Vienna University was founded in 1365 by Duke Rudolf IV and is the oldest University in the German speaking country. Today, being Austria's largest University, it hosts eight faculties cover virtually all disciplines (Humanities, Social Sciences, Economic Sciences, Law, Natural Sciences, Medicine and theology) and 190 departments/units and has currently about 92,000 enrolled students from 128 countries. The University, which is a publicly maintained institution, has an impressive library, which is the largest in Austria.

The University's involvement in the field of science and technology studies started in the Eighties with the establishment of the Department for Philosophy of Science and Social Studies of Science. It is located in Vienna's 9th district at Sensengasse and offers teaching facilities for the whole university, profiting from the consequent interdisciplinary tension and dialogue.

The conference will take place in the old main University building at the Ringstrasse in the heart of town, with only walking distance to historical Vienna as well as a large number of cultural sites like museums and traditional coffee houses. We have also tried to choose hotels as close as possible to the Conference location, though there is a dense and well equipped public transport system in Vienna.

Special note from the local organizing committee concerning the political situation in Austria:

We fully understand that the gains by the extreme right-wing, so-called "Freedom Party" (FPO) under Jörg Haider in the Austrian parliamentary elections of October 1999, and the participation of this party in the Austrian government now, have raised concerns among a number of our friends and colleagues in the 4S/EASST community. More than two thirds of Austrian voters chose either the Social Democrats (who received the highest percentage of the vote), the conservative People's Party or the Greens, but the strong showing of the FPO has shocked us and many other observers deeply. Clearly, concern about the conference venue is appropriate. Relocation might seem to be a solution for colleagues outside Austria, but for us, who are trying to resist Haider's rise, an active response from inside the country appears to be a far more appropriate way to confront the situation. We therefore suggest making the Vienna conference an opportunity to continue the ongoing discussion about the rise of right-wing populism in Austria.

We plan to do this by means of special panels on this and related topics, focusing on the ways in which social science has helped, or failed, to analyse and respond to such developments. In this context we also plan to discuss the ways in which Austrians have faced their past, or failed to do so, in the postwar era and especially since to Waldheim affair in 1986. Such discussions involving members of the 4S/EASST community and Austrian colleagues from other fields could make an important contribution to a more accurate and differentiated debate that might help to initiate change. We hope that the international 4S/EASST community will join us in our efforts to face these issues and contribute to international public discussion of this burning issue.

local arrangements

If you have any further question concerning the local organisation please do not hesitate to contact: Ulrike Felt or Judith Kröll or Tina Thiel.

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frontpage illustration: Ernst Mach (professor at the University of Vienna, 1895-1901), Selfportrait of the I, 1886.
The Politics of Computer Profiling

by Greg Elmer
Department of Communication, University of Pittsburgh

A profile, as the name suggests, is a kind of prior ordering, in this case a model or figure that organizes multiple sources of information to scan for matching or exceptional cases. Shaping an informed form of stereotyping, profiling technology has become increasingly popular in targeting individuals for specialized messages, instructions, inspection, or treatment. Profiling, in turn, is only one of a host of increasingly available computer-assisted actual and diagnostic procedures that are being used, among other things, to identify individuals for various tasks or entitlements, to define potential risks or hazards, and to forestall or enhance certain behaviors and traits. Unlike stereotypes, however, profiles are not merely "false images" that are used to justify differences in power. Diagnostic profiles exist rather at the intersection of actual and virtual worlds... (Hogland, 1996, p.27)

While interest in all-things-profiled continues unabated in American culture - on the big screen, in books and on television news programming - the phenomenon itself remains quite surprisingly uninterrogated. Yet, as profiling maintains a certain illusory and enigmatic quality, it is closely not without its specific logic, applications and technologies. Although there are few sustained critiques of the technology and politics of profiling, I believe there to be a relatively simple logic behind the need to construct a picture out of the seemingly infinite qualities of everyday life. To profile is to attempt to account for the unknown, the inability to adequately capture, contain or regulate, and govern behaviour, thought, language and action.

In a recent article I note the proliferation of "profiling" television programmes - most prominently NBC's Profiler and Fox's The X-Files and Millennium - that focus on the very inability to capture the criminal, to know what's 'out there', or in fact know who is even human. To combat this precarious state of affairs the protagonists in each one of these programmes, and many other more mainstream cop shows and feature films, look to match patterns of criminal (or silent) behaviour to the modus operandi of known (meaning catalogued) criminals. How many times have we heard The X-Files' lead characters and other agents/detectives list off the one-size-fits-all profile: male, in his late thirties, a loner, with above average intelligence? Without exception, such contemporary narratives, stories, plots and programming all play on the link between the need to profile - to come up with at least some picture of the transgressor - and the widespread fear of the unknown.

