

LUXEMBURG LECTURE

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HOW TO HOLD ALGORITHMS
ACCOUNTABLE

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ROSA-LUXEMBURG-STIFTUNG, SALON
FRANZ-MEHRING-PLATZ 1 · 10243 BERLIN

The Lecture will be followed by a commentary by **AlgorithmWatch**, a Berlin based NGO that evaluates and sheds light on algorithmic decision making processes.

Admission is free and registration is not required.

HOW TO HOLD ALGORITHMS ACCOUNTABLE!

“Luxemburg-Lecture” by Frank Pasquale

The infancy of the internet has long passed. Cyberspace is no longer an escape from the “real world”. It affects the “real world” by adding a code layer to almost anything. Online corporations are setting the rules that determine who is hired or receives a credit at which rate, where to drive and how to deliver care work. Databases – private or state-run – collect, combine and recombine data to produce profiles. Those algorithms, working for google, Walmart, Deliveroo or state institutions are impenetrable to outside observers. Complex mathematics calculates outcomes that influence people’s lives. But such processes are not only highly elaborate most often they are also protected by trade secrecy.

You want to know why a decision was made? You probably don’t have the right to know. You feel there is wrong information about you? You won’t have the chance to make a plea to change that information. This has given rise to a movement for algorithmic accountability. It’s an urgent and global cause. The challenge is not technical, but mostly political. One important part is to create law that empowers people to see and challenge what the algorithms are saying about us. Therefore algorithmic accountability requires the skills of theorists and practitioners, lawyers, social scientists, journalists and others.

Frank Pasquale is one of the leading scholars on algorithmic accountability and professor of law at the University of Maryland and author of “The Black Box Society. The Secret Algorithms That Control Money and Information”.

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