

## **The emotional architecture of social media: The case of the Facebook "Like" button**

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This presentation argues that work on mediated participation needs to take a careful look at the emotional architecture of technologies and platforms of participation. In particular, it considers the forms of emotional expression that are structurally encouraged in social media on the basis of design decisions. Based on interviews with users, it takes an in-depth look at the Facebook “Like” button and its consequences for the horizons of mediated public participation enabled by the social networking site.

The presentation suggests that the affordances of particular platforms have a significant impact on structuring the forms of political participation – and the emotional tone and content of these forms. For example, while letters to the editor sections in newspapers have tended to encourage a formal, “rational” and dispassionate form of public discourse, the emotional architecture of Facebook – and particularly the feature of the “Like” button – directs debate on the social media platform in the direction of the blandly positive. In general, the technological affordances of social media shape the nature of public discourse in ways that may support more openly emotional forms of public participation, challenging the liberal democratic model of the rational, dispassionate and impartial citizen.

**Bio:** Karin Wahl-Jorgensen is Professor in the Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, Cardiff University and Director of Research Development and Environment in the school. She is the author of three books, *Disasters and the Media* (Peter Lang, 2012; co-authored with Mervi Pantti and Simon Cottle), *Journalists and the Public* (Hampton Press, 2007) and *Citizens or Consumers?* (Open University Press, 2005; co-authored with Justin Lewis and Sanna Inthorn), and is currently writing *Emotions, Media and Politics* for Polity Press.