety

unconference

Nodes On A Web

The Fediverse in/for Public Institutions

Report regarding the NOAW unconference on 19/20 March 2026, supported by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Kingdom Relations of the Netherlands, the Innovation Department of the Gemeente Amsterdam, NLnet foundation, the Chaos Computer Club and SABOA foundation.

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Foreword

Amsterdam provided a fitting backdrop for FediVariety's NOAW unconference: A sun-drenched waterway, a tall sailing ship, and the Innovation Department office of the Gemeente Amsterdam, reimagined as a startup-style workspace. Public institutions and a wide range of actors came together for two days of open exchange around fediverse integration.

Day one eased in gently before picking up pace. FediVariety's team shared their report on Fediverse Integration in Public Institutions, but the real energy came from the floor. Rather than following a rigid agenda, participants grabbed post-its and a large board, moved outside into the sunshine, and let the conversations take shape organically.

Topics sprawled in every direction, interrupted only by lunch breaks, gracefully delivered by Phyllis on their old-school *bakfiets*. By the time everyone sat down for the network dinner — generously offered by the Ministry of Internal Affairs— something more than a conference had taken shape: a community with shared purpose: Nodes On A Web!

Day two matched the first in ambition. New sessions dug into concrete challenges and roadmaps for advancing fediverse adoption in public institutions. The mix of backgrounds and perspectives made for exactly the kind of generative friction these conversations need.

The NOAW unconference was a reminder of what open, inclusive gatherings can produce. Thanks to everyone who brought their curiosity and generosity to the table.

A big thank you to our supporters!



Quick Info Sheet

Project: "Nodes On A Web: The Fediverse in/for Public Institutions", a FediVariety unconference.



Dates & place: Thu/Fri 19/20 March 2026, Marineterrein Amsterdam, offices of the Innovation Department of the Gemeente Amsterdam.

Facilitators: FediVariety (SABOA foundation), represented by Victoria Neumann (research lead), Peter Mechels (project lead).

Sponsors: The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Kingdom Relations of the Netherlands, the Innovation Department of the Gemeente Amsterdam, the NLnet foundation, the Chaos Computer Club and the SABOA foundation.

Objective: Strengthen the long-term development of alternative social media through an unconference that unites individuals engaged in these initiatives with the broader Fediverse community. Provide a collaborative setting to encourage knowledge exchange and promote the integration of free and open source alternatives for public communication.

Outcomes: Exchange valuable insights and ideas on how the Fediverse can sustainably benefit public institutions in the long term, demonstrated by the number and variety of sessions and the number as well as the level of engagement from the participants. Most participants submitted or signed a letter of support regarding the FediVariety application for the ScaleDem grant (EU Horizon Programme). With this application FediVariety aims to expand the NOAW unconference on a European scale in partnership with the Critical Infrastructure Lab (University of Amsterdam and Utrecht University).

Participants: We invited a diverse range of roles and audiences including journalists, civil servants, academics, researchers and students business owners, community managers, grants and funds managers, developers, coders, digital activists, and open-source enthusiasts. This varied group of individuals with diverse skills and perspectives co-organised and participated in discussions workshops and sessions exploring Fediverse integration into public administration from multiple angles. FediVariety recruited 50 participants for day one and 30 for day two.

Participants' organisations: [Open Future Foundation](#), [University of Groningen Library](#), [Open Internet Discourse Foundation](#), [FediWay](#), [Waag Futurelab for technology and society](#), [LocalGov Drupal Developers](#), [Waterschap AGV](#), [Piratenpartij](#), [De Groenen](#), [Vlaamse Radio en Televisie](#), [PublicSpaces Foundation](#), [Leiden University](#), [Digitale Gesellschaft e.V.](#), [Gemeente Amsterdam](#), [CIO-rijk Netherlands](#), [Procolix](#), [Bureau Keteninformatisering Werk en Inkomen \(BKWI\)](#), [NLnet Foundation](#), [Research Council of Norway](#), [European Public Social Network Initiative](#), [Coalitie Eerlijk Digitaal Onderwijs](#), [#OMN Open Media Network](#), [Critical Infrastructure Lab \(UVA, UU\)](#), etc.

Session contents: The NOAW unconference gathering discussed a wide range of topics like moderation, engagement, funding, all centred around the Fediverse, a decentralised network of social media platforms.

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FediVariety?



