New Research Network to Study and Design Innovative Ways of Solving Public Problems

MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Opening Governance *formed to gather evidence and develop new designs for governing*

NEW YORK, NY, March 4, 2014 – The Governance Lab (The GovLab) at New York University today announced the formation of a Research Network on Opening Governance, which will seek to develop blueprints for more effective and legitimate democratic institutions to help improve people's lives.

Convened and organized by the GovLab, the **MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Opening Governance** is made possible by a three-year grant of $5 million from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation as well as a gift from Google.org, which will allow the Network to tap the latest technological advances to further its work.

Combining empirical research with real-world experiments, the Research Network will study what happens when governments and institutions open themselves to diverse participation, pursue collaborative problem-solving, and seek input and expertise from a range of people. Network members include twelve experts (see below) in computer science, political science, policy informatics, social psychology and philosophy, law, and communications. This core group is complemented by an advisory network of academics, technologists, and current and former government officials. Together, they will assess existing innovations in governing and experiment with new practices and how institutions make decisions at the local, national, and international levels.

Support for the Network from Google.org will be used to build technology platforms to solve problems more openly and to run agile, real-world, empirical experiments with institutional partners such as governments and NGOs to discover what can enhance collaboration and decision-making in the public interest.

The Network's research will be complemented by theoretical writing and compelling storytelling designed to articulate and demonstrate clearly and concretely how governing agencies might work better than they do today. "We want to arm policymakers and practitioners with evidence of what works and what does not," says Professor Beth Simone Noveck, Network Chair and author of *Wiki Government: How Technology Can Make Government Better, Democracy Stronger and Citi More Powerful*, "which is vital to drive innovation, re-establish legitimacy and more effectively target scarce resources to solve today's problems."

"From prize-backed challenges to spur creative thinking to the use of expert networks to get the smartest people focused on a problem no matter where they work, this shift from top-down, closed, and professional government to decentralized, open, and smarter governance may be the major social innovation of the 21st century," says Noveck. "The MacArthur Research Network on Opening Governance is the ideal crucible for helping transition from closed and centralized to open and collaborative institutions of governance in a way that is scientifically sound and yields new insights to inform future efforts, always with an eye toward real-world impacts."

MacArthur Foundation President Robert Gallucci added, "Recognizing that we cannot solve today's challenges with yesterday's tools, this interdisciplinary group will bring fresh thinking to questions about how our governing institutions operate, and how they can develop better ways to help address seemingly intractable social problems for the common good."

About the Governance Lab (GovLab) at New York University

Founded in 2012, the Governance Lab (The GovLab) strives to improve people's lives by changing how we govern. The GovLab endeavors to strengthen the ability of people and institutions to work together to solve problems, make decisions, resolve conflict and govern themselves more effectively and legitimately. The GovLab designs technology, policy and strategies for fostering these more open approaches to governance and active conceptions of citizenship and studies what works. More information is available at www.thegovlab.org

About the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation supports creative people and effective institutions committed to building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. In addition to selecting the MacArthur Fellows, the Foundation works to defend human rights, advance global conservation and security, make cities better places, and understand how technology is affecting children and society. More information is available at www.macfound.org.

For more information or how to become involved, contact

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URL: http://www.opening-governance.org/

Members

GOVLAB
The Governance Lab @ NYU

The MacArthur Research Network on Opening Governance comprises:

Chair: Beth Simone Noveck
Network Coordinator: Andrew Young
Chief of Research: Stefaan Verhulst

Faculty Members:
- Sir Tim Berners-Lee (Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)/University of Southampton, UK)
- Deborah Estrin (Cornell Tech/Weill Cornell Medical College)
- Erik Johnston (Arizona State University)
- Henry Farrell (George Washington University)
- Sheena S. Iyengar (Columbia Business School/Jerome A. Chazen Institute of International Business)
- Karim Lakhani (Harvard Business School)
- Anita McGahan (University of Toronto)
- Cosma Shalizi (Carnegie Mellon/Santa Fe Institute)

Institutional Members:
- Christian Bason and Jesper Christiansen (MindLab, Denmark)
- Geoff Mulgan (National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts – NESTA, United Kingdom)
- Lee Rainie (Pew Research Center)