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### **Speaking the Language of Democracy in the Digital Age.**

Today the Web bears a resemblance to an encyclopaedia broken into regionalised fragments. Western search engines are dependent on Wikipedia, but also act as an index of the articles of Wikipedia and other online dictionaries such as Britannica. The knowledge graphs of other platforms, including those used in the training of AI, rely on this system. China has reproduced its own regional encyclopaedic system, with a cultural twist.

A global, multi-language encyclopaedia holds the promise of the Western scientific ideal of a universal language of representations (universal knowledge), but also of universal translation - drawing the interest of actors interested in extending economic and military relationships. Universal models of knowledge, however, ignore the politics of language and translation across cultures. Researchers have found such politics across Wikipedia's language communities. Evidence suggests this politics is impacting on the capacity of automated systems to generate global knowledge. Those following ideals of universalism may continue to attempt to tweak technologies and draw in more users, without acknowledging such politics. In the process they also ignore findings across contemporary sciences, including physics and the cognitive sciences, suggesting human beings are imagining space-time (s).

My research looks at the difficulties facing Wikipedia as it attempts to support universal models of knowledge generation. I am also looking at alternative strategies that recognises the politics of spatial-temporal imaginings and ask how technology might support the negotiation of this internationally. I imagine a blended online/offline platform supporting multiple language communities in dialogue over issues of international justice - from climate change to poverty. Such technology would seek to promote dialogue through equality of participation (whether or not this is referred to as 'democracy'), including of those without access to the Web, education, or written resources. All could be asked to give their testimony, bear witness to their own experience and imagine a fairer, more sustainable, world. The focus would be less on evidencing the authority of their words as objective truths, than respecting their testimony and imaginings as fellow human beings. Translation capabilities would need to be developed to support this process. These would need to negotiate the continuous reshaping of languages alongside reimagining of the world(s) they represent, without drawing on traditions of translation associated with the politics of hierarchy, colonialism and imposition.