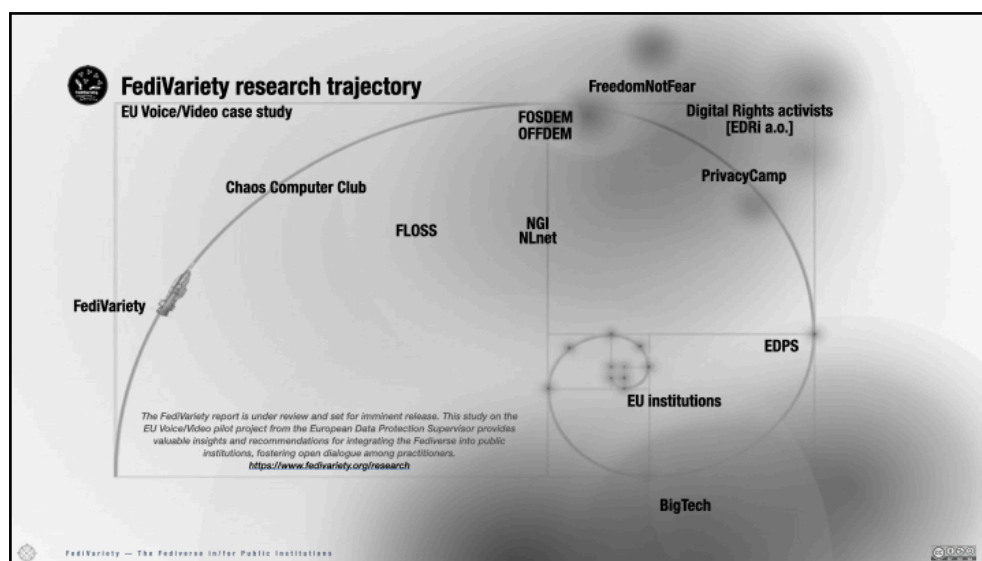
FediVariety is a European collective of digital activists and researchers dedicated to promoting Free/Libre Open Source Software (FLOSS) for public administration, with an emphasis on the Fediverse.

FediVariety is facilitated by [SABOA Foundation](#), a non-

profit that proactively tackles social challenges with unsolicited, practical advice.

The [FediVariety research project](#) is funded by the [NLnet Foundation](#). It explores the potential integration of the Fediverse into public administration, providing valuable insights for public entities considering its adoption.

By examining the experiences of the [European Data Protection Supervisor](#) (EDPS) with the [EU Voice/Video pilot project](#), FediVariety aims to shed light on both the challenges and benefits of decentralised social media solutions. The FediVariety report is currently under review and set for imminent release.



[mastodon.social/@FediVariety](#)

[FediVariety.org](#) — Juggling the Fediverse

[SABOA.eu](#) — Stichting Ongevraagd Advies

NOAW Unconference?



Public communication is increasingly shaped by a handful of private platforms — but there's a growing movement working to change that. Across Europe and beyond, individuals and institutions are building and adopting free, open source alternatives rooted in the values

of the Fediverse: decentralisation, transparency, and community ownership.

FediVariety's Nodes On A Web unconference brought those people together. Rather than a traditional conference with fixed agendas and top-down presentations, this was a space shaped by its participants —designed for honest conversation, shared learning, and collective problem-solving. The goal was simple: strengthen the long-term development of alternative social media by connecting those already doing the work with the wider Fediverse community.

Together, we aimed to explore how federated platforms can sustainably serve public institutions, what stands in the way, and how we can move forward —at scale. This gathering was also a step toward something larger: Expanding this work across Europe through the FediVariety initiative and its partnership with the Critical Infrastructure Lab at the University of Amsterdam and Utrecht University (<https://www.fedivariety.org/scaling-open-social-media>).

The future of public communication doesn't have to be decided by a few. It can be built by many.

Session Highlights

Before and during the NOAW unconference, participants could propose sessions.

A Kanban containing an overview of the NOAW unconference sessions, as well as the links to the session reports were accessible for all participants.



In addition, there were a number of lightning talks, a format in which an idea or initiative can be pitched for five minutes or less.

In order to allow for an open discussion on issues, we introduced rules for the sessions: by default they are off-the-record, meaning that what is

discussed is not going to be recorded, or published. If participants wanted to take notes or record what would be said, they would have to agree at the beginning of a session that it allows content to be shared outside the meeting, but without revealing the original speaker (Chatham House Rule). Therefore not all sessions were recorded.

Below here we want to highlight the sessions that were recorded. These summaries mainly exist due to the note-taking efforts of the participants, and we are thankful for them sharing them with us.

Learning from the EDPS Pilot

The introduction to the NOAW unconference was to share insights from the [FediVariety study on the EDPS pilot project EU Voice/Video](#).

There were three questions to be answered:

1. How did EDPS conduct their pilot cross-institutionally, with over 40 EUIs involved?
2. Derived from those experiences, what are pathways for integrate the Fediverse into public administration?

OPENING SESSION

Learning from the EDPS Pilot

The EU Voice/Video pilot involved 40+ European Union institutions, demonstrating the feasibility of Fediverse integration at scale. The pilot revealed a 'hot potato situation'.

→ Feasibility was proven but no institution stepped forward to take responsibility.

THREE MAIN QUESTIONS

- How was this done?
- How can it be done, derived from those experiences?
- What lies ahead of us?

THE SHORT ANSWER

- The pilot didn't emerge from thin air.
- It requires a collective, collaborative and coordinated effort.
- The willingness to experiment.

FediVariety — The Fediverse In/for Public Institutions

3. What are our visions for the future of social media alternative for public institutions? The short answer to all of these questions is that it is a collective, collaborative and coordinated effort.

The EU Voice/Video pilot didn't emerge from thin air, but with efforts of different administrative and FOSS communities, and willingness to experiment.

OPENING SESSION

Learning from the EDPS Pilot

→ How was this done?

