The icons depict the parties to the debate. Green stands for non-governmental organisation, blue for governmental organisation, yellow for corporations and red for acader institutions. Note that not all organisations are classified according to their corresponding .org, .gov, .com and .edu domains. Organisations are assigned to a domain on the basis of the 'about us' sections on their web sites.

www.dti.gov.uk/bioguide

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Monsanto

Genetically Modified Food Debate

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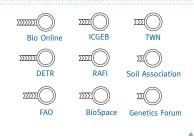
The map captures the state of the genetically modified food debate on the World Wide Web on 1 October 1999. Hyperlinks between organisations engaged in the GM Food issue serve as guidelines for determining the leading players in the web debate. Greenpeace UK and Friends of the Earth UK, two organisations with high public trust, are chosen as starting points. Following the outwards links from the sites, and those sites' outward links, a set of potentially relevant actors in the org, .gov, com and .edu domains is captured. Applying a relevance criterion, it is decided that only those organisations with more than four inward links from this GM Food issue network are granted a place on the debate map.

Legend

Six lines of enquiry



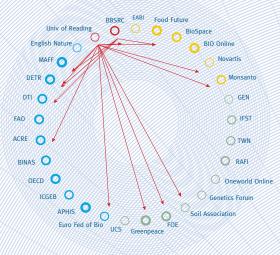
Selective search engines determine site relevance on the basis of the Selective search engines determine site relevance on the basis of the quantity of links received from the entire web. Some of the relevant organisations on the GM Food debate map (as Friends of the Earth and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation) also would be located by these relevance engines. But certain parties to the debate, deemed crucial to the issue by other relevant parties, would not be flagged by these engines. The Biosafety information Network of the UN as well as the UK governmental Advisory Committee on Releases into the Environment would remain obscure.



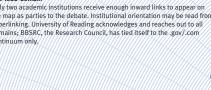
The debate stops here?
Certain players in the .gov. .com and .org domains do not link to the other parties to the debate. Of the missing linkers, the organisations with few inward links thereby become more peripheral in the debate. There are other missing linkers, however, that are deemed highly relevant by the debating parties, such as the UK Department of the Environment and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation. By ignoring relevant actors and viewpoints, the non-linking organisations not only appear less knowledgeable, but they lead surfers away from the debate.



All things considered the Organisation on Economic Cooperation and Development stands at the crossroads of the debate. Highly relevant, the third greatest networker, heavily active and popular, the OECD also is fully transdiscursive within the debate, linking to all domains. Sharing the rare transdiscursive trait with the University of Reading Snaring the rare transdiscursive trait with the University of Reading and the European Federation of Biotechnology, OEC's biotech harmonisation committee appears to further public debate in its most classical form. The transdiscursives strive to recognise and graciously convene all relevant partites, in contrast to the polarising approaches of many .org's and .com's.



The .edu domain Only two academic institutions receive enough inward links to appear on the map as parties to the debate. Institutional orientation may be read from hyperlinking. University of Reading acknowledges and reaches out to all domains; BBSRC, the Research Council, has tied itself to the .gov/.com



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The mother map shows all hyperlinks connecting the parties to the debate.





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The .gov domain
Governmental bodies are not only the largest domain present on the map. They also receive the greatest number of acknowledgements from the debating parties. Notice the British governmental departments mainly display kinship ties by linking only to other national departments. Conversely, the European and international bodies tend to traverse deads in burdering the European and international bodies tend to traverse domain boundaries. But of these cross-domain linkers, only the European Federation of Biotechnology - the Commission's Task Force on public perception - recognises the high-intensity conflict between the large life science companies and media-savy. org campaigners.

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The .org domain
The second largest group on the map, non-governmental organisations generally display a habit described as swarming - mobilising and intermingling with the like-minded. The Genetic Engineering Network typifies the style by linking and being linked to by .org's only, Greenpeace International diverges from the pattern by tying the NGO perspective and to those of .edu and .gov (but not .com). The Institute for Food Science and Explanation appreciation between controlled as one above the part of a

Technology, a professional body categorised as .org, plays the part of a

non-reflexive linker by granting passage to all domains but its own

APHIS Euro Fed of Bio UCS Greenpeace

BIO Online

Novartis

Monsanto

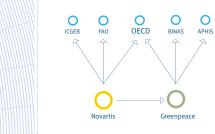
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The .com domainThe debate hosts six organisations representing commercial interests - two trade organisations, two life sciences companies and two e-commercial trade organisations, two life sciences companies and two e-commercial biotech entities. The life sciences companies embrace a 'new media style' by linking tactically to both critics and supporters. Acting like totems the e-commercial organisations refrain from linking all together and thus from acknowledging a debate. Food for our Future, the web site by the British Food and Drink Federation, displays a style that is typical of a lobby group. The non-reflexive linker connects to all domains in the debate with the exception of the .com interests for which it lobbies.

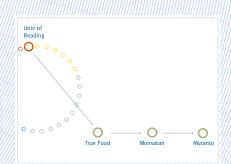


Wishful linking: aspirational and missing links

All hyperlinks are not created equally. Organisations link to express solidarity, to acknowledge formal partnership, to show awareness, to make reference to a source, to point to destinations of interest and so make reference to a source, to point to destinations of interest and so on. They also may link to seek standing. By associating itself with a respected party, the linker can stake claim to some respect. In turn, missing links may be read as signs of disrespect, especially if the party does not reciprocate a diplomatic link. Greenpeace International and Novartis, the Swiss life sciences company, appear to practice mindful linking. Both tie themselves to revered international governmental organisations. And whilst Novartis reaches out to Greenpeace with a link, the environmental group does not reciprocate.

Globalising the debate
In linking mainly to other life sciences companies and US
governmental bodies, in August 1999 Monsanto.com, the US site,
appeared as a kinship linker in a GM Food debate centering around the
UK By October Monsanto.com has globalised its linking strategy,
adapting its link list to fit the growing geo-political context of GM Food.
Along with such players as the OECD and Greenpeace International,
Monsanto nulls the Article European and international governmental.

Monsanto pulls the British, European and international governmental bodies into a transnational GM Food debate.

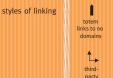


From the map to the rogue
The boundaries between organisations on and off the map are drawn on the basis of quantities of relevant inward links. Organisations may fall off the map whenever they are not sufficiently acknowledged by the actors in the issue network. Thus the boundaries of the map are partly the result of the institutional orientation enacted in hyperlinks This has political effects; inward links from the issue network decide whether one is party to the debate. There are paths leading to further Herrae cognitae. Rogue sites may be reached by starting from the University of Reading, and jumping off the map to Greenpeace UK True Food campaign and on to Monsatan and Mutanto.









Monsanto, Monsatan, Mutanto

In an effort to produce a brief epistemological crisis, the pure rogue fudges the domain name of its target and emulates its web design, making small but sensitive changes to the content. Other rogues are less subtle in their web technique.



The web sites that make up the GM Food debate bring to life a spectrum of discursive cultures: quality of life and growth, concern and regulation, critical information



The politics of association .gov links to the folksy hubs of the American biotech community, bio.com and biospace.com, pulling, for example, the 'genepool' discussion list and 'biobuzz newsflashes into the debate.



Established media: the debate by the Guardian online The starting points for the mapping procedure that yielded the web debate on GM Food were chosen on the basis of 'trust logics', i.e., the idea that surfing publics turn to NGO's for reliable information. Choosing



Debate surfing skills and the governmental domain Governmental sites often present long lists of topics, working groups and documents. Consulting the .org and the .com parties allows the less initiated to discove the names and titles of commitees, reports and directives relevant to the debate.

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