



Fediverse Integration into (EU) Public Administration - A Fantastic FediVariety Circus

FOSDEM talk

31 januari 2026, 15:40-16:00

Social Web track - Room H.2215 (Ferrer)

Track: Social Web

Room: H.2215 (Ferrer)

Day: Saturday

Start: 15:40

End: 16:00

Video only: h2215

What: Join the conversation!



FediVariety
—juggling the fediverse—

FediVariety, a research initiative supported by the NLnet and SABOA foundations, has analyzed the European Data Protection Supervisor's pilot project, "EU Voice/Video".

Our upcoming report, scheduled for publication in early 2026, will offer key insights and recommendations for integrating the Fediverse into public administration. We encourage you to share your thoughts and experiences with us by joining our mailing list or participating in our upcoming workshop.

At FOSDEM, we will be presenting our findings and inviting you to join our workshop on the Fediverse in Amsterdam on March 19-20, 2026.

Building on our findings, we aim to explore how the Fediverse can effectively support public institutions in the long term, addressing critical questions about its future and strategies for developing and adopting decentralized social media. We seek to create a broad coalition and welcome developers, administrators, content managers, moderators, coders, digital activists, and open-source enthusiasts committed to fostering sustainable alternative social media and promoting an open social web.

The FediVariety project is supported by the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS), the Ministry of the Kingdom (Relations) of the Netherlands, the Digitalisation & Innovation Department of the City of Amsterdam, NLnet foundation, and SABOA foundation.

More information on our research and findings can be found in our report: [https://fedivariety.org/research](#)

Questions? Feedback? Contact us: <https://mastodon.social/@FediVariety> or info@fedivariety.org

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



Peter Mechels

[vishnee](#)

Links

—*presentation slides with transcript*—

- [FediVariety / NOAW unconference INFO](#)
- [FediVariety / NOAW unconference CfP](#)

<https://fosdem.org/2026/schedule/event/PGB9VZ-a-fantastic-fedivariety-circus/>



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A Track: [Social Web](#)
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Chat: [Join the conversation!](#)



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At FOSDEM, we will present preliminary insights from our research and invite participation in an unconference in Amsterdam on March 19-20, 2026.

Building on our findings, we aim to explore how the Fediverse can effectively support public institutions in the long term, addressing critical questions about its future and strategies for developing and adopting decentralized social media. We seek to create a broad coalition and welcome developers, administrators, content managers, moderators, coders, digital activists, and open-source enthusiasts committed to fostering sustainable alternative social media and promoting an open social web.

— "Nodes On A Web (NOAW): The Fediverse in/for Public Institutions", is supported by the Chief Information Office (CIO-Rijk) (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations) of the Netherlands, the Digitalisation & Innovation Department of the City of Amsterdam, NLnet foundation, and SABOA foundation.

More information on the NOAW unconference, the format and registration can be found here: <https://fedivariety.org/unconference>

Questions? Feedback? Contact us: <https://mastodon.social/@FediVariety> noaw@fedivariety.org

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Speakers



[Peter Mechels](#)
[vishnee](#)

Links

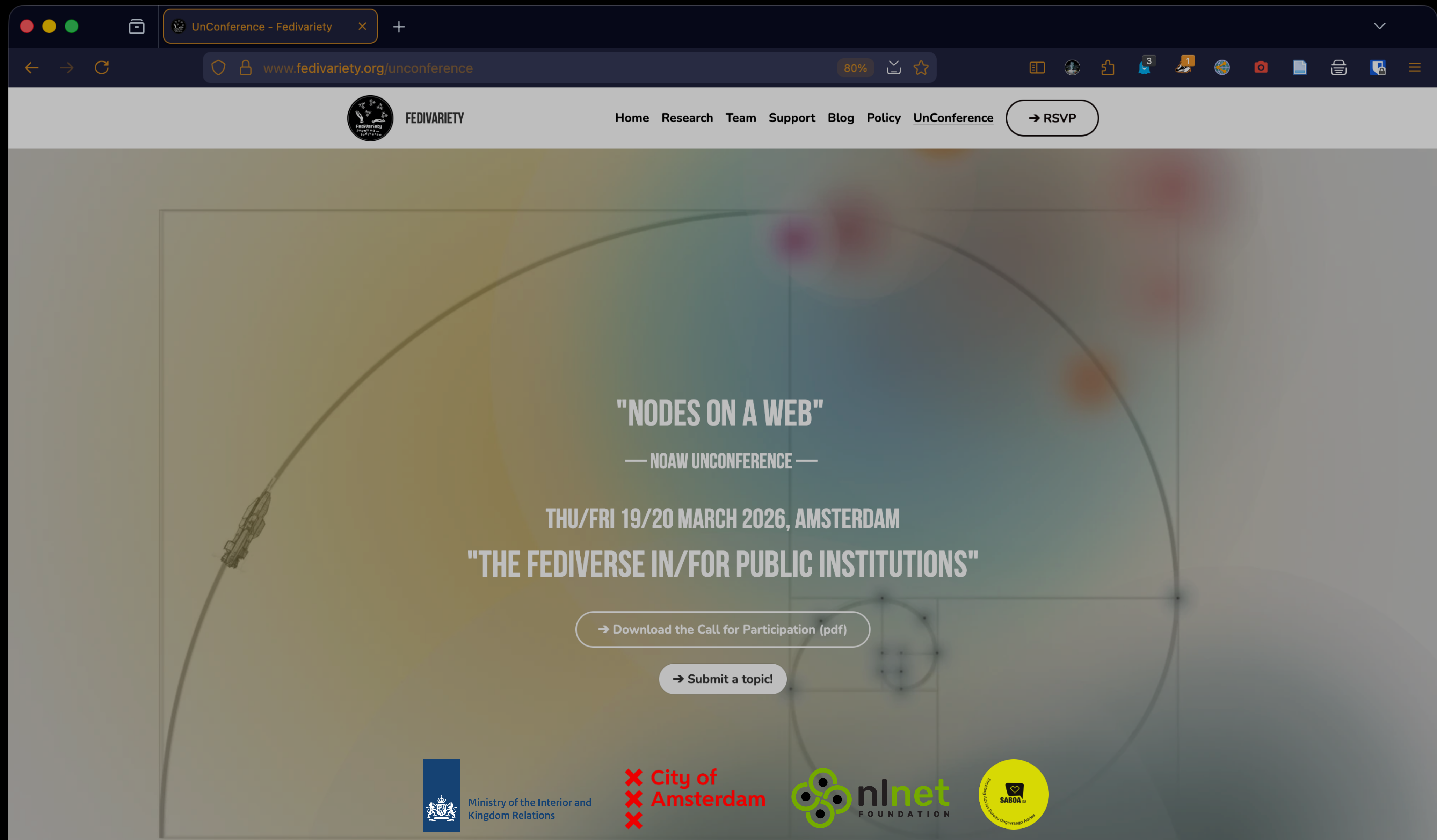
- [FediVariety mastodon account](#)
- [FediVariety website](#)
- [FediVariety / NOAW unconference INFO](#)
- [FediVariety / NOAW unconference CFP](#)