EDPS EU Voice/Video was centralised, self-hosted

- Technical hosting infrastructure
- Governance & compliance
- Moderation & coordination

EDPS expectation

- EU Voice/Video project would be taken over

Roles/tasks of 40+ institutions

- Creating an account + posting
- Getting used to a different platform

Capacity building

- Smaller institutions couldn't (time frame, risks)
- Bigger institutions wouldn't (responsibility)

→ How can it be done?

Fully Internal Model
Hosting, content, governance & moderation / all in-house

External Model
Varying split of internal vs. outsourced responsibilities

Hybrid Model
Roles distributed across multiple institutions

→ What lies ahead of us?

Scale Integration
Move away from some of the operational aspects (e.g. hosting)

Considerations
Moderation, sustainable funding, values we want this public interest infrastructure to be build on

Requirements
A collective, collaborative and coordinated effort and the willingness to experiment

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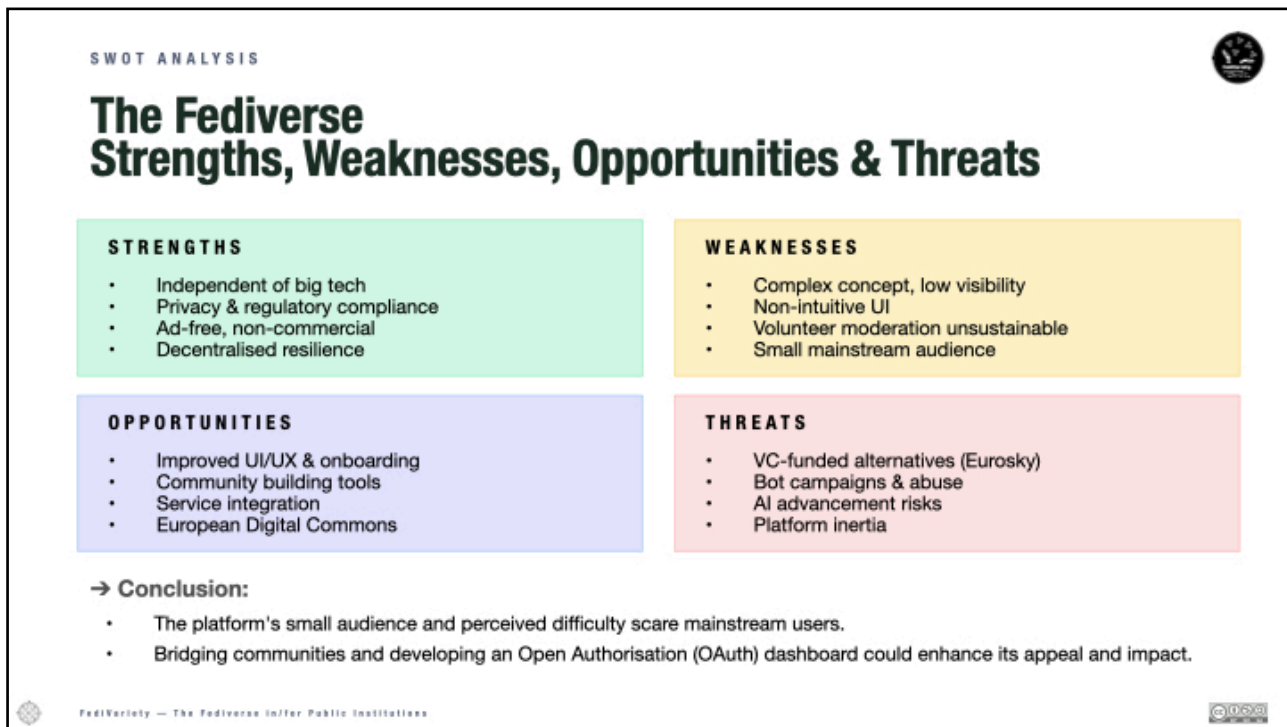
The pilot aimed to demonstrate the feasibility of Fediverse integration with the hope of wider adoption. However no institution stepped forward to take over the project revealing a ‘hot potato situation’ where no one wanted the hot potato: responsibility. Some EUIs have their own instance, for example the European Court of Justice, and the EU commission partnering with Mastodon GmbH.

If a public institution chooses to have their own instances, several models are available, each requires careful consideration of the situation and will be detailed in the FediVariety report:

1. A fully internal model, with all aspects kept in-house (hosting, content creation, governance, moderation);
2. An external model with varying responsibilities (e.g. hosting and moderation external, content creation and governance internal),
3. A hybrid model with roles and responsibilities across different institutions (e.g. hosting by IT department, content by account holders, governance by Data Protection Services, and moderation cross-institutionally).

Scaling Fediverse integration for the future demands a collective collaborative and coordinated effort. This is why we gathered at NOAW to discuss our visions and the values we want this public interest infrastructure to be built upon.

SWOT Analysis of the Fediverse



The Fediverse stands out for its independence from big tech, prioritizing privacy, autonomy, and regulatory compliance. Its decentralised structure and established user base enhance security and resilience, but the platform faces challenges such as a complex concept, low visibility, and a non-intuitive user interface.

