Stacco Troncoso

Recipes for a data commons are ubiquitous. Despite noble intentions, the solutions offered often conflate commons with [commons-based peer production](#) (CBPP). The latter describes the proto-mode of production found in Wikipedia and Free Software projects, characterized by often permissionless contributions and lack of direct compensation, and where there may be participation in a community but perhaps not in a close-knit group.

Meanwhile, in concrete, small-scale [commons](#) (and cooperatives to a certain extent) face-to-face interactions and close relationships prevail, while rewards and benefits are more directly related to work or shared inputs.

Despite these fundamental differences, both CBPP and commons are characterized by procedural similarities that question the premises of mainstream economics. Many readings of Ostrom and CBPP conceive the commons as a resource, rather than a social process. This limited understanding places the development of a data commons at the hands of institutions ill-suited to understanding the often in-situ nature of commons governance or Open-Source contributory cultures. The unchecked for-profit digitalization and exploitation of data leads us to assume that data is a resource to be exploited, opening the question of who benefits from this exploitation. What is to be done?

Our suggestion is that any data or knowledge commons needs to, first and foremost, be an experiential learning process that creates new commons, rather than exploit it for absentee shareholder interest or under the mandates of institutions with little notion of open-source cultures and economics. How can we achieve this?

[DisCO](#) (Distributed Cooperative Organizations) is a set of tools and methodologies based on Feminist Economics, P2P cultures and distributed computing that bridges the divide between small-scale, trusted commons and complex transnational Commons Based Peer Production projects. Applicable to a host of organizations including worker-owned coops, SMEs, non-profits, Community Land Trusts and more, DisCOs generate data metrics which include (often invisibilized) care or reproductive work.

If data is value, DisCOs ask, "what are the *values* informing the way we collect, share and leverage data"; and more importantly, "to what end?". With their orientation towards social and environmentally positive outcomes and federated nature, DisCOs can help provide feasible management strategies for a people-controlled data commons that leverage the best of small commons and coops with CBPP. DisCO also provides ethical templates for the development of technologies with a special focus on AI and blockchain/DLT applications.

Find out more in the links below:

DisCO Official Publications

- [DisCO.beat](#) (The DisCO Newsletter)

- [DisCO Manifesto](#)

- [DisCO Elements](#)

External Publications

- [Platforming Equality: Care Before Code Care](#) (Chapter on DisCO from [Autonomy.work](#)'s booklet

- [Deliberate Dancing: A Critical Investigation of DisCOs' Potential to Re-Politicize the Economy](#) (Master's thesis on DisCO)

Articles

- [How to Account for the Future of Work: Automation, Blockchain, and the Knowledge Economy](#) on [Hackernoon](#)

- [Last Night a Distributed Cooperative Organization Saved My Life: A Brief Introduction to DisCOs](#) on [Hackernoon](#)

- [Tales of a DisCO Straight from the Dance Floor](#) for [Grassroots Economic Organizing](#). (Practical experiences of Guerrilla Translation as a DisCO)

- [Anoche una organización cooperativa distribuida me salvó la vida: una breve introducción a las DisCO](#). Introductory article in Spanish for alternative digital newspaper [El Salto](#).

Videos and Public Presentations

- [The DisCO Mothership has Landed: Feminist, Cooperative, Commons & Blockchains](#) (1 minute video trailer)

- [Groove is in the Heart: the DisCO Elements](#) (1 minute video trailer for the DisCO Elements)

- [Feminista, cooperativista, distribuido y orientado al procomún: bienvenidas a DisCO](#) (1 minute video trailer in Spanish)

- [Take Back the App!](#) (Episode of the Laura Flanders Show featuring DisCOs, Platform Coops and more…)

- [DisCO.coop – The Future of Distributed Work](#) | Radical Practice Conference 2020/21 (22 minute presentation by DisCO co-founder [Ann Marie Utratel](#))

- [OPEN: 2020 DisCO Webinar recording](#) (April 2020)

- [Rage Against the Machine and Science Friction: a video introduction to DisCOs](#) (45 min presentation and audio/podcast version).

- [Tech for Society #13: Rights to the blockchain city #2](#) a livecast episode by Pakhuis de Zwijger on the possibilities of blockchains if they were designed to support alternative economic models, with [DisCO.coop](#) among the participants.

- [MoneyLab Berlin #11](#). (This is the whole encounter, the DisCO part begins at 1:27:00)

- [DWeb Meetup: March 2021 "The Latest in the Decentralized Web"](#) (This is the whole meetup, the DisCO part begins at 0:59:00 approx.)