

Technology Assessment



Trustworthy and Controversial?

Agenda

1. Introduction Rathenau Instituut

- Structure
- Science System Assessment
- Technology Assessment

2. Doing TA

- Be trustworthy: factual basis
- Be interested: engage in interaction
- Be relevant: make a difference (be controversial)

Rathenau Instituut: structure

- Task
 - Technology Assessment
 - Science System Assessment
- Place
 - Core finance by government
 - Independent board (appointed by Minister of Science)
 - Managed by Royal Academy
- Program
 - Presented to the Parliament
 - External evaluation every five years.

Science System Assessment (= Science for Science Policy)

- Informing decision making about the research system:
Facts & Figures
- Improve understanding of **dynamics of the research system**, esp the relation between science policy and dynamics of new science and technology
- Support political opinion forming and societal debate about the **science and innovation policy**

Technology Assessment:

- The institute's task is to support the **societal debate and political opinion forming** on questions regarding **scientific or technological developments**, more specific ethical, social, legal, cultural aspects hereof.
- The institute supports more specific the forming of political opinions in both Houses of the **Parliament** (Netherlands) and the **European Parliament**.
- In order to support societal debate and political opinion forming **involve government and decision-makers**

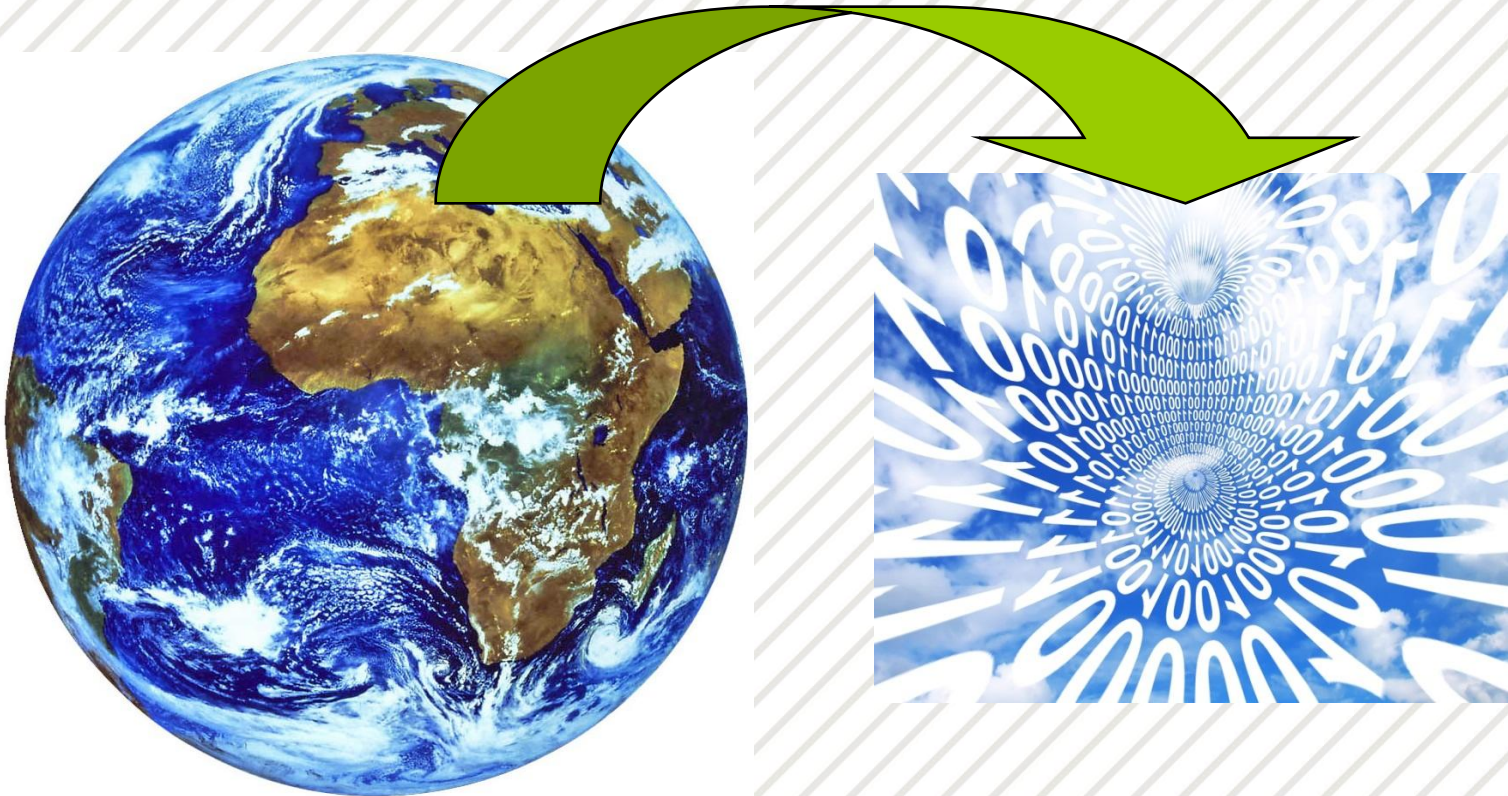
Being trustworthy: building knowledge



Assessing the impact

- Assessing societal impact of science and technology
 - The impact goes beyond the consequences of use
 - The impact is partly depending on technology and design
 - The impact is embedded in systems and structures
- In complex societies: the impact
 - is sometimes public, sometimes private, mostly mixed
 - is related to ethical and political pluralism: **make explicit**