Opportunities for growth include improving UI/UX, fostering community building, and integrating with other services. However, threats from VC-funded alternatives (Eurosky e.g.), bot campaigns, and AI advancements pose significant risks to the platform's relevance and user engagement.

The platform's ad-free, non-commercial focus and volunteer moderation, while strengths, also present weaknesses in terms of sustainability and consistency. The platform's small audience and perceived difficulty scare mainstream users, but bridging communities and developing an oath dashboard could enhance its appeal and impact.

The Semantics of Sovereignty

The group identified key attributes for sovereignty including the right to archive data, transparency, and the ability to host one's own software. The discussion focused on the core idea of 'freedom to join, leave, move, and take all your data,' aligning with the philosophy of the four opens (open source, open data, open license, and open process). The conversation touched on governance, practical examples, and different perspectives, including those of Fediverse users and server hosts.

The final working definition, formulated from a server owner's perspective, is: 'Server owners have their own self-governed domain, respecting the 4 Os.'

The group acknowledged the need for further exploration of terms like engagement, diversity, transparency, governance, protection, open, and the Fediverse itself, to create working definitions for alignment and sustainable growth.

Next steps include defining these terms, engaging in governance discussions, and potentially refining the working definition based on existing research or authorities.

SEMANTICS OF SOVEREIGNTY

What Does Sovereignty Mean for the Fediverse?

The conversation touched on governance, practical examples, and different perspectives —including those of Fediverse users and server hosts:

- Key attributes: right to archive data, transparency, and the ability to self-host software.
- Core philosophy: freedom to join, leave, move, and take all your data.
- Aligned with the Four Opens: open source, open data, open license, and open process.
- Next steps: define terms like engagement, diversity, transparency, governance, protection —and refine definitions for sustainable growth.

→ Working definition:

- "Server owners have their own self-governed domain, respecting the 4 Opens."

FediVariety — The Fediverse in/for Public Institutions

Mainstreaming the Fediverse

This session involved expanding its reach while preserving its unique culture and values. Key developments include tools like Fediway for cross-platform discovery, Govdirectory for government social media channels, and SocialHub for Fediverse management.

Success hinges on justifiable costs, measurable reach, and transparency to counter political influence. Awareness initiatives, such as customer journey maps and library/WordPress plugins, can help onboard new users.

MAINSTREAMING



Mainstreaming the Fediverse

Expanding reach while preserving culture, values, and ethical design.

TOOLS & INITIATIVES

- Fediway —cross-platform discovery
- Govdirectory —government channels
- SocialHub —Fediverse management
- Customer journey maps for onboarding
- Library & WordPress plugins

SUCCESS FACTORS

- Justifiable & transparent costs
- Measurable reach & impact
- Counter political influence
- Avoid mainstream platform pitfalls

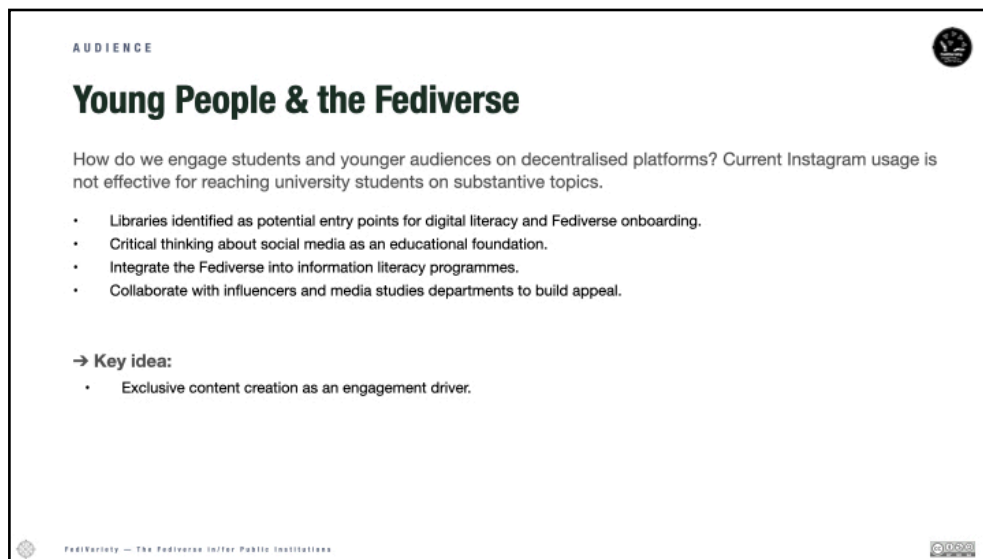
→ Aim:

- Create a European Digital Commons that prioritises user values and ethical design.

The Fediverse faces challenges from alternatives like Eurosky and must navigate issues like de-platforming and ethical design to avoid the pitfalls of mainstream social networks. Aim is to create a European Digital Commons that prioritises user values and ethical design.

Young People and the Fediverse

This session aimed to explore how to engage students on decentralised social media platforms, as their current Instagram usage isn't effective for this demographic. It centred on applying critical thinking to these platforms and the potential of the Fediverse as a healthier alternative to commercial social media.



AUDIENCE

Young People & the Fediverse

How do we engage students and younger audiences on decentralised platforms? Current Instagram usage is not effective for reaching university students on substantive topics.