Fediverse Integration into (EU) Public Administration — *A Fantastic FediVariety Circus* —

Peter Mechels [cpt. zzepposs]
Victoria Neumann [vishnee]

We study fediverse integration in public administration. We are part of “FediVariety”. And we’re “Juggling the Fediverse”. Thank you, Nlnet —for funding us!



And thanks as well go to the Dutch CIO-government and the City of Amsterdam... For supporting our UNconference, in March. In Amsterdam.

UnConference - Fediversity

www.fediversity.org/unconference

FEDIVARIETY

Home Research Team Support Blog Policy UnConference → RSVP

 drop topic

 more info

"NODES ON A WEB"
— NOAW UNCONFERENCE —

THU/FRI 19/20 MARCH 2026, AMSTERDAM

"THE FEDIVERSE IN/FOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS"

→ Download the Call for Participation (pdf)

→ Submit a topic!

 Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations

 City of Amsterdam

 nl.net FOUNDATION

 SABOA

—An UNconference, based on findings from our research report, and fuelled with stories from all of us! Let's try to open up new chapters of history!



Fediverse Integration into (EU) Public Administration

—A *Fantastic FediVariety Circus*—

Sneak peek!

Cause
Case
Consequences

So, this is a very short sneak peek about our research journey! We'll gonna to picture you the cause and the case of our study... as well as the consequences.



Fediverse Integration into (EU) Public Administration —*A Fantastic FediVariety Circus*—



Plus—if enough time is left.... We'll share a story with you from our famous logbook.



Fediverse Integration into (EU) Public Administration —A *Fantastic FediVariety Circus*—

A large, striped circus tent with yellow and purple stripes is shown at dusk. The tent is illuminated by spotlights, and the sky is a deep orange and purple. The text 'Cause Failure ???' is overlaid in a large, white, pixelated font with a red outline.

**Cause
Failure ???**

*But before we dive into the CASE.... What was the actual CAUSE for this study?!
— We went to a keynote titled: “Fediverse integration - Why We Try and Why We Fail !”*

EDPS
failure



Wojciech Wiewiórowski

At the FreedomNotFear UNconference in 2023, in a dazzling keynote speech, the European Data Protection Supervisor pointed us to their failure...

EDPS
failure



Wojciech Wiewiórowski

European Data Protection Supervisor

*“To integrate the fediverse into public admin.” —And he called out to us... To reach out!
To the politicians! To the parliament!*

EDPS failure

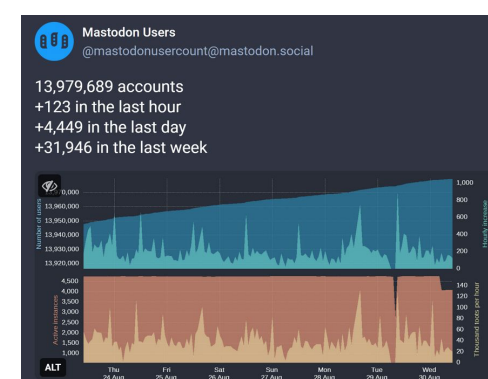
Why We Try

Why We Fail



Why we try? EDPS Fediverse Pilots (III)

New mastodon users (daily)
Data from @mastodonusercount@bitcoinhackers.org

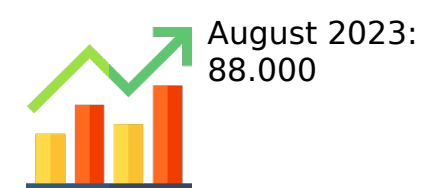


- about 14 million accounts
- 10 thousands new users per week

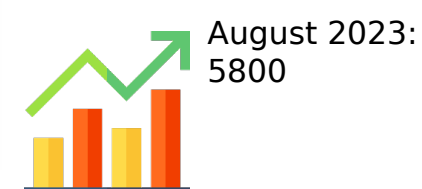
Development of Followers of the EC and EDPS accounts on EU Voice



October 2022: 8000



October 2022: 1700



Why we fail? The price to pay

- There is not a generalised political will
- There is a cost to embrace the independence/sovereignty promised by the Fediverse:
 - Major social networks offer communication departments much bigger audience and a set of tools that are useful for them (including tracking of users).
 - Publishing in multiple channels is costly and in some cases major social network providers make it difficult.
 - Running your own service is always complicated and can generate IT challenges.