Being interested: engage in interaction



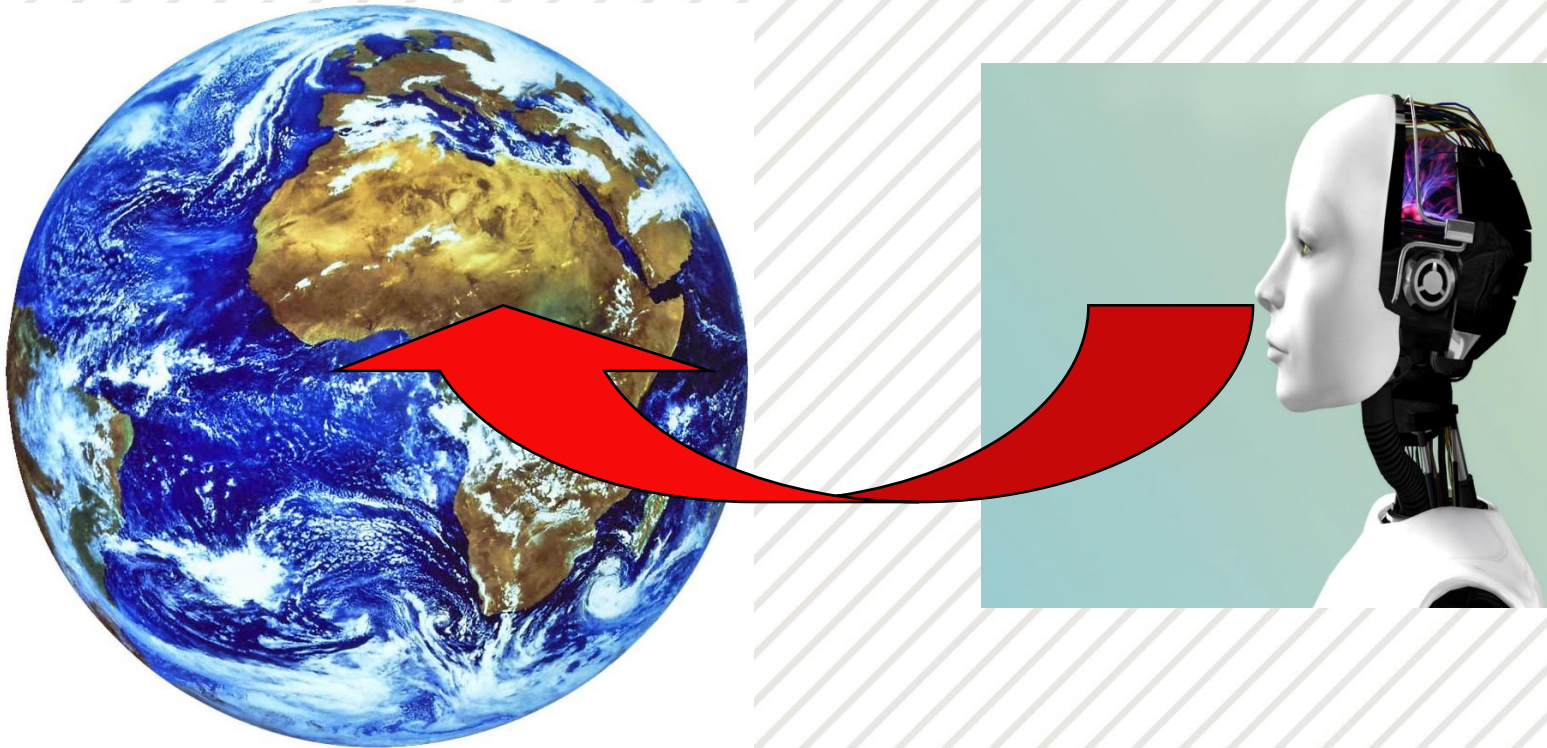
Interaction: make citizens relevant

- Source
 - Focus group, poll, participatory structures
 - Knowledge of citizen perspectives is necessary to understand the impact of technology
- Public
 - Theatre, media and internet
 - Public → publics
 - Societal debates are public
- Instrument
 - Polling (participation) creates (**sometimes**) news
 - Media and Politics have (**sometimes**) an interest in opinions

Engagement and interaction: difficult issues

- Which Source?
 - The 'naked' citizen: the citizen against the NGO's?
 - Study of the citizen \leftrightarrow interaction with the citizen
- Which Public
 - Consumers, Citizens or Citoyens?
 - Participation \leftrightarrow Deliberation
- Justified instrument?
 - The danger of a 'polling democracy'
 - Representation \leftrightarrow Argumentative quality

Be relevant, be controversial



Modern societies are media societies



Make relevant:

Say something that makes a difference

Say something that can be challenged

Say something controversial

Technology Assessment

Make relevant:

Say something that makes a difference

Say something that can be challenged

Say something controversial

Not without danger

No offence without good defence

Accept that media have their own dynamics

Accept that politics and policy making have their
own dynamics



TA: Trustworthy and Controversial:

1. Define your publics:
 - Rathenau Instituut: politics, policy makers and general publics
2. Be trustworthy for these publics:
 - Strength in fact-finding and share different perspectives
 - Interaction and not just providing information
3. Be relevant for these publics
 - Where do they get their information?
 - Make a difference and add to the discussion (be **controversial**)
 - Interact with their time frame and accept dynamics