- Libraries identified as potential entry points for digital literacy and Fediverse onboarding.
- Critical thinking about social media as an educational foundation.
- Integrate the Fediverse into information literacy programmes.
- Collaborate with influencers and media studies departments to build appeal.

→ Key idea:

- Exclusive content creation as an engagement driver.

FediVariety — The Fediverse In/for Public Institutions

The discussion emphasised the challenges of reaching younger audiences and highlighted libraries as potential entry points.

Key ideas included raising awareness about the Fediverse, integrating it into information literacy programmes, creating exclusive content to boost engagement and collaborating with influencers or media studies departments to make it appealing to young people.

Tools for Creators

To explore the Fediverse, the session proposed a Fediverse address book, interactive starter guides and cross-platform post sharing. Social media management tools discussed included statistics, auto-reposting and a structured publishing workflow.

TOOLS FOR CREATORS



Tools & Features for Content Creators

Open science and topic-based communities are being proposed as engagement catalysts —potentially boosted by a hype bot to attract new users. These initiatives aim to foster community building.

DISCOVERY & NAVIGATION

- Fediverse address book —yellow pages
- Interactive instance-selection guide
- Mastodon starter guide hashtag index
- Explanatory video for choosing an instance

PUBLISHING & MANAGEMENT

- Cross-platform post sharing
- Statistics & content logs
- Auto-reposting & scheduling
- Automatic alt text generation
- Sharing Mastodon posts to X/LinkedIn

→ **Organising proposals:**

- Knowledge bases like FediForum, FediTips, etc. and a curated list of lists.

FediVariety — The Fediverse In/for Public Institutions



Additional features suggested were automatic alt texts, a content library, content statistics and logs, a forwarding service or shortener and sharing Mastodon posts on X/LinkedIn. To aid navigation, the session proposed a Mastodon starter guide hashtag index and an explanatory video for choosing an instance. To attract new users, a hype bot and community building around topics like open science were suggested.

Outside the unconference, a FediForum and a curated list of lists were proposed for organisation.

Moderation on the Fediverse

Moderation on the Fediverse is still largely volunteer run, which isn't sustainable long-term. This often leads to burnout or volunteer drop-off, a problem not unique to the Fediverse. Commercial platforms outsource these tasks to low-paid workers, exploiting their labour and mental health.

GOVERNANCE

Moderation on the Fediverse

Volunteer-driven moderation is not sustainable. Two distinct moderation functions were identified:

SAFETY	COMMUNITY
• Structural, like water management • Keeps infrastructure running smoothly • Shields against collective threats	• Dispute resolution & norm development • Maintaining conversation culture • Moderation across instances

→ Recommendations:

- Capacity building within institutions needed — decentralisation can align with local norms.
- Tooling: automated flagging, protocol development, counter-speech experimentation.
- Involving civic institutions and vulnerable groups as a viable path forward.

FediVariety — The Fediverse in/for Public Institutions

Moderation has two distinct elements:

1. Establishing and maintaining safety. It can be viewed like water management: it is a structural function of an infrastructure, and its function is to keep things running smoothly and shield against collective threats.
2. While the Fediverse allows for one-sided broadcasting, where moderation is handled by user-owned instances, this model works for small organisations. For an engaging communication, the task of moderating remains essential and multiple models and experiences were discussed and shared during the session: Capacity building within institutions is needed to address moderation issues, but experimentation can support de-escalation, counter-speech and feedback on why people are blocked.

Decentralisation can help align with local norms, but involving public bodies and civic institutions, particularly vulnerable groups, could be a viable solution. Tooling, such as automated flagging or protocol development can further create better conditions for moderation.

Algorithms for the Fediverse

The discussion centred on how algorithms, feeds, and privacy intersect in social platform design.

On algorithms, this discussion group broadly agreed that algorithms themselves aren't inherently bad (they can correct for real biases) but poorly designed ones actively diminish user experience rather than enriching it. Music recommendation (Tidal was cited as a weak example) and search feedback came up as concrete cases. A recurring frustration was the absence of truly modular, composable algorithmic systems — something like "Lego for algorithms." Graze.social was mentioned as a relevant project in this space.

On feeds, the conversation touched on the tradeoff between a single unified feed versus multiple curated ones (with Bluesky as a reference point), and the importance of avoiding slot-machine dynamics in feed design — patterns that exploit psychological loops rather than serving user intent.

On privacy and incentives, the group noted that anonymisation alone doesn't resolve the deeper issues. Once a platform runs on open protocols, algorithmic design becomes inseparable from economic incentives. K-pop was used as an example of content engineered for maximum engagement.

ALGORITHMS

Algorithms for the Fediverse

- ON ALGORITHMS**
 - Not inherently bad —can correct for real biases
 - Poorly designed ones diminish user experience
 - Vision: modular, composable —Lego for algorithms
 - Graze.social cited as a relevant project
- ON FEEDS & PRIVACY**
 - Single vs. multiple curated feeds (Bluesky ref.)
 - Avoid slot-machine dynamics exploiting psychology
 - Anonymisation alone doesn't resolve deeper issues
 - Open protocols make algorithmic design inseparable from economic incentives

→ Closing thought:

- The Fediverse should take consent seriously at a structural level.
- E.g. drawing inspiration from how private community platforms like Discord and Matrix handle community boundaries.