Immediately following his appeal — as he stepped off the stage — We approached 'da professa'... We challenged him that this wasn't a failure...

EDPS
failure

Development of Followers of the EC and EDPS accounts on EU Voice



October 2022:
8000



August 2023:
88.000



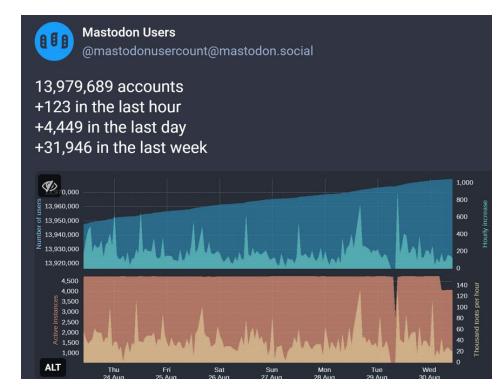
October 2022:
1700



August 2023:
5800

Why we try? EDPS Fediverse Pilots

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EURO
DATA
PROTE
SUPER

The EU's
protection

mised

much
n

es

*Especially not regarding the numbers for their fediverse accounts.
—So we invited him to come back the very next day...*

EDPS failure

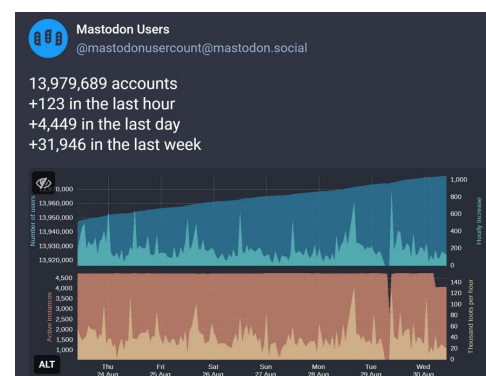
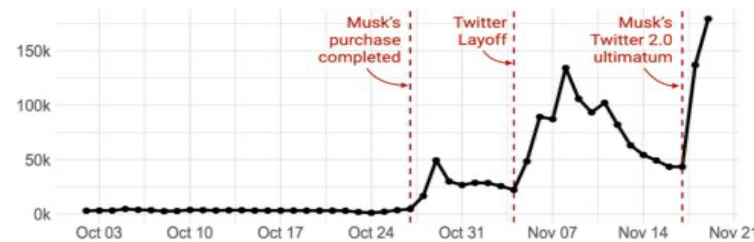


EURO
DATA
PROTE
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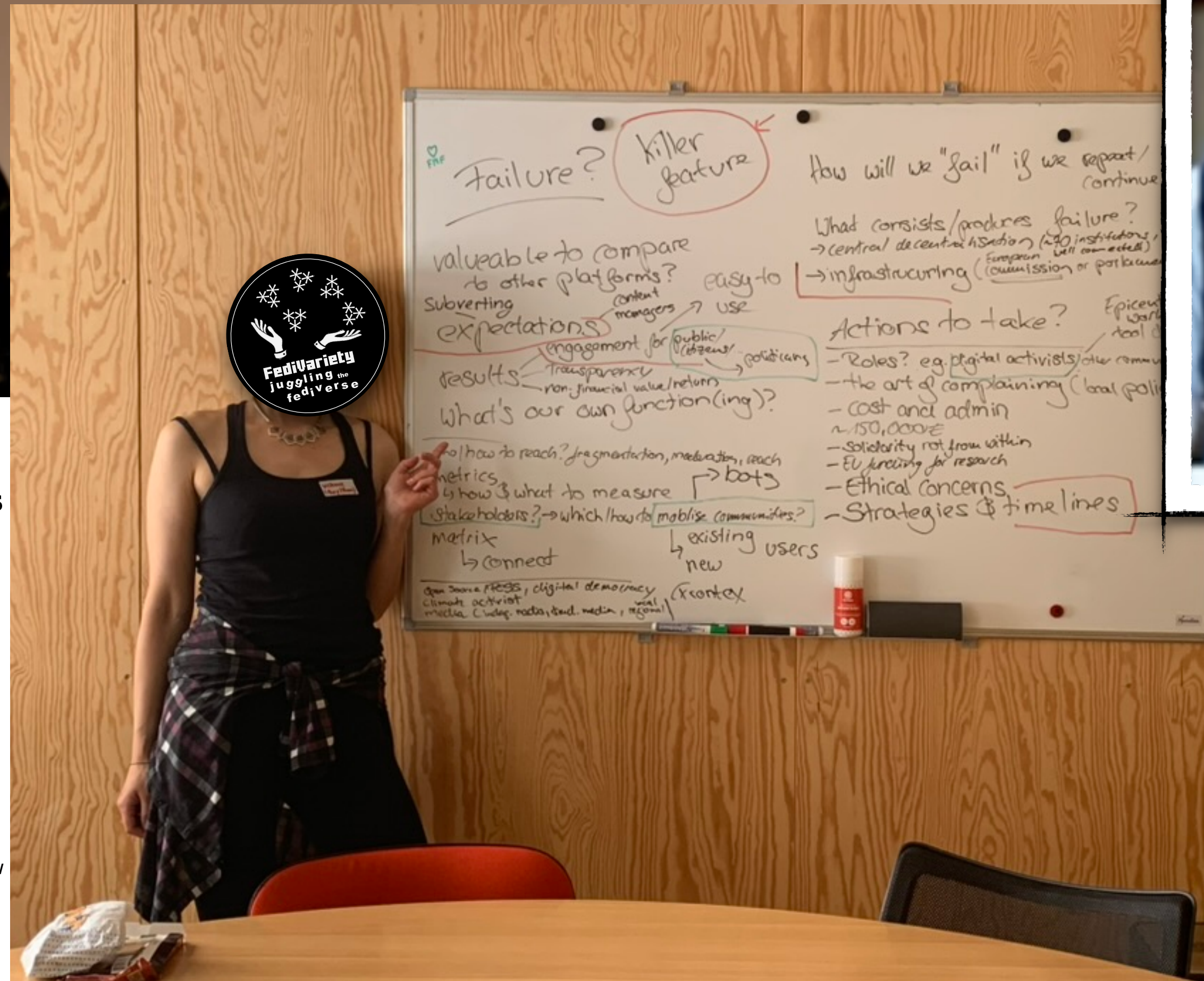
The EU's
protection

