

The „Orwell-1984-Award“

Honoring the Champions of Responsible & Democratic Data Usage and Protection in a Global Society

A Call for Funding an Award for Publications in the Defense of Democracy, Basic Rights, Privacy, Data Security and Protection

Short information: This is a call in search of support for funding an award the objective of which is to appreciate the discourse and its authors on today's "Orwellian-1984" tendencies in terms of publications or media productions. Different from other Big Brother awards, the purpose of this prize is not to identify phenomena serving as proofs for Big Brother developments, rather than to honor profound and intelligent discussions on such phenomena through publications (articles, books, film, media...).



„Written in 1948, „1984“ was George Orwell's chilling prophecy about the future. While 1984 has come and gone, Orwell's narrative is timelier than ever. 1984 presents a "negative utopia", that is at once a startling and haunting vision of the world — so powerful that it's completely convincing from start to finish. No one can deny the power of this novel, its hold on the imaginations of entire generations of readers, or the resiliency of its admonitions — a legacy that seems to grow, not lessen, with the passage of time.” Quoted from <http://www.goodreads.com/> on Orwell's 1984

The Internet of Things, Big Data, the Cloud, the Social Media, Mobile Communications, Cybercurrency and similar concepts are profoundly changing the structure and texture of our lives, be it in business, in education, in government or in our communities. Individual primacy may soon become a thing of the past if we fail to understand these new dynamics and rebuild our societies so that trust and openness are maintained. In this spirit, the “Orwell-1984-Award” is to

recognize those individuals and organizations that co-create a wiser future where our digitized world does not dominate and control, but enhances and supports individuals and organizations.

How did this initiative get started?

In 1982, Günter Koch (http://files.hanser.de/hanser/docs/20140207_21427123427-112_Appraisal.pdf) initiated a project which was based on the need to analyze how much of George Orwell's prophecy for the year 1984 had already turned into reality. His idea was picked up by Germany's TV Channel ZDF and, under the lead of one of its later directors, Günter Myrell, a series of nine TV programs were produced under the series' title „**Daten-Schatten**“ (literal translation: „Data-Shadows“). Three of the nine shows were authored, authorized and moderated by Günter Koch and co-authored by John Favaro.

Originally the two authors intended to run a university seminar at the Computer Science Faculty of the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) in 1982 (the Technical University of Karlsruhe). We wanted to find out if and to what extent Orwell's “negative utopia,” something he called the “Big Brother World”, was already suppressing independent political opinion of individuals. Second, we wanted to see which technologies were already in place in 1984 and to what extent they had been foreseen by Orwell when he wrote his book in 1948. The Karlsruhe Computer Science Faculty Council rejected Koch's seminar concept, arguing that computer science has nothing to do with the social or political sciences – an opinion which, shortly thereafter, was overruled by the reality of discussion in professional societies such as the German “Gesellschaft für Informatik”.

Regulation policies in Germany in the late 70ies and early 80ies were traumatized by the terroristic activities of the so-called Red Army Fraction (RAF). This necessitated the need to raise a series of so-called security measures by the public authorities which, in fact, lead to inappropriate ordinances enabling the secret observation of citizens. Through historic experience aided by the knowledge about the misuse of spying applied by secret services in East Germany, a more spontaneous discussion on questions of privacy and data security arose in many intellectual communities. These discussions inspired our TV series, as well as articles in its accompanying book „**Datenschatten**“ (Literally translated: “Data Shadow”. See the publication: „*Datenschatten – Wie die Computer dein Leben kontrollieren*“. Rowohlt TB, 1987, ISBN 3499154307, as well as John Favaro's report on this project:

<http://www.execupery.com/dokumente/ITs TIME Favaro The Datenschatten Project.pdf>.

Today's terroristic acts challenge us to again look hard at these questions. They are happening in the middle of our developed societies, be it 9/11 in the US, the Charlie Hebdo attack in France in 2015 (which actually took place exactly one day after this document had been written in its 1st version), plus many similar events in Paris (Bataclan Theatre), Niza, Berlin and, earlier, Madrid, London, Nigeria and elsewhere. The pattern of reaction to these tragic events is so very similar: authorities feel the need to implemented measures of surveillance, even if they are going beyond normal democratic control. There is no question that officials need to take certain measures to avoid criminal terroristic attack against society. Yet, how should this be done in a developed and open democracy with strong values respecting free expression? The big question is how our values in an open society have to be balanced against the potential dangers of terrorist activities?

Koch and Favaro, in the course of their research for the *Datenschatten* TV project, discovered that in 1984 the US National Security Agency (NSA), well known today thanks to Edward

Snowden's disclosures, had already required data encoding techniques to decipher any encrypted information transmitted through data networks. In this way, the NSA was already in an extraordinary position to take control on any data transmission. Interestingly enough, when we addressed this critical discovery at that time, i.e. more than 30 years ago, there was no substantial reaction at all in the public sphere. Most people do not realize that the insights which were gained through Edward Snowden's documents, were already known to a large extent much earlier, but perhaps not in such detail as Snowden has provided. However it was no secret that since decades the NSA was penetrating most communication systems, including private data exchange.