FediVariety — The Fediverse in/for Public Institutions

Private spaces like Discord and Matrix were seen as an important counterbalance. The closing thought was that the fediverse should take consent seriously at a structural level, drawing inspiration from how those platforms handle community boundaries.

Coding Communities?

On the possibilities of building open digital societies through public value algorithms.

This [keynote by Nikolaus Poehhacker](#) (University of Graz, European Research Council /ERC-funded) argues that algorithms are not neutral technical tools but active shapers of communities and public life —and asks whether they can be redesigned around public values rather than commercial ones.

The talk moves through several interconnected ideas:

- a. The problem:
Current platform algorithms — optimised for engagement — drive polarisation, addiction, hate speech, and misinformation. Policy responses consistently lag behind what research shows is actually happening.

KEYNOTE

Coding communities?

Algorithms are not neutral —they actively shape communities.
Can they be redesigned around public values rather than profit?

- Keynote by Nikolaus Poehhacker, IDea_Lab at University of Graz.

The Problem	Algorithms as Institutions	The Value Problem	The Way Forward
Platform algorithms optimised for engagement drive polarisation, addiction, and misinformation —while policy consistently lags behind.	Algorithms produce simultaneity, shared topics, and societal self-observation —performing the mediating role once held by mass media.	Public values are abstract, experience-based, and situational. A public broadcaster case study shows "diversity" is felt but near-impossible to formalise.	Public value algorithms must be open, measurable, debate-and-adaptable, and plural —to a degree that they do not lose its integrating possibility.

→ **Conclusions:**

- Open digital societies are possible if we treat public value algorithms as evolving institutions rather than not finished technical artefacts.
- A shared public service infrastructure forms the core, with a variety of applications built on top.

FediVariety — The Fediverse In/for Public Institutions

- b. How algorithms build communities: Drawing on media sociology, Poehhacker argues that algorithms perform classic mediating functions in complex societies: Producing simultaneity, enabling collective self-observation, generating shared topics, and institutionalising solutions to common problems. This makes them politically significant, not just technically interesting. So we should look at algorithms as “evolving Institutions”.
- c. What “public value” means —and why it's hard: Public values are abstract, experience-based, and situationally applied, which makes them inherently uncertain. Agreeing on them collectively, independent of market logic, is genuinely difficult. The “trolley-problem” analogy illustrates how ethical intuitions vary across cultures and contexts. A concrete case study: Poehhacker draws on his own “embedded” research inside a public broadcaster developing a video-on-demand recommender system. The case reveals how “diversity” —a core public service obligation— is a concept learned through professional practice and institutional culture, not easily formalisable into algorithmic rules. Technologists and sociologists struggled to interpret what the system's latent factors even meant.
- d. The way forward: Public value algorithms must be open, measurable in their impacts, adaptable through debate, and plural —but not so fragmented that they lose their integrating social function. This sets up a core tension between centralisation (shared values, social cohesion) and decentralisation (community diversity, resilience). His answer: a shared public service infrastructure at the core, with a plurality of applications built on top.

The conclusion is cautiously optimistic: Open digital societies are possible, but only if we treat public value algorithms as ongoing, never-finished institutions rather than one-time technical deployments.

Engagement Strategies

The current state of adoption shows that knowledge about the Fediverse is often limited and siloed, Many public organisations favour Mastodon for one-way broadcasting rather than fostering two-way interaction. Technical barriers, such as the lack of hashtag use, also hinder adoption.

STRATEGY



Engagement Strategies for Public Organisations

Knowledge about the Fediverse is often limited and siloed within public organisations.

- Many institutions use Mastodon for one-way broadcasting rather than two-way interaction.
- Mastodon's lack of traditional metrics challenges social media managers
—yet quality of engagement is seen as higher.
- Public institutions have an obligation to maintain a presence on open platforms.
—1Plus / Plus1 principle?
- GDPR compliance and policy alignment are key levers to increase Fediverse adoption.

→ Reframe the value proposition:

- Prioritise high-quality, niche engagement.
- Consider the mental wellbeing of communications staff managing these platforms.



FediVariety — The Fediverse for Public Institutions



The discussion highlighted the debate on what constitutes meaningful presence on Mastodon, with opinions divided on whether broadcasting alone is sufficient. The group explored how to define and measure engagement, noting that Mastodon's lack of traditional metrics poses challenges for

social media managers. However, the quality of engagement on Mastodon is seen as higher.

There is a sense of responsibility for public institutions to maintain a presence on open platforms, with concrete examples being the best way to advocate for Mastodon.

The session also discussed policy and strategy perspectives, including compliance and GDPR considerations, to increase Fediverse adoption.

The value proposition was reframed to prioritise high-quality, niche engagement and to consider the mental well-being of communications staff.

Fediverse Funding

The Fediverse originated from bottom-up, grassroots initiatives within free and open-source environments. While some development has received funding, such as through EU NGI grants, it still heavily relies on volunteer labour.