Why we try? EDPS Fediverse Pilots

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dependence/sovereignty promised

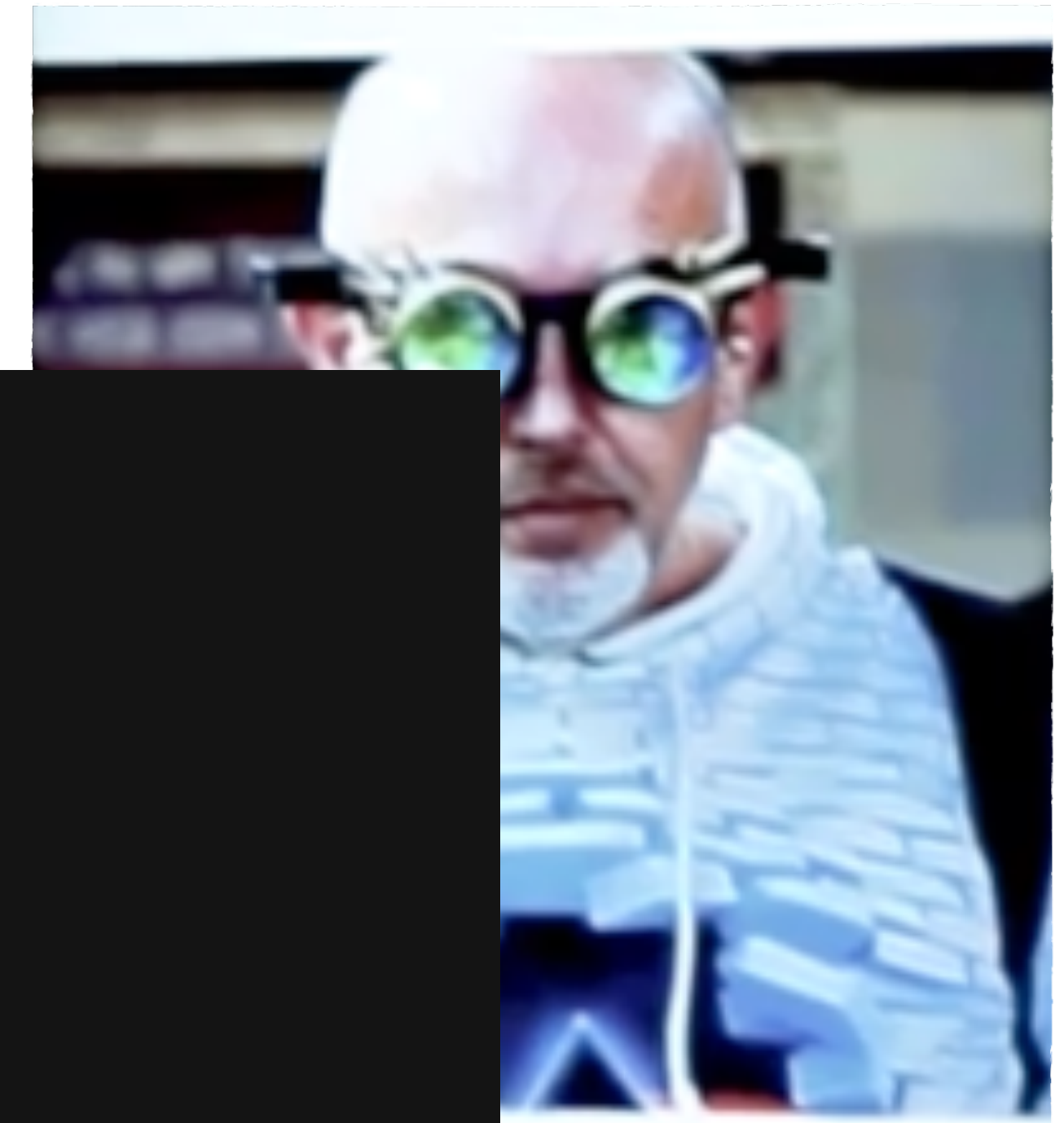
communication departments much that are useful for them

costly and in some cases make it difficult.

is complicated and can

...To have a workshop on their “failing” EU Voice/Video pilot.
—Here our circus took off!