Our politicians are now asking themselves why, if this information has been known for so long, that we are so outraged today over the NSA disclosures? In this context it is a bit disconcerting that Germany's Chancellor A. Merkel, upon the occasion of her meeting with US President Obama in 2013 said, that the Internet (and its associated societal and political effects) is still "unknown territory" (in German: *Neuland*) to most of the politicians. Her statement motivated Günter Koch to join others in issuing a publication with a title associated with Mrs. Merkel's statement. (See the book „Überwiegend Neuland - Positionsbestimmungen der Wissenschaft zur Gestaltung der Informationsgesellschaft.“ Berlin: edition sigma 2014, ISBN 978-3-8360-3599-6).

As a result of these experiences made over decades, G. Koch has decided to create and herewith to publish an award in reference to George Orwell's novel 1984. The intent is to honor those personalities, persons or groups who, by their activities, their publications, their research or any other complementary initiative, demonstrate that they are helping to prevent the tragic conditions Orwell so well described in his novel „1984“. To put it in positive terms: We wish to acknowledge those who by their actions, their influence and their recognition demonstrate that attempts to establish, to foster or to maintain „Big Brother regimes“ must be and can be opposed and stopped.

The Rational for the „Orwell-1984-Award“

The suggestion to launch a special „Orwell-1984-Award“ is motivated by the following factors:

- To raise attention on questions of preserving privacy, opposing any attempts and measures to penetrate our private living sphere,
- to trigger and maintain the discourse in order to enable the public to better understand the strategies and measures of authorities aiming at spying into spaces which, in a free world, do not and shall not matter to them,
- to encourage solicited publications on observations on authorities' suppressing free speech and public discourse in exchanging citizens' opinions by applying Big Brother methods,
- to motivate students and scientists to investigate and contribute e.g. by term or thesis papers or articles on subjects addressing the maintenance of the critical balance between public security interest and privacy protection,
- to trigger journalists to engage in deeper analysis on how democracy can be secured in face of anti-democratic movements claiming control by means of Big Brother technologies and methods,

- and finally, to motivate the general public to participate in a renewed discourse on how to maintain the achievements of democracy in defense against anti-democratic authoritative movements making use modern (IT) technology which undermines citizens' sovereignty and liberty.

This incomplete list also provides an idea of what may well be financed and managed in the course of a hopefully positive development of the „Orwell-1984-Award“, which is intended to grow stepwise:

- Raising funds, starting from an initial investment of 1.000,- € made by the initiator, organiser and first investor in the proposed award (G. Koch).
- Once having achieved 5.000,- € in fund money, an award body, under public law ,will be set up to lead the setting up of a web page and platform, providing professional accounting, forming an Evaluation Board, preparing the first award ceremony and preparing the foundation of the legal body.
- A legal entity will be created with a constitution and clearly defined definitions and procedures for granting the award(s). Depending on the funding volume raised, this body shall be either a Foundation or an Association under the law of a European country (probably Austria).
- It is likely that in setting up the initial instance of an Evaluation Committee, at the beginning, it will cooperate and take decisions in a virtual mode (i.e. via teleconferencing),
- We will identify the first awardee in 2018,
- The nature of this initial ceremony and its format will depend upon the initial funding,
- It will be possible to consider an extension of award categories, once a funding level of 30.000,- € has been achieved,
- In the future, we envision an extension to further funding associated with the award, e.g. scientific and publication projects.

For information: Other Awards Carrying the Name And Work of George Orwell

George Orwell's merits are reflected in some existing awards carrying his name. The data given in the sequel is only for information in case there are related questions coming up:

1. The **NCTE George Orwell Award for Distinguished Contribution to Honesty and Clarity in Public Language** (the **Orwell Award** for short), established in 1975 and given by the National Council of Teachers of English Public Language Awards Committee, recognizes writers who have made outstanding contributions to the critical analysis of public discourse.
2. The **Orwell Prize** as one of Britain's most prestigious prizes **for political writing**. Every year several prizes for work which comes closest to George Orwell's ambition „to make political writing into an art“are given. Beyond this definition, work done by George Orwell as well as articles about Orwell are being published by the organisers of this

award. The Prize was established in its present form by the late Professor Sir Bernard Crick in 1994, „to encourage writing in good English – while giving equal value to style and content, politics or public policy, whether political, economic, social or cultural – of a kind aimed at or accessible to the reading public, not to specialist or academic audiences“.

Securing the „Ethics“ of the „Orwell-1984-Award“ by applying established rules in organising the award such as e.g. in identifying awardees

The key aim of the „Orwell-1984-Award“ is to identify and to recognize personalities or groups which demonstrated their eligibility by their engagement, usually documented by themselves in their writings or by their activities documented in whatever media version serving as testimonials. The award is granted for “best publications” in whatever form, treating subjects of data security and protection, privacy and surveillance, having impact on its readers.

