Fireside Chats

Seniors meeting Juniors

Digital Enlightenment fireside chats

Over the past year Digital Enlightenment Forum organized small-size online meetings - **fireside chats -** where 6-8 young professionals and promising PhD and master's level students have an informal chat for 1-1.5 hours with a senior person from the world of policy, politics, industry or academia.

The senior person is the host and briefly introduces a specific theme. This is then followed by an open discussion. The intention is not only to exchange about the theme but also to hear about some of the professional life experiences of the host.

The participants (the 'juniors') hear interesting insights about an attractive theme. They learn from the experience of the host in her or his life as a politician, policymaker, academic, entrepreneur, etc. And they meet online peers who are at a similar stage of their professional and academic life.

Are you interested as an Emeritus Professor to be the host for a fireside chat? It is a lightweight effort and very rewarding. For the program of future firesides: see here.

Assessment of the Digital Enlightenment fireside chats

About 20 such chats have been organized in the past year, in COVID-times. They generate great enthusiasm of participants and hosts. The dialogue works very well, especially when the senior host is open to learn as much from the juniors as the other way around. We now have an international community of young, promising professionals and students. The exclusivity and the intimacy of the fireside chats stimulate high-quality participation. The young professionals and PhD/master level students are very well-qualified, active and engaged. A fireside chat is lightweight and non-bureaucratic. The host speaks 'from the heart' about a well-known topic and their professional life.

Example themes at the fireside chats have been:

Co-creation in health data platforms	How to think about technology
The datafied child	Centralisation-decentralisation pendulum on the Internet and the Web
Digitalisation as climate solution or as pollution	
Digital Transformation and the Global Emergence of K-Pop	Digital technologies to augment human collective intelligence
Community Building in the Digital Age	Policymaking and politics in the European Parliament
Artificial Intelligence	Life of European Commission policymaker
Citizen-controlled personal data cooperatives	Our future Digital Industry
Data control and the EU data governance regulation	Digital Rights, Digital Sovereignty

Digital Enlightenment Forum is an informal community of people committed to the evolution of digitisation in society while respecting human values. We bring together experts and professionals in multi-stakeholder discussions to find solution-focused strategies. We organise events and undertake studies. We had celebrities in our midst such as Sir Tim Berners-Lee and European Commissioner Viviane Reding. We promote enlightened thinking, making sense of emerging issues, engaging in public debate, benefiting from each other s experiences and networks, and respecting differences of perspective.

This is an Input for eRegions Emeriti meeting 29 Sept 2021, by Prof Dr Paul Timmers, paul.timmers@iivii.eu