EDPS
failure



EURO
DATA
PROTE
SUPER

The EU's
protection



3 OUT OF 5 PEOPLE
WATCH PORN AT WORK

THE REST IS
UNEMPLOYED

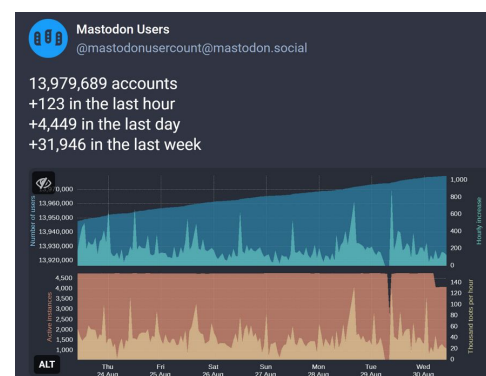
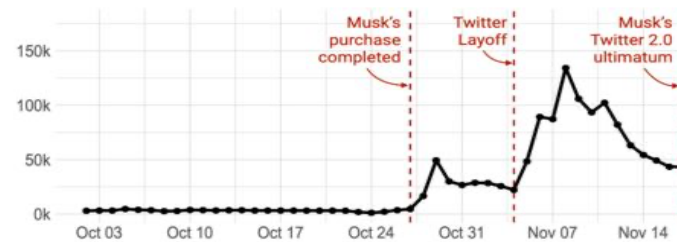
Pornhub

IT'S FOR ALL



Why we try? EDPS Fediverse

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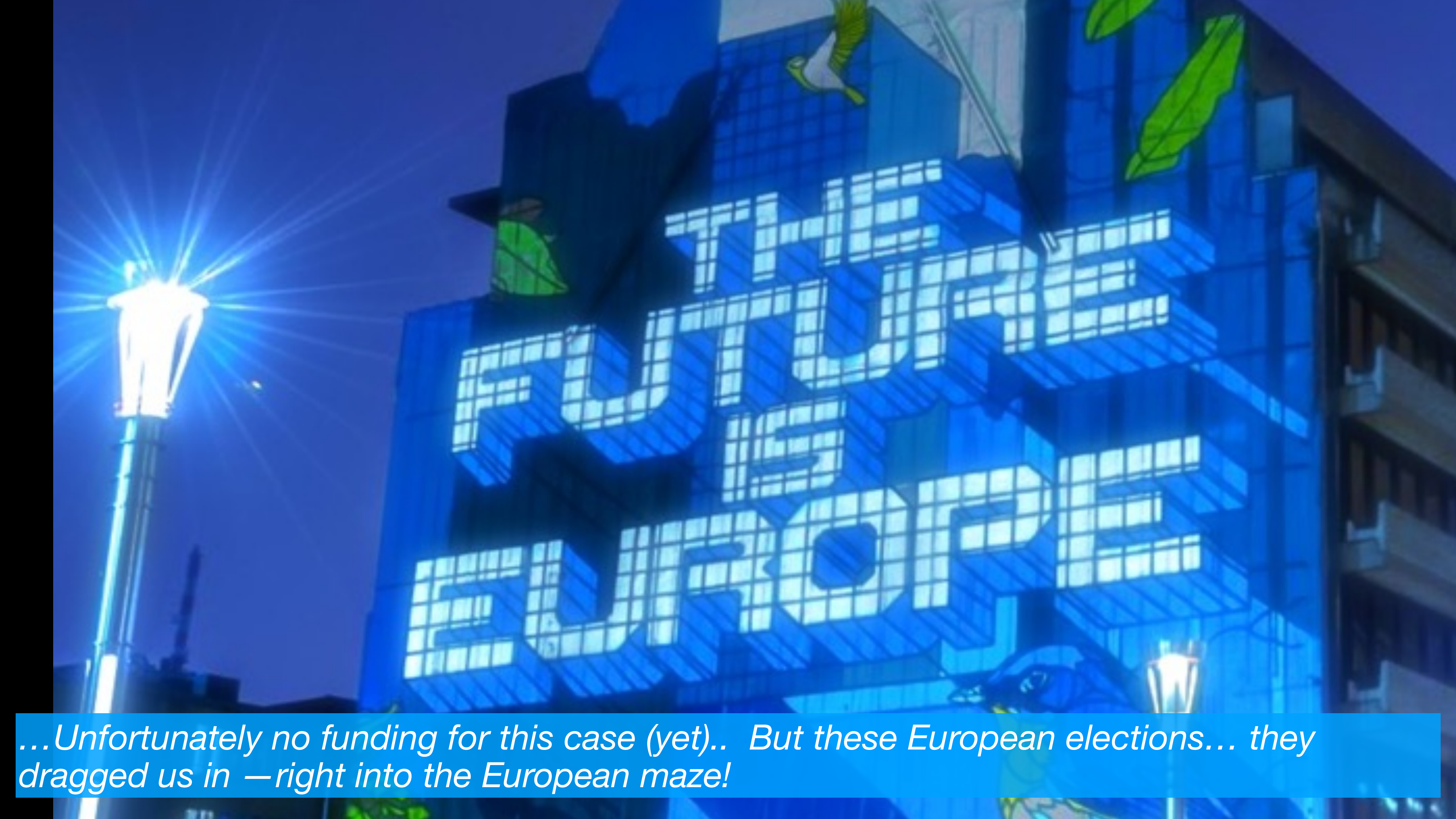
reignty promised

departments much
helpful for them

in some cases
make it difficult.

is complicated and can

The first result—after some braining—we came up with was a pitch for an advertisement campaign on PornHub... — To promote alternative social media to politicians, during the European elections.