The Awards Committee has the responsibility to identify the right, if not the best, candidates and to select the specific awardee(s). The Award Committee is to be formed once a funding level of 5.000,- € has been achieved. The building of this committee will be organised through a bootstrapping process: an initial group of four honorable, respected and scientifically educated representatives will form the core committee: the initiator of the award, one representative of the Chaos Computer Club in Germany (which, despite of its name, is the one competence institute knowing most about espionage and hacking in the internet), one member from instkomm e.V. Association, one from “Netzpolitik” and one from the European Leonardo Corporate Learning Award as the reference body in how to organise an award. In its completed constitution, the Awards Committee may have up to 15 members.

The procedures and processes in selecting the awardee, later potentially several awardees in several categories, as well as for the funding of projects will be the same ones as have been established by the European Leonardo Corporate Learning Award as our basic reference. (http://www.leonardo-award.eu/content/index_eng.html)

Since the proposed award has a political dimension, it is most important that the selection process is designed such that it guarantees a maximum of objectivity and impartiality and that those engaged in the selection of candidates as well as the candidates themselves are committed to standards as are known in the domain of public science, such as peer reviewing and justification by applying criteria of good scientific practices.

Who is invited to donate for the funds of the Prize?

We expect funding will come from dedicated individuals, organizations that see the need to insure a fair and open society and through “crowdfunding,” for the many that also share our concerns.

Donator in also may be the „the crowd“ in terms of both natural or legal persons manifesting the support of the idea of awarding persons who demonstrate successful engagement in defense of democracy, privacy and open society. Donations by each supporter / supporting organisation shall be made at individually feasible amounts.

The inherent definition for selecting the best awardee/s is given by the title of the award and thereby the reference to Orwell's novel „1984“. Those supporting the award by donations also

commit to support the imagination, that society never in principle shall develop towards a scenario as described in that novel.

How to get started?

This call is not yet founded on a solicited organisation. The binding promise, however, is that such an organisation will be established as soon as the fund account is filled to a level of 5.000,- €, following legal procedures for a public, not-for-profit foundation (or association). Until then, the following rules are valid and will be guaranteed by the initiator:

- For organisational reasons, a minimum funding contribution per crowd donator shall be 100,- € or more; no limits above. During the initiation phase no related tax reduction on the donation can be promised to the donator. Once the body is founded, tax reduction options are a matter of applying according to available regulations.
- Each funding contribution shall be made to the following account:

Name of receiver: **execupery / Prof. G. Koch**

Bank and location: **DIE ERSTE, Vienna, Austria**

IBSN: **AT83 2011 1281 5662 0902**

BIC: **GIBAATWW**

Text to be used: **Orwell-1984-Award / <your e-mail>** (Only transfers with indication of the e-mail address will be confirmed explicitly via mail).

- Each sponsor having noted his/her e-mail address will receive a confirmation of his / her payment within one month by electronic mail from the receiver, serving as a notice of receipt that the amount has been taken to the account for the purpose of creating the „Orwell-1984-Award“.
- The funding accounting and all related incoming payments will be checked and controlled by a certified bookkeeper plus an independent Chartered Tax Advisor, both located in Vienna, Austria. The receiver of the money guarantees as a person for the correct handling, bookkeeping and use of the money collected.
- Once a first level of an aggregated funding sum of 5.000,- € is achieved, a legal body will be founded, which will be either an association or a foundation. The funds collected so far will be transferred to this new body (carrying „Orwell-1984-Award“ in its name) and will be used for a) setting up this organisation, b) to be reserved for the purposes the founding Award Committee decides, i.e. first hand in creating the award organisation, the material value of the award, the ceremony and the related public relations.
- Collection of funds will continue, hopefully leading to a well filled and filling award account.
- In case the minimum level of raising 5.000,- € in funds will not be achieved in 9 months from on the time stamped publication of this call, the donators will receive their money back (minus bank fees) and the project of fundraising would be closed, but not necessarily the overall project (which then should be achieved on another route).

- Once the critical mass of 5.000,- € has been achieved, a first candidate selected will be awarded for sure.

Perspective

Based on the experience the initiator of this award already has had as a member of a European award committee we have good reasons to expect that this award will grow over time in a well-managed process. The likely well filled and continuously filling account and in consequence an increased budget shall be used for funding a) further awards in special categories, b) projects in support of the mission of the award. This may be student and/or scientists contributions in terms of publications, research projects etc. Since the award in its initial state has no budget yet, such programs will be decided by the Award Committee depending on the availability of finances. Donators will be kept informed by regular news published via internet media, as well as further benefits for them will be decided.

<End of information and call for support, time stamped of this updated version (original version was issued in Oct. 2015) from February 1st, 2017 >