VCoI Call Notes

*30 Aug 2021*

# Attendees

* Rob Nehmer
* Mike Bennett
* Claude Baudoin
* Bobbin Teegarden

# Agenda

* Work through the terms
  + Wrap up last week's term treatment
  + The next term: Algorithmic Governance

# Meeting Notes

## Updates

### AI PTF

May look for VCoI for what they are doing.

People looking to understand how to use what we are defining.

Also MVF v SKOS.

CB proposes joint meeting where they can present MVF to the VCoI group. Need to know what it and what it is intended for before we know if / how to use it.

EK will consider this.

MB comment: VCoI is not about what to use but how to use it.

We would want to figure out what we need to do in order to identify what constructs to use from MVF and / or SKOS

What we needed to produce: some kind of explainer on e.g. what is a concept / a term, how each CoI may have its own concept space and how these use these, e.g. common concept, similar or different names or those concepts and so on. For example a list of (example?) terms and how different groups would choose different mappings from concept to terms.

Identify what we would like to achieve e.g.:

* Combined repository
* Federated repositories

i.e. where people go in order to fid the terms they need for an RFI or RFP and how to ingest that in machine readable format

Do a preliminary draft paper with how to use MVF, SKOS, OWL / RDF etc.

Identify which questions are left open versus what is in place.

Give examples e.g. preferred terms, hierarchical relationships etc.

Write that down and start to circulate that for feedback and understanding.

## Working Through the Process

From last time:

We had a singleton i.e. Common Statistical Production Architecture.

Add to the process: decision point early for the TF:

* Is this a single thing or a category of things?

Then branch process into one or other branch of:

* If Concept: Go to Term and Definitions process
* If Singleton: Go to References process

Acroynm (in this case):

* What does it stand for?

#### Try this:

Definition:

a reference architecture for the statistical industry aiming at promoting collaboration between national and international organizations.

Q: Could a TF determine if this is:

* A category of thing (of which there may be more than one member)
* An individual thing of some kind

Parse the definition and see…

By what criteria:

2 possible things to try:

* Take the definition and put it in Google
* Take the acronym and put it in Google

There might be other terms where this doesn't work.

It might be that from the same definition as written you could not reliably tell if this was a unique thing.

* So this question doesn't work as part of the process.

As written the 'a' in the definition might mean a specific reference architecture or to a category of such reference architectures. Might e.g. be some other industry group you are not aware of.

Then:

Given the TF is determining what its current usage is. As far as that TF has already determined, they are referring to an individual thing

**Conclusion:** can't use the question wording alone – have to know what the TF has in mind.

Given we had to spend time going around it last time, this was not a trivial process decision point.

So we have to start with what the TF wants, rather than an automatic question-answering process point.

**Process description:** "Analyze the term and…"

(rather than a Yes or No)

We will see that on today's example also.

**Process description:** "Analyze the term and identify whether the term you are looking to define refers to a category of things of which there may be members, or an individual thing in the world"

If the TF can't answer that question to its own satisfaction, do they really own the term?

### Next Term: Algorithmic Governance

Pretend to be the TF.

#### Step 1:

"Analyze the term and identify whether the term you are looking to define refers to a category of things of which there may be members, or an individual thing in the world"

Governance – there has to be many instantiations of this.

Even the chosen definition seemed to mention possible multiple departments.

Even the chosen definition, while it feels wrong, is defining the kind of thing of which there must be many.

#### Therefore:

Go to Process (1): the Terms and Definitions process.

Process (1): 'Does the Concept Exist?'

Ans = no

Next step: add new Concept

#### Go To: Concept modeling

2 questions:

* What kind of Thing is it?
* What distinguishes from other such things?

Q: Other such things generally or other concepts already in the concept list.

At this point: we have an empty concept list.

#### Concept List

TF starts with a Concept List

That becomes the Taxonomy

On Q1: If we are asking 'What kind of thing is it?' Does that need to be from an existing set of things?

That is, in an existing ontology.

MB: No

Right now we are the TF.

Here are the possibilities:

* We might have a list of things
* We might have an ontology
* This might be a new thing not in our list of things

2 scenarios in which this process plays out:

1. This is all new; no pre-existing set of concepts OR words maintained by the TF
2. There is already a concept model etc. maintained under VCoI method, by the TF
3. The TF has a pre-existing resource not defined under VCoI

For now: Assume green field

Do this again later for not green field.

Overall we have to capture:

* The context of intended usage
* The concept

As currently written the process is that we identify the Concept next.

*What kind of thing is it?*

Does this presume an existing ontology?

No because we are doing the greenfield

#### Aside: for the instructions thing

Distinguish a new start to the process versus a longer term steady state

#### /Aside

### Note possibilities:

What the TF chooses to use as a concept resource.

Possible kinds of concept resource include:

* List of concepts
* Taxonomy of concepts
* Concept ontology (real things)
* Data-enabled ontology (data representations of real things)
* Other

Right now:

No pre-existing concept list.

The Ontology (1) may have some concepts the TF can reuse e.g. organizations, documents, tasks forces etc. But not others e.g. rules.