As public institutions explore alternatives, two key challenges arise: the distinct culture and requirements of these organisations and the lack of sustainable long-term funding.

During the session, various funding models were discussed, along with cost factors like hosting, development, maintenance and repair, content and community management, research and more. These were examined in light of different cultural norms. This included

private economy funding similar to business models like RedHat and pricing strategies (e.g. freemium, badges); EU funding strategies for working collaboratively on digital commons through programmes like Horizon or through and EDIC; a consortium to go for different public funding sources or tender processes; or experimental community or membership financing (e.g. "10% pledge"), Fedihunt or Kiva.

Other questions that were discussed were potential impact of commercial interest ("Is your local bakery posting they have a sale considered advertisement?").

FUNDING

Funding the Fediverse

Grassroots origins, volunteer labour, EU grants (NGI) —but significant long-term sustainability gaps remain.

FUNDING MODELS DISCUSSED	COST FACTORS
• Private economy — RedHat model, freemium, badges • EU funding — Horizon, EDIC programmes • Public consortium / matchmaking + tender processes • Community financing — '10% pledge,' open web kickstarter, Fedihunt, Kiva Microfunds	• Hosting & infrastructure • Development, maintenance & repair • Content & community management • Community care & safety work

→ Open question:

- "Is your local bakery posting a sale considered advertisement?"
- The boundary between public interest use and commercial influence remains contested.

FediVariety — The Fediverse In/for Public Institutions

Financial Sustainability and Funding

The current financial sustainability of the fediverse is based on a mix of self-funding, donations, and external funding like EU grants, with significant gaps in funding for community care and safety work. Ongoing initiatives like NGI (NLnet) are helping but the overall funding future remains uncertain.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Financial Sustainability and Funding

Current sustainability relies on a mix of self-funding, donations, and external grants
—with significant gaps in community care and safety work.

CURRENT LANDSCAPE	ECONOMIC MODELS UNDER CONSIDERATION	CHALLENGES & NEXT STEPS
• Self-funding, donations, EU grants (NGI/NLnet) • Funding future remains uncertain • Gaps in community care & safety work	• Red Hat model • Procurement & tenders • Forming consortiums • Cost-sharing among users • Sovereignty-linked funding	• Cultural & semantic frictions (FLOSS vs. open source) • Differing political ideologies • Effective communication & decision-making • Improving governance processes

→ Summary:

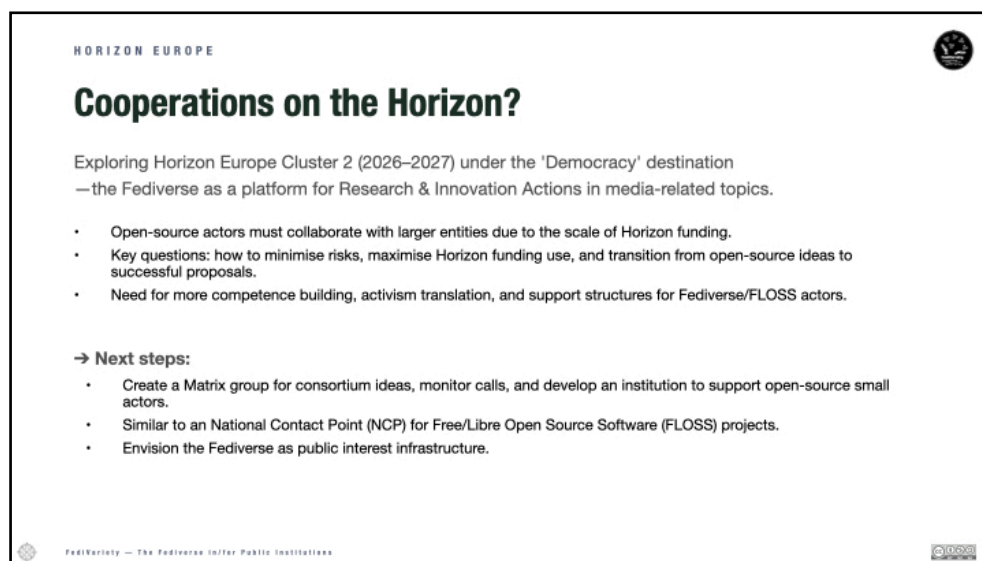
- Ongoing initiatives like NGI (NLnet) are helping, but the Fediverse needs durable, diversified funding structures that can withstand shifts in political and institutional priorities.

FediVariety — The Fediverse in/for Public Institutions

To address this, various economic models are being considered, including the Red Hat model, procurement and tenders, and forming consortiums. Sovereignty attachments and alternative funding distribution models like cost-sharing among users are also under consideration.

Cultural and semantic frictions within the community, based on differing views on Open source versus Free/Libre Open Source software and political ideologies, present challenges to implementing these solutions. Effective communication and decision-making processes are also identified as areas for improvement.

Cooperations on the Horizon?



HORIZON EUROPE

Cooperations on the Horizon?

Exploring Horizon Europe Cluster 2 (2026–2027) under the 'Democracy' destination
—the Fediverse as a platform for Research & Innovation Actions in media-related topics.