The historian and novelist, Caleb Carr, likewise, offers a compelling look at the earliest use of criminal profiling through a mix of narrative fiction and historical fact. Set in Manhattan at the turn of the twentieth century, Caleb's The Alienist opens with a grotesque description of a series of unimaginably gruesome crimes. At first we are told that the authorities fail to recognize the relationship or pattern among a number of similar crimes perpetrated over two years. It is later revealed, however, that the police's disinterest was in no small part due to the nature of the victims, all child prostitutes. The crimes are sufficiently invisible to the public eye. The book's chief protagonist, a newspaper writer, indeed bemuses the fact that such crimes are seen as unfit to print by his editors. Consequently, in addition to descriptions of the crimes and the moral standing of the victims, much of the book's first chapters begin to introduce the reader to the members of what will become the city's 'unofficial' investigations unit - the aforementioned journalist, two marginalised Jewish New York City police detectives and most importantly Dr. Kleiber, an enigmatic psychologist or, in the language of the day, alienist.

What Carr sets out to accomplish in The Alienist is not only to provide a lavish description of the
moral landscape of Manhattan in the late 1800s, but more importantly to discuss the social implications of the convergence of mathematical statistics (specifically the establishment and significance of patterns) with behavioural psychology. Consequently, Callen's main characters are largely developed through their relationship to the production and utility of simulated pictures of probable social, political and criminal transgressors. Thus, whereas authors such as Ian Hacking (1990) and Armand Mattelart (1996) offer compelling discussions of the relationship between statistics, measurements and the governance of the nation-state, Carr's piece of fiction sheds light upon the social and political dimensions of tracking, profiling and hence governing individual behaviour. For as Carr's most engaging character, Dr. Kleiner, notes: We know nothing of the person we seek, and are unlikely ever to find witnesses who know more than we do. Circumstantial evidence will be sparse at best - he has been at work for years, after all, and has had more than enough time to perfect his technique. What we must do - the only thing that can be done - is to paint an imaginary picture of the sort of person that might commit such acts. If we had such a picture, the significance of what little evidence we collected would be dramatically magnified. We might reduce the haystack in which our needles hide to something more like a - a pile of straw, if you will. (p61)

One of the political questionably results of this shift in tactics - from attempting to track the actions of individual criminals to researching the qualities of potential/probable transgressors through patterns of behaviour - is the production of very large named 'deviant' social profiles (the aforementioned one-size-fits-all profile). As a consequence of deploying such broad and encompassing descriptors, profiling virtually (literally and figuratively speaking) 'guarantees' and 'serves up' a phalanx of typically marginalised individuals for surveillance. Given that such profiles are embedded with cultural and social values, alongside or in spite of the hard evidence or clues in any one case, potential discriminatory applications are all too apparent. A case in point: over the past two or three decades, there have been an increasing number of stories in the American press and on television, particularly in the state of New Jersey, that have recounted the practice of racial profiling on state highways by law

enforcement. In this excessively broad (indeed bio-political) definition of profiling, members of certain minorities, namely African-American and Latinos, are stopped and interrogated by authorities merely because of their race and ethnicity. To speak of racial profiling is to move beyond the individual acts of prejudice and racism by law enforcement officers to the larger bureaucratic and institutional realm (e.g., policy making, rules and regulations). Activated by default. Often the racial profiling therefore lies not so much in their 'representational' status, for example, as stereotypes, but rather as blueprints that actively serve to discriminate populations in search of possible transgressors. In other words, as consumers, citizens, fathers, mothers, African Americans, et cetera, we are not merely represented (or misrepresented) in through texts, rather our actions, behaviours, opinions, likes, wants and desires are actively monitored, tracked and solicited.

Long before the medium became the message, Marshall McLuhan offered a compelling technological discussion of media feedback and profiling technologies. According to McLuhan, the logic behind the so-called radio audimeter - a device that recorded the station choices of listeners - clearly resonated with "a good many other facts of our world. It is obviously the commercial counterpart of the secret microphone installed for political reasons. It is the mechanical sleuth which eventually pieces together the radio habits of a household into a singly chart-image." (McLuhan 1951, 49-50)

Published in 1951, this portion of McLuhan's The Mechanical Bride provides an early example of market research, indeed one with implications far beyond the switch, dial or television remote control for that matter. The audimeter clearly speaks to the process of sampling, the use of scientific methods to patrol, diagnose and survey particular routines in this instance, that of listeners. It also reminds us that such techniques collect very personal information within a space widely respected as being 'private'. The audimeter is also a technology without an end; it continuously collects information round the clock. It tracks the routines and 'habits' of listeners. Later, McLuhan reminds us that the information collected by the audimeter is 'charted' or mapped, a somewhat prophetic choice of words given the contemporary spatialisation of profiling technologies. The "real" and "virtual" worlds thus use the same tools to segment, subdivide and gauge the habitual routines and lifestyles of individual citizens.