Also will have Terms and Definitions, Abbreviations, References i.e. the internal structure of the VCoI process as elements within Ontology (1).

The TF could use these concepts.

TF could for 'Algorithm' say 'Algorithmic Governance is a Term' and leave it at that.

- come back to that later as part of error trapping in the process.

#### Next step: New Concept in Concept List

Concept is that one corresponds to the term 'Algorithmic Governance' as used in the context of this TF.

New concept in the concept list.

Term 00001

Concept primary label:

* Concept 00001
  + Primary label: Algorithmic Governance

Process point: is the 1ry label the written 'term' under which it first appeared? Yes for now.

Ask the 1st ontological question:

What kind of Thing is This?

### Some descriptions

#### From the TF:

'an alternative form of government or social ordering,…'

- probably wrong

#### From further research (BT):

Algorithmic governance as a key concept in controversies around the emerging digital society highlights the idea that digital technologies produce social ordering in a specific way.

- like a critical paper, taking a position that by having these layers of technology you are privileging certain kinds of thing, and concluding that something should be more conclusive.

How would an OMG TF respond to this e.g. 'that is not what we need, we are after the digitization of government through algorithms'

- this would depend on the TF.

#### From the term name

'Algorithmic governance' appears to be a qualified term for a kind of 'governance'.

Either this

* Is a kind of 'governance'
* Is a form of 'Regulation' as in 'this new form of regulation'

See [1]

### For the method:

#### Find references

Things the ref can say about the concept give indications of what the concept is; e.g. in [1] we have:

Short case studies on predictive policy and automated content moderation show that algorithmic governance is multiple, contingent and contested. It takes different forms in different contexts and jurisdictions, and it is shaped by interests, power, and resistance

- which doesn't define but says things about 'it'

### What is the 'it'?

From [3]:

This new form of regulation – algorithmic governance

* Q: What kind of thing is it?
* A: A kind of Regulation

Concept List – extend that

Put together a taxonomy of these.

## Concept List

* Concept 00001 called Algorithmic Governance
* Regulation
* Governance

The TF has to think about the overarching Concept Model that it maintains.

e.g. is Governance a synonym (same concept) as 'Regulation' or:

* Is Governance a kind of Regulation
* Is Regulation a kind of Governance

Ref [3] has Governance as a kind of Regulation

**Governance:** how you govern a thing

**Regulation:**

* (n): a rule or set of rules set out by some regulatory authority
* (v): the act of controlling something in some way

The TF: We meant a kind of regulatory approach to thing. i.e. a kind of governance.

Context is the context of the TF e.g. in documents.

* Get the TF to expand on when they would or would not use.
* Also apply these questions to the higher level terms we introduced in response to 'what kind of thing is this

#### Add Q2 answer:

* It is algorithmic

Get the TF unpack what they mean by that.

### Next week

No call

## Next meeting

In 2 week we pick this up and continue.

OR we may hear from Berndt someone (via Bobbin suggestion and Claude's meeting today at AI PTF)

- depending on availability.

May be later. Might be quite esoteric. Better to do this later.

Or make special arrangements OR e.g. have him present at Burlingame.

Similarly we would look to have the MVF folks present once we have a clearer idea of what we want to do, in order to learn how to use that to it.

# Appendix: References

### Ref [1]

Abstract  
Algorithmic governance as a key concept in controversies around the emerging digital society highlights the idea that digital technologies produce social ordering in a specific way. Starting with the origins of the concept, this paper portrays different perspectives and objects of inquiry where algorithmic governance has gained prominence ranging from the public sector to labour management and ordering digital communication. Recurrent controversies across all sectors such as datafication and surveillance, bias, agency and transparency indicate that the concept of algorithmic governance allows to bring objects of inquiry and research fields that had not been related before into a joint conversation. Short case studies on predictive policy and automated content moderation show that algorithmic governance is multiple, contingent and contested. It takes different forms in different contexts and jurisdictions, and it is shaped by interests, power, and resistance.  (from <https://policyreview.info/concepts/algorithmic-governance>

### Ref [2]

Algorithmic governance: A modes of governance approach  
[https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/) › doi › full › rego  
by D Gritsenko · Cited by 10 — 2), algorithmic governance comprises “the intentional and unintentional steering effects of algorithmic-selection systems.”

### Ref [3]

Synopsis of a book called Algorithmic Governance: This book analyses the changes to the regulation of everyday life that have taken place as a result of datafication, the ever-growing analytical, predictive, and structuring role of algorithms, and the prominence of the platform economy. This new form of regulation – algorithmic governance – ranges from nudging individuals towards predefined outcomes to outright structuration of behaviour through digital architecture. The author reveals the strength and pervasiveness of algorithmic politics through a comparison with the main traditional form of regulation: law. These changes are subsequently demonstrated to reflect a broader shift away from anthropocentric accounts of the world. In doing so, the book adopts a posthumanist framework which focuses on deep embeddedness and interactions between humans, the natural environment, technology, and code.