...Unfortunately no funding for this case (yet).. But these European elections... they dragged us in —right into the European maze!



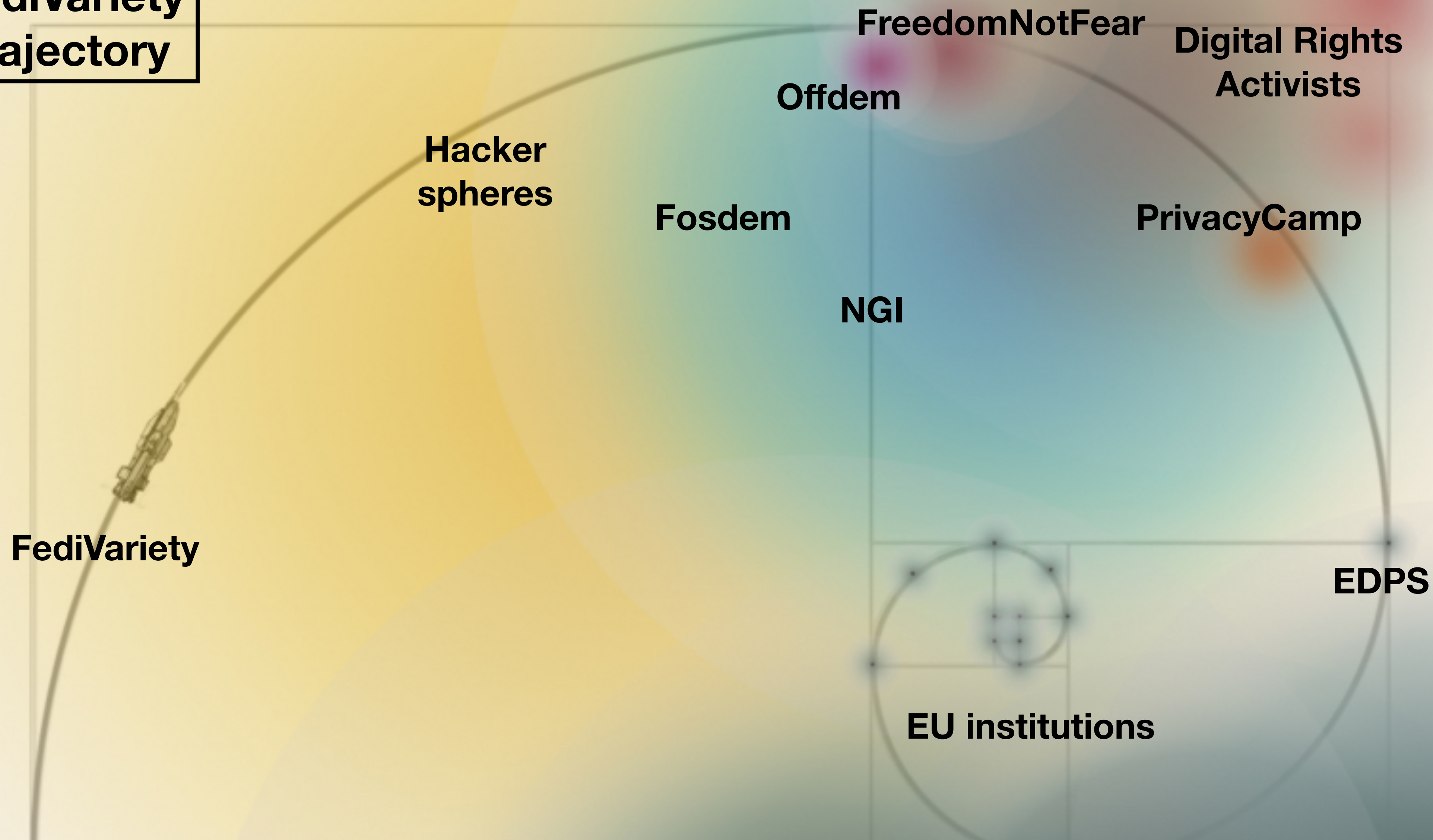
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Case 'EU Voice/Video'

SO TO OUR CASE.

The subject of our study! 'EU Voice/Video'!

**FediVariety
trajectory**



In order to do our research, we made a FANTASTIC trip. To get a grip on this we proposed a research study about the "EU Voice/Video" case!

FediVariety's EU Voice/Video *case study*

The EDPS pilot project, "EU Voice/Video," was one of the first to integrate self-hosted Fediverse instances into cross-institutional public administration.

For this research, Fedivariety examined data on the creation, usage, and experience of the 40 institutional EU Voice—'Mastodon'— and 6 EU Video—'Peertube'— accounts.

Fedivariety made Freedom of Information requests to 21 institutions, resulting in documents like reports, correspondence, presentations, manuals, and evaluation reports. They also conducted 10 interviews with individuals involved in the pilot and beyond, such as the Dutch Government pilot, and the wider open source community pushing for the Fediverse.

