



DATA GOV

Governance by Data Infrastructure

Kick-Off Event Report

March 26th & 27th 2026

Amsterdam



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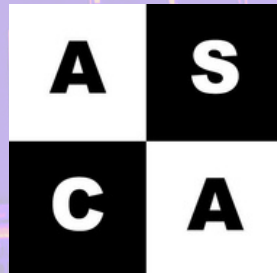


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DATAGOV Kick-Off Workshop Day 1

26 March 2026 | UvA Institute for Advanced Study (IAS), Amsterdam

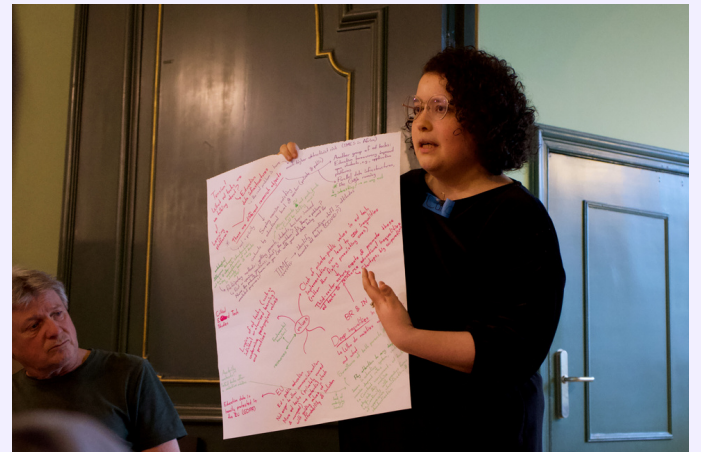
The DATAGOV project launched with an invite-only workshop bringing together 25 participants from across disciplines and regions: **Mirca Madianou** (Goldsmiths, University of London), **Jo Pierson** (University of Hasselt), **Cecilia Passanti** (Université Paris Cité), **Niels ten Oever** (University of Amsterdam), **Marjolein Lanzing** (University of Amsterdam), **Louise Amoore** (Durham University), **Rob van Kranenburg** (IEEE Standards Association), **Fernando Filgueiras** (Brazilian Ministry of Education), Rocco Bellanova (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) and **Bidisha Chaudhuri** (University of Amsterdam).

Combining short interventions with extended discussion, the workshop aimed to map the field, strengthen connections, and identify directions for future research. Hosted at the **UvA Institute for Advanced Study (IAS)**, the intimate and interdisciplinary setting encouraged sustained dialogue across disciplinary and geographical boundaries, creating the conditions for the collaborative exchange that the DATAGOV project seeks to foster.

Across two speaker sessions, a shared concern emerged around the shifting role of data infrastructures in governance: systems such as biometric identification, digital ID frameworks, education platforms, and social policy databases are increasingly shaping access to services, rights, and recognition. Rather than functioning as neutral tools, these infrastructures are becoming embedded in institutional processes and decision-making, raising questions about how governance is exercised when it is built into technical systems.

A recurring thread was the complexity of the actors involved. Participants pointed to the **entanglement of public institutions, private companies, and third-sector organisations in the design and operation of data infrastructures**. Cases from education and public administration illustrated how these systems complicate questions of accountability and control, challenging straightforward distinctions between public and private.

Empirical examples from **Brazil, India, South Africa, and European contexts** grounded these discussions in concrete settings. Cecilia Passanti and Mirca Madianou underscored how identification systems and biometric technologies are tied to longer historical trajectories, including colonial legacies, while also shaping contemporary forms of inclusion and exclusion.



DATAGOV Kick-Off Workshop Day 2

27 March 2026 | Framer Framed, Amsterdam

The second day of the DATAGOV Kick-Off moved from the workshop setting to **Framer Framed**, opening the conversation to a broader audience of researchers, students, artists, policymakers, civil society organisations, and members of the public. Through **two keynote lectures and panel discussions**, the event explored how emerging research questions around data infrastructures connect to pressing societal and democratic concerns, as we outlined in a dedicated **[Blog post](#)**.

The morning keynote by **Louise Amore** examined the relationship between AI, cloud infrastructures, and the changing nature of the state. Joined by **Rocco Bellanova, Mirca Madianou** and **Niels ten Oever**, the subsequent panel reflected on the infrastructural dimensions of AI, drawing connections between interoperability, humanitarian governance, and the growing dependence on digital infrastructures. Audience discussions extended these debates, raising questions about the future of public institutions and the implications of increasingly shared dependencies between states, private companies, and civil society actors.

The afternoon keynote by **Fernando Filgueiras** turned to Brazil's newly established National Education Data Infrastructure (IND), using it as a case study to examine how interoperable data systems are reshaping public administration. Framing digital transformation as a political rather than technological project, the keynote highlighted how infrastructures increasingly influence institutional coordination, governance, and state capacity.

The second panel, featuring **Bidisha Chaudhuri, Cecilia Passanti** and **Rob van Kranenburg**, broadened the discussion to digital public infrastructures across different national contexts. Speakers reflected on changing forms of statecraft in India, the historical development of digital identity and biometric systems, and Europe's dependence on global cloud infrastructure. Together, these perspectives reinforced many of the questions raised during the first day of the workshop, while highlighting their relevance across diverse political and geographical settings.

Across the day, discussions repeatedly returned to **questions of democracy, accountability and power**. Participants considered how data infrastructures increasingly shape public institutions, redistribute authority, and challenge existing understandings of **transparency, sovereignty, and public governance**. Rather than offering definitive answers, the event underscored the need for continued interdisciplinary dialogue between researchers, policymakers, practitioners, and the public.

The second day concluded the DATAGOV Kick-Off by expanding the conversation beyond the research community and reaffirming the project's commitment to examining how data infrastructures are transforming governance across different sectors and regions. Together, the two-day event established a strong foundation for future collaboration and identified a rich set of questions that will guide the next phase of the project.

Holding the public event at **Framer Framed** helped broaden the conversation beyond academia. As a space dedicated to critical dialogue between art, society, and politics, it provided an appropriate setting for engaging researchers, policymakers, artists, students, and members of the public in discussions about the societal implications of data infrastructures. The venue reinforced DATAGOV's commitment to connecting academic research with wider public debate.





Photographs by Yelyzaveta Terentieva, Joëlle Grotendorst, Giulia Campaioli, and Federico Bonelli.

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