Call for Papers
9ᵗʰ dgv Conference of the Section "Digitisation in Everyday Life" of the German Association of Cultural Anthropology and Folklore Studies (dgv)

Digital Futures in the Making: Imaginaries, Politics, and Materialities
15-16 September 2022
Institute of Anthropological Studies in Culture and History, University of Hamburg
https://digilab-culture.de/call/

Digital processes and their profound impact on everyday lives are connected to various, sometimes contradictory imaginations and scenarios. What will digital futures look like, and what directions are possible and desirable? How do ideas of digital futures already shape the present? This conference aims to explore processes of emergence, improvisation, and contingency in developing, designing, and using digital media and technologies. The study of future-making is an emerging field in anthropology, connecting the perspective from the past and present as an object of anthropological inquiry (Macdonald 2012) with the orientation on the (near) future (Rabinow 2003; Collier & Lakoff 2005; Smith et al. 2016; Bryant & Knight 2019). Futures (in plural) relate both to the creation of imaginations as well as practices of the possible in situations of everyday life where 'living' and the idea of a good life is at stake (Collier & Lakoff 2005).

As digital transformations profoundly shape and change everyday life in the present, they raise questions of how one should live (Collier & Lakoff 2005) in the digital age. Digital technologies are already part of "our" everyday lives, although some people and groups face more barriers than others due to the strong link between social and digital inequalities (van Dijk 2005; Robinson et al. 2015). Imagining and designing digital futures are closely linked with ethical negotiations about sustainability, equality and participation in European societies. In addition, we need to take into account the often-invisible materiality of digital media and technologies (Reichert & Richterich 2015). How can we as ethnographers engage in ongoing processes of envisioning and designing the futures in and for digitisation? How can ideas about potential futures guide the development and implementation of digital technologies? How can a diverse range of people, groups and materialities be involved in their development? What sites of controversy or contestation become apparent? What kind of established or new scientific methods are necessary to study digital futures in the making?

We welcome submissions that discuss and demonstrate people-oriented and/or future-oriented approaches that acknowledge the open-endedness and contingency of (digital) cultures, as well as those that address broader methodological and epistemological issues pertaining to the processes of envisioning and designing the futures in and for digitisation.

We strongly encourage the participation of early-career researchers of all levels (PhD & post-doc), young professionals and graduate research students interested in future-making and digitisation. Possible themes include but are not limited to:

- *How should we live in the digital age*: What are modes of living that acknowledge the open-endedness and contingency of digital cultures? Which imaginaries or even utopias are envisioned? How do they already shape ongoing digital transformations?
- *Mundanisation of digital technologies*: How do people negotiate futures and appropriate the digital within their everyday lives? Which resistances, counterculture(s), and creative practices emerge in everyday life and social movements?

- *Digital infrastructuring and materialities*: In this section, we are concerned with not only the often-hidden infrastructures (including data, code, algorithms, etc.), in which power and governmentality are embedded and materialised, but also with the profound knowledge gap that exists between platforms, institutions, and the vast majority of people that use and co-produce digital media. Furthermore, we are interested in how digital expressions, artefacts, and the stakeholders who develop them shape how digital cultures are realised.
- *Futures of digital anthropology and open science:* Digital media have also become instruments of analysis of researchers in cultural anthropology and related disciplines of technoscience. Open science poses new challenges to ethnographic research with regard to research data management, data infrastructures and ethics. How do digital technologies create new possibilities for ethnographic research and academic knowledge production itself? What challenges and ethical questions may arise for qualitative and empirical research in sensitive fields?

The conference theme seeks to address a broad spectrum of research fields, including health, naturecultures, foodways, urban and regional development, disaster studies, digital heritage and memory, dataficiation and platformisation, artificial intelligence, (academic) working and organisational cultures, cultural diversity and (flight) migration, radicalisation, participatory design, citizen science and engaged anthropology, digital methods, etc.

We welcome individual papers and panels as well as experimental workshops and transdisciplinary studios to discuss everything from ongoing research, collaborations, methodological challenges, and empirical work to new ideas. We are planning to publish the contributions resulting from this call in an international publication.

Please send a 300-word abstract (in English or German) and a short biography (in English) to mail@digilab-culture.de by 5 December 2021.

Important dates:
- The abstract submission deadline has been extended to 5th January 2022
- Notification of acceptance: by the end of February 2022
- Registration opens: 15 June 2022

While we recognise that international travel remains uncertain, we have limited our call to on-site presentations at a physical conference at the University of Hamburg. We will, however, stream keynote addresses for everyone.

Registration is required. The final conference dates will be confirmed by November 2021. A room for childcare will be provided.

Organisers: Samantha Lutz, Anna Oechslen, Hannah Rotthaus, Quoc-Tan Tran

<u>Literature</u>
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Collier, S. J., & Lakoff, A. (2005). On Regimes of Living. In A. Ong & S. J. Collier (Eds.), *Global Assemblages: Technology, Politics, and Ethics as Anthropological Problems* (pp. 22–39). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Koch, G. (Ed.). (2017). *Digitisation: Theories and Concepts for Empirical Cultural Research*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Macdonald, S. (2012). Presencing Europe's Pasts. In U. Kockel, M. Nic Craith, & J. Frykman (Eds.), *A Companion to the Anthropology of Europe* (233-252). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

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Reichert, R., & Richterich, A. (2015). Introduction: Digital Materialism. *Digital Culture & Society*, *1*(1), 5–17.

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Smith, R. C. (Ed.). (2016). *Design anthropological futures: Exploring emergence, intervention and formation*. London & New York: Bloomsbury Academic.

Van Dijk, J. (2005). *The deepening divide: Inequality in the information society*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.