Therefor Fedivariety attended various events, including lobby events, policy meetings, advocacy parties, tech conferences, hack gatherings... to observe, and to have intimate conversations about the complex interplay of power and seduction in the European maze.

By the way, this study uses a blend of qualitative research method based on and document analysis and Grounded Theory.

Fedivariety's overall aim is to provide policy recommendations and comprehensive guides for public administrations interested in self-hosting alternatives of decentralised and federated social media.

The insights and recommendations from this study will be discussed at the 'Nodes On A Web unconference'.

So? Darlings?! Why not open some new chapters of history...?



drop topic



more info

Now if you close your eyes, take a deep breath.

[recorded voice]

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Consequences Success!

So what have we learned from fediverse adoption in public administration..? It's a success!
IT'S TOTALLY DOABLE!



Cheap

CHEAP! 1. It doesn't cost much to deploy. 2. Governments already have the infrastructure and the people able to do it. 3. Finding the right budget is key here.



Cheap

EASY

EASY! 1. We found that admin and moderation wasn't much of an issue, thanks to many pilots like this one from EDPS. 2. There is a lot of resources out there, like GDPR compliant terms and conditions. 3. Governance is still work, and but that is a responsibility.



But most importantly: it's FUN! 1. Interviewees loved the interaction and engagement they had on the fediverse. 2. They enjoyed experimenting with how it and what works. 3. And participants liked the collaboration it created (doing it cross institutionally and bridging communities). —So why isn't there a more wide-spread adoption and experimentation?

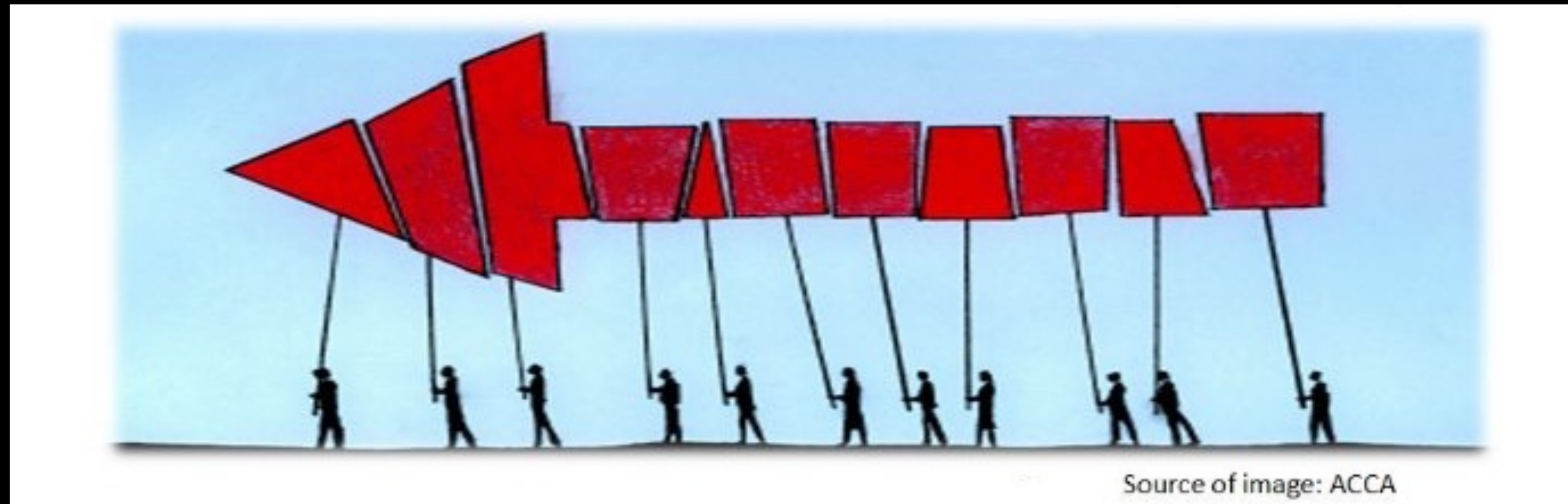


What we found was a very European story. There may be a little bit of funding and budget here and there, for a pilot, some prototypes, some features. While sometimes labelled as failure, it is actually a great success, IF NOT a learning experience. But then it stops. #RipNGI with all its shortcomings.



*It was also very common open source story. It is not as convenient to use, and many aspects not quite fit for purpose. YET. But we believe we can get there, if we dare to think more long-term and are willing to take responsibility.
—But we also need to take care of our communities when doing it.*

“[...] work together on a digital common”



To quote one of our participants: “The fediverse is an easy vehicle [...] to work together on a digital common”. Let's step together into an era of collective sense-making. Even if we fail sometimes. Discuss what values to see reflected (beyond data protection)... What we would like to see developed and a road map on how to get there.

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www.fediversity.org/unconference

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"THE FEDIVERSE IN/FOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS"

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more info

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We can only bring our stories to you. But what we need are yours.



