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Digital Inclusion to Enhance Potentials of AI and Reassembling Innovations, Growth and Democracy

ABSTRACT

Innovations and entrepreneurship have deeply changed by the Internet and digitalisation of services. The emerging technological development, interest and focus on AI are now opening for even more fundamental changes in society. The prospects for AI (incl automatization and big data) for growth and new regional development resemble those previously connected to digitalisation, rife with positive opportunities and seen as a solution to any societal challenge. However, knowledgeable and inclusive societies are key for the AI related solutions to be put in practices and in the service of a sustainable democracy.

The aim of this talk is to elaborate on conceptualisations of digital inclusion and discuss its role and potential to enhance democratic inclusion. I will further argue that digital and democratic inclusion is a pre-requisite for reassembling frames for innovations, growth and democracy, in both theory and practice. The digital divide was identified in research already in the 1990's as a main barrier for growth and innovations in the digital economy, as well as digitalisation of other sectors in society. Today, research as well as policy makers, including in the European Union, have a more compound interpretation of equality, inclusion and participation in digital contexts, where competence, usability and trust are emphasised. There are several political and practical initiatives to enhance digital inclusion to build more sustainable and growing societies - but there are also challenges.

Short Bio:

Elin Wihlborg is Professor in Political Science and Public Administration at the Department of Management and Engineering at Linköping university, Sweden. She is a guest professor in Work integrated Learning at University West, Sweden. Wihlborg holds a PhD in Technology and Social change from Linköping University and a MSc in Social Policy from London School of Economics, UK. She was a proud holder of Marie Curie Scholarship during 2010-13 for advanced research at Oslo University and McQuarrie University in Sydney, Australia. She is a mini-track co-chair for the digital government track at the annual Hawaiian international Conference on System Science. Professor Wihlborg's work has been published in the *Technology in Society*, *Transformative Government*, *Sustainable development*, *Journal of Urban Technology*, *Local Government Studies* and *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence* among others. Her work is closely related to and used by policy making bodies as the Swedish Association of Local and Regional Authorities. Her research on digitalisation particularly focus the automatization of work and services in public authorities, and further the role of, and organization at, public libraries to enhance digital inclusion among citizens and local governments.