

UNBLACK THE BOX

www.unblackthebox.org

For a (self)conscious use of digital and data technologies in educational institutions

At a glance:

UNBLACK THE BOX is a network initiative founded in 2019 by researchers from education science, sociology, information technology, media and health education, as well as teachers in schools, universities and pedagogical training. Our goal is to enable educational institutions and teachers to respond to the growing datafication and digitization of education with enlightened, critical and conscious decision-making, even without extensive IT knowledge.

Background:

Schools, universities, but also institutions in early childhood education and non-formal education are under rising pressure of quick and extensive digitalization. This includes massive investments in WiFi or hardware as well as an increasing use of platforms, learning software, learning analytics, and (to a growing extent) AI technologies. All of these developments are framed by promises to increase learning performance, fairness, educational equity or efficiency, while releasing the administrative and pedagogical burden for teachers.

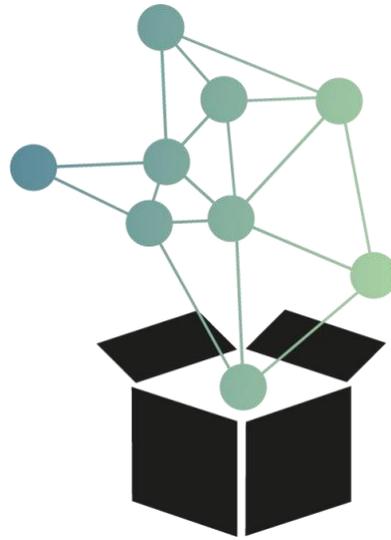
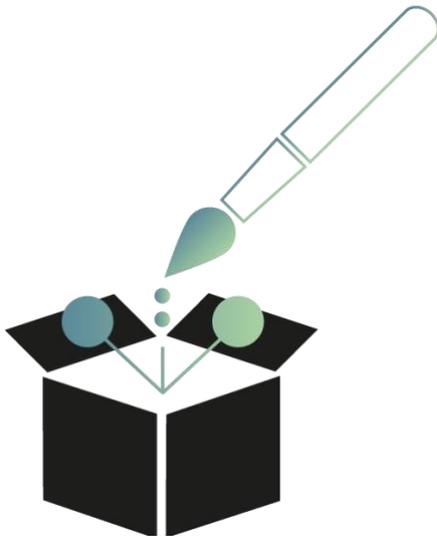
Consequently, educational institutions are being flooded with a growing number of financing, consulting and training initiatives. At the same time, the vast majority of these activities are related to (effective) hard- and software usage skills, while critical approaches are often reduced to questions such as data protection, cyberbullying or fake news. This also means, the

complex logics of digital technologies often remain a black box to those who are increasingly governed by those technologies: institutional leaders, teachers and students.

In other words, there appears a dramatic lack of understanding the fundamental logics, processes, but also the complex social interrelationships of datafication and digitalization, of algorithms and AI (meaning to unblack the box!). Such an understanding is essential for sustainable, democratically oriented educational leadership in the digital age.

Responding to this need, UNBLACK THE BOX:

- provides a holistic, critical view on the functioning and mechanisms of data (technologies) in educational contexts and



- provides educational institutions, leaders and teachers with tools for conscious, creative usage of data technologies. This usage includes the retention or even the expansion of analogue technologies.

What we are offering:

- >> A digital platform with various information on current research, material, tools and events
- >> Resources to develop a critical understanding of data (technologies) for educational institutions, leaders, teachers and the interested public
- >> Collaboration with educational institutions on their digital development
- >> Teacher and leadership training, workshops and webinars
- >> Consulting for management personnel
- >> And more to come...

Who we are:



Prof. Dr. Sigrid Hartong, initiative management, sociology and education science;

Helmut-Schmidt-University Hamburg; working on educational policy and governance, datafication and digitalization in educational institutions, building international research networks, Critical Data Studies.

<https://www.hsu-hh.de/sozgov/en/team-en/prof-dr-sigrid-hartong/>



Prof. Heidrun Allert, (media) education und computer science in education; University of Kiel; working on AI, adaptive technologies, software engineering, design based, creative understandings of algorithmization and datafication.

<https://www.medienpaedagogik.uni-kiel.de/de/team/prof-dr-heidrun-allert>



Prof. Paula Bleckmann, media and health education; Alanus Hochschule Alfter; working on teacher education, founder of ECHT DABEI (media risk prevention program for kindergardens and schools), „Analog-Digidaktik“ approach.

<https://www.alanus.edu/de/hochschule/menschen/detail/paula-bleckmann>



Izabela Czarnojan, media education and psychology, teacher trainer at the Hamburg Institute for Teacher Education and School Development (LI) for online-based learning and teaching as well as webinar methods; teacher, IT and media education coordinator at the Walddörfer-Gymnasium Hamburg.

<https://schulentwicklungdigital.de/>



M.A. Annina Förschler, sociology and education science; Helmut-Schmidt-University Hamburg; working on educational policy and governance, datafication and digitalization in educational institutions, privatization, EdTech Industry, Critical Data Studies.

<https://www.hsu-hh.de/sozgov/en/team-en/m-a-annina-foerschler/>



Dr. Sieglinde Jornitz, education science; DIPF Leibniz Institute for Research and Information in Education Frankfurt; working on education policy and reform, internationalization, pedagogical effects of digitalization.

<https://www.dipf.de/en/institute/staff/jornitz-sieglinde>



Dr. Manuel Reinhard, coordinator of the initiative; philosopher and organizational consultant; working on philosophy of the society, the digital environment and education.

<https://www.hsu-hh.de/sozgov/en/team-en/dr-manuel-reinhard/>



Dr. Christoph Richter, educational psychology; University of Kiel; working on digital culture, technology & cultural education; educational computer science, participatory research & design; collaborative learning & knowledge creation.

<https://www.medienpaedagogik.uni-kiel.de/de/team/christoph-richter>



M.A. Ina Sander, media and communication studies; PhD candidate Cardiff University, research fellow Helmut-Schmidt-University Hamburg; working on datafication and digitisation, data and digital literacy, education about big data; Critical Data Studies approach.

<https://www.hsu-hh.de/sozgov/en/team-en/m-a-ina-sander/>