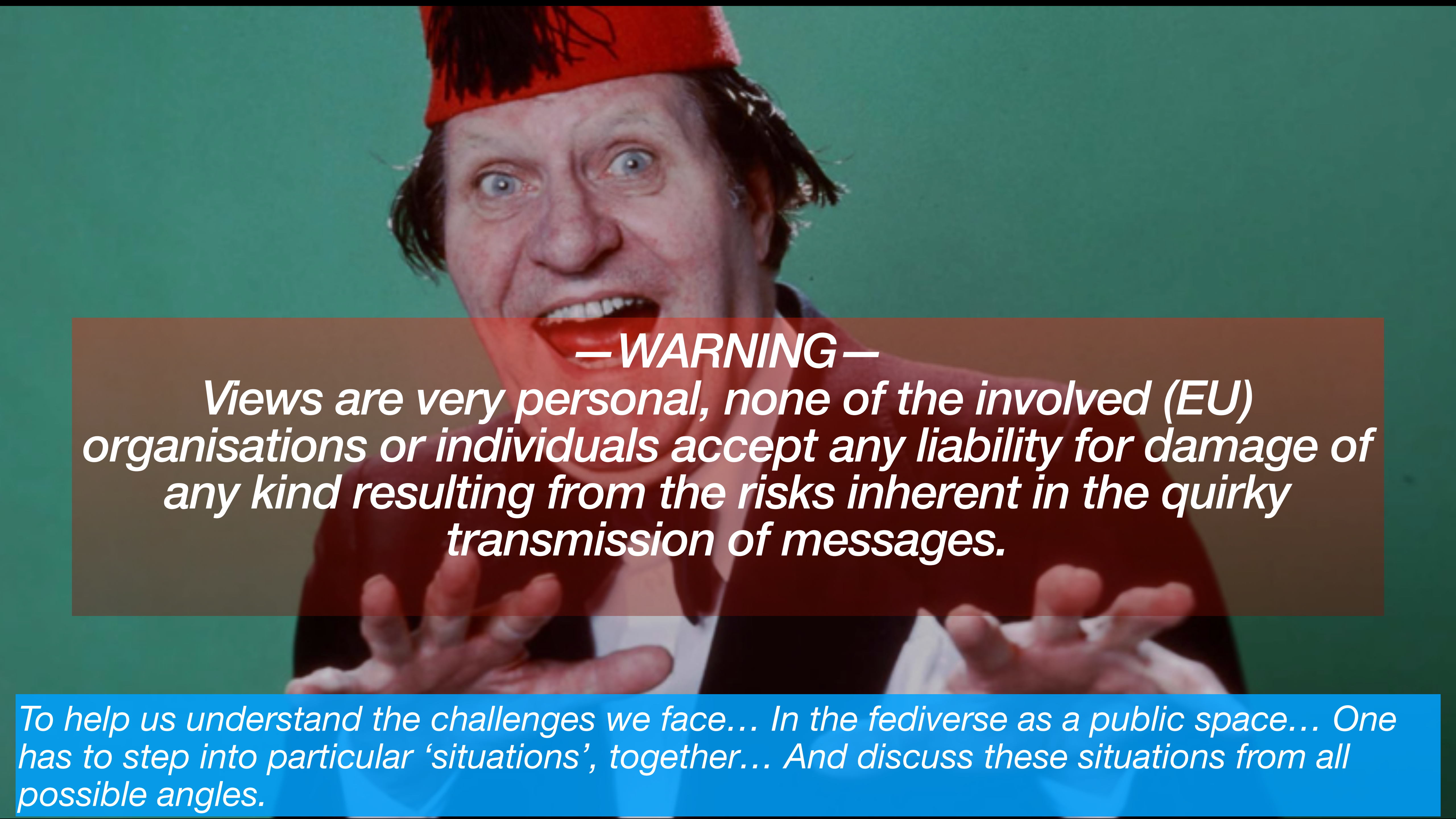
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-Logbook-

*The Logbook then! It's a logbook with stories, based on genuine quotes from real people, regarding actual events.... all related to 'Fediverse Integration into Public Administration'.
—Stories with a little FediVariety twist, of course.*



—WARNING—

Views are very personal, none of the involved (EU) organisations or individuals accept any liability for damage of any kind resulting from the risks inherent in the quirky transmission of messages.

To help us understand the challenges we face... In the fediverse as a public space... One has to step into particular 'situations', together... And discuss these situations from all possible angles.



Logbook menu



*This is our Logbook Menu. And we just pick one story out...
—Mind these personal logbooks recorded the experiences, doubts, excitements, challenges, opportunities, loves and hopes of some of the people we met on our journey.*

May, 11th, 2024 - Letter to Myself. Before Hitting The Button.

Shaping a Rock into a Ball



*April, 17th, 2024 - Letter to Myself. Before Hitting The Button.
Shaping a Rock into a Ball*

...

*April, 17th, 2024 - Letter to Myself. Before Hitting The Button.
Shaping a Rock into a Ball*

Shaping a Rock into a Ball

Navigating the European Union resembles an intimate dance —difficult yet thrilling.

Hidden in the shadows of public institutions are the resistances we encounter, emerging only when we attempt to breach tricky communication barriers.

In high-stakes environments like the EU, trust and courage are crucial yet often held close, like sweet secrets. The stakes are high, and willingness to engage can feel enticingly limited.

One interviewee likened our quest for “fediverse integration” to the challenging art of shaping a stubborn rock into a smooth ball. Just as that requires passion and dedication, we aim to innovate public administration with new technologies.

The journey is fraught with resistance, complex regulations, and historical burdens, yet the rewards—enhanced transparency and deeper citizen engagement—shine brightly.

Ultimately, “shaping a rock into a ball” reminds us that meaningful change demands patience and resilience as we strive for responsive and inclusive public administration in this captivating digital age.

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So.. Let's keep juggling the fediverse! Get involved!