- Open-source actors must collaborate with larger entities due to the scale of Horizon funding.
- Key questions: how to minimise risks, maximise Horizon funding use, and transition from open-source ideas to successful proposals.
- Need for more competence building, activism translation, and support structures for Fediverse/FLOSS actors.

→ Next steps:

- Create a Matrix group for consortium ideas, monitor calls, and develop an institution to support open-source small actors.
- Similar to an National Contact Point (NCP) for Free/Libre Open Source Software (FLOSS) projects.
- Envision the Fediverse as public interest infrastructure.

FediVariety — The Fediverse in/for Public Institutions

This session 'Cooperations on the Horizon?' aimed to explore the Horizon Europe (HE) program, focusing on Cluster 2, 2026-2027, specifically under the destination 'Democracy.' The Fediverse was highlighted as a potential technical platform for supporting Research

and Innovation Actions in media-related topics.

The session covered how to read HE work programs, identify call topics, and position Fediverse projects within consortia. The discussion emphasised the need for open-source participants to collaborate with larger entities due to the size and complexity of Horizon funding.

Key questions included how to minimise risks and maximise the use of Horizon Europe funding, as well as pathways from open-source ideas to successful Horizon proposals. The session also touched on the need for more competence building, translation of activism, and support structures for Fediverse/open-source actors in European projects.

Future steps include creating a Matrix group for consortium ideas, monitoring calls, and developing an institution to support open-source small actors in European programs like National Contact Points (NCPs) for FLOSS projects.

Final Notes / The Way Ahead

FediVariety's Nodes On A Web (NOAW) unconference was a vibrant gathering of passionate, diverse minds united by a shared vision: The Fediverse as a joyful, collaborative, and collectively built public infrastructure. Fuelled by resources like the (ending) EU NGI funding and a wealth of knowledgeable communities, encourages everyone to experiment, share responsibility and shape the future of federated social networking together. Let us move on!

A heartfelt thank you to all who attended FediVariety's NOAW unconference —and to our sponsors— for making this possible. “It was a pleasure to be a harbour for a great variety of space ships in the #Fediverse.”

Stay tuned for what's next:

Vision paper: In the run-up to [FOSDEM](#), we took part in a workshop regarding the European Social Web, organised by the [SocialWebFoundation](#). The consensus reached in the workshop (though not unanimous) was that a message emphasising the interoperability of distributed social networking, along with shared principles of decentralisation, open standards, and open source, would best advance social sovereignty forward in Europe. The result is currently drafted in a vision paper regarding the European Social Web, presumably to be shared real soon. Preludes were recently [mentioned in a talk at 2MR](#) in Hamburg.

Scaling: Encouraged by the enthusiastic reactions and support from NOAW attendees, FediVariety (SABOA.eu) partnered with the [Critical Infrastructure Lab](#) (University of Amsterdam and Utrecht University) to apply to a [ScaleDem Piloting 2026](#) (EU Horizon) call regarding ‘Scaling Social Media Alternatives for Public Institutions’ in Europe. The partnership leverages the NOAW unconference event as a guiding principle for the transformative gatherings outlined in our application. A [blueprint of our plans](#) are published on FediVariety's website.

Consortium building: Through participation in numerous networks (DC EDIC, European Social Web, SWAN, etc. etc.) we were encouraged to organise an info session about potential projects that could receive funding for the Fediverse as a Digital Commons and Public Interest Infrastructure. Date to be announced soon.

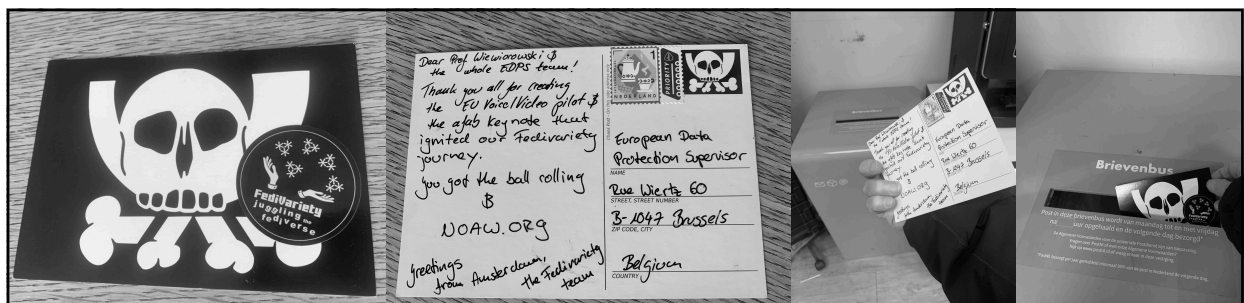
Reach out, if you're interested!

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FediVariety.org — Juggling the Fediverse

Short word of thanks to the supervisor & greetings from Amsterdam ~:)



Addendum: Billie's Logbook

Dive into the captivating journey of navigating the European Union's complex landscape in following Billie's logbook entry, 'Shaping a Rock into a Ball.' Learn how dedication and passion can transform even the most stubborn obstacles into smooth, achievable goals: The Art of Persistence.

All Logbook entries (printable to hang above your bed...) are to be found here:
<https://www.fedivariety.org/billie-s-logbook>

