Sensors, empowerment, and accountability (SEMA) in Africa

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Sources of inspiration for the ideas we present here:

1. **MSc students at ITC**: Field work with the pilot HSW in Zanzibar

2. **Prof. Robert Hoppe**: on differences between the media/the web as a means for improved deliberation and decision-making and the media/the web as a means for agenda-setting, issue formation and political mobilization.

3. **Kate Lance**: PhD research on the influence of donors on the behaviour of government agencies in the geospatial sector in Africa

   video: [http://cddrl.stanford.edu/events/recording/6389/1/538](http://cddrl.stanford.edu/events/recording/6389/1/538)
   [especially Fung’s concept of political apps on the web & dynamics of different types of apps]
**A view on Digital earth**

Digital Earth = *All apps* for commerce, social interaction, collaborative knowledge production, citizen science and political action on the *geoweb*

- Disruptive / Killer apps
- Non-disruptive apps (yet)

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**An app is a killer when...**

1. Users adopt the app and abandon their old way of doing something

   Because it improves their experience by changing how they do that thing

2. Organizations harnessing the app displace organizations using old ones
The view on Digital earth in this paper:

Digital Earth = Apps for commerce, social interaction, collaborative knowledge production, citizen science and political action on the geoweb

- Disruptive / Killer apps?
- Non-disruptive apps (yet)

Killer apps: political mobilization?
Killer apps: political decision making?

Points

- SEMA: a story
  - Political killer apps on the geoweb?
  - Propositions
Water
HSW Implementation

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To what extent and how can citizens in Tanzania directly exact accountability from public service providers with the human sensor web (HSW)?
More info on SEMA in:

Sensors, empowerment, and accountability: a Digital Earth view from East Africa

International Journal of Digital Earth

Yola Georgiadou, Benson Bana, Robert Becht, Robert Hoppe, Justinian Ikingura, Menno-Jan Kraak, Kate Lance, Rob Lemmens, Juma Hemed Lungo, Michael McCall, Gianluca Miscione & Jeroen Verplanke
Points

• SEMA: a story

• Conceptualising political killer apps on the geoweb?

• Propositions
Old Politics

Citizens

input

Traditional Organizations

Elections
Lobbying

Politicians &
Public Agencies

Communicative
Pressure

output

Public Sphere/
Public opinion

Public Action

Laws &
Policies

Archon Fung et al 2011

Disruptive – Killer apps

Commercial
Social interaction
Knowledge production
Political Apps

Non Disruptive

Georgiadou and Verplancke 2011

Old Politics

Traditional Organizations

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Communicative
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Public Sphere/
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Policies

Archon Fung et al 2011

Disruptive – Killer apps

Commercial
Social interaction
Knowledge production
Political Apps

Non Disruptive

Georgiadou and Verplancke 2011
Old Politics in Africa (our POV)

- Traditional Organizations
- International NGOs
- Elections/Lobbying
- Politicians & Public Agencies
- Donors/IFIs
- Communicative Pressure
- Laws & Policies
- Aid/Contracts
- Public Action
- ‘Development’
- Public Sphere/Public opinion
- Global media
- Citizens

New Politics in Africa with HSW?

- Traditional Organizations
- International NGOs
- Water Agency
- Donors/IFIs
- Laws & Policies
- Aid/Contracts
- Public Action
- ‘Development’
- Public Sphere/Public opinion
- Global media
- Citizens

Georgiadou and Verplanck 2011
New Politics in Africa with HSW

Citizens → HSW → Public Sphere/Public opinion → Global media → Public Action → ‘Development’

Laws & Policies → Aid/Contracts

Donors/IFIs → Politicians & Public Agencies

SEMA → Citizens → Traditional Organizations → International NGOs

New Politics in Africa with SEMA

Citizens → SEMA → Public Sphere/Public opinion → Global media → Public Action → ‘Development’

Laws & Policies → Aid/Contracts

Donors/IFIs → Politicians & Public Agencies

Communicative Pressure

Global media

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Disruptive — Killer apps

Non Disruptive

Commercial Social interaction Knowledge production Political Apps

No political killer apps yet ....

Georgiadou and Verplanke 2011
Propositions @ Symposion

1. For Digital Earth research to be truly global, attention to political apps on the geoweb (political decision making & mobilization) is warranted.

2. Inter-disciplinarity (PolSci -- GIScience) a sine qua non to understand the dynamics of success and rate of innovation of political apps.
Discussion point

- To what extent can Citizen Science apps become killer platforms in Africa?

- Are they more or less likely than political apps to become disruptive in Africa? (*)

  — (*) See, e.g. M. Haklay’s Extreme Citizen Science pilots in Congo

thank you