Thus, as contemporary profiling technologies continue to seep into the spaces of everyday life - be it through point-of-sales/purchase technologies, namely via sticky little logo Kinetic Systems at the click of a hypertextual link on the world wide web - they also becomes increasingly automated. In the example of Instantaneous cookies (a program that facilitates the collection on individual web users), for instance, computer users receive (or download) their web browser applications (Netscape or MS Explorer) with their "cookies" activated by default. Often only the most literate computer and Internet users find and change the default settings. The economy of personal information on the web is, in other words, governed by an implicitly affirmative technology that by default collects information and tracks the on-line behaviour of computer users. Many other computerized consumer exchanges also require individuals to give important demographic information (mainly zip codes or telephone numbers) to actually facilitate a purchase. Such exchanges, again, are built upon technological systems that by default require consumers to offer up personal information. In addition, mail order businesses - particularly those such as BML music that offer free tesselers (CDs and tapes in this case) in exchange for contractual obligations to purchase a number of goods at a relatively high cost are also infamous for sending and billing for products that the consumer has not explicitly ordered. In this particular case, BML's 'default setting' (buy in absence of an explicit "no thank you") requires consumers to tell the business that it does not want a product.

Such default settings are common place in an information economy that needs to regulate and prioritize a seemingly infinite number of choices, products and services. Such computer settings are therefore an "affirmatively indifferent" options menu required to assist novice computer users; default settings obviously serve distinct interests. Computer software giants Microsoft, for example, have captured a sizable portion of the Internet browser market - hence providing the graphic representation of cyberspace - by merely setting their Explorer browser as the default Internet gateway in Windows and Apple's computer operating systems. In other words, Microsoft have used their PC operating system (Windows) monopoly to 'embed' their own browser as a default choice.

Facilitated by default settings, such 'generic monopolies' and other automated 'choices' - particularly those that integrate the collection of personal information - have not gone unchallenged by their detractors. In the coming months and years the future applications of profiling and default technologies will have to respond to both legislative and technological opponents. Those interested in a democratic vision of the Informational society would be well served by participating in the recent anti-trust cases brought by the American government's Federal Trade Commission against both Microsoft and Intel. The conclusion of such legislative challenges will no doubt set the tone for other macro-political responses to a computer market that automates the collection of personal information. In addition to the broader challenges that need to be made against the computer, consumer, banking and retail industries, through government and the courts, the computing public also needs to actively promote and disseminate technological responses to computer profiling. By removing on-line persistent cookies, for instance, readily available programs such as NS close, which obliterates cookies, thereby foiling any attempts to track computer uses, also provides a much needed technological response to the computer and information industries attempt to give as we know they want.

Notes


3. Criminal drama programming on television, Law and Order or the British mini-series Cracker, for example, routinely discuss criminal 'profiling' (or "proving operandi") to correlate criminal traits to similar patterns of known offenders. Both programs, particularly the latter, also rely upon psychosocial profiling to "get into the mind" of transgressors. Such
programming, of course, takes its lead from feature films such as Silence of the Lambs, a grimy crime drama that arguably started the contemporary fascination with the FBI and its criminal behavioral (profiling) unit.

4. Carr includes the forward note that "Prior to the twentieth century, persons suffering from mental illness were thought to be "alienated", not only from the rest of society but from their true natures. Those experts were therefore known as alienists."

5. The American Civil Liberties Union have been at the forefront of the argument against the use of racial profiles in the United States. In a recent report entitled Driving While Black: Racial Profiling On Our Nation's Highways (American Civil Liberties Union, 1999) the ACLU recount the first use of racial profiles by law enforcement agencies in the United States.

6. The Department of Justice has since reached an out of court agreement with Intel. Microsoft continues to fight the government in the courts. The Associated Press has written a helpful article on the government's allegations of anti-trust against Microsoft. cf. http://dailynews.yahoo.com/headlines/aptechnology/story.html?u=ap/19990625/hi/microsoft_charges_2.html


Other References


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A longer version of this piece is contained in Preferred Placement: Knowledge Politics on the Web, edited by Richard Rogers, Jan van Eyck Editions, Maastricht, 2000, available via：http://www.jansvaneyck.nl or http://www.bolse.nl.

Pretensions and Politics

by Gerard de Vries

Department of Philosophy, University of Amsterdam


CONSTRUCTIONISM, if you have not come across the term before, is a collection of academic work that shares some surface affinities, and likes to think of itself as having a great common past. Gergen, cited in the introduction to this volume, situates and defines it as follows:

Drawing importantly from emerging developments most prominently in the history of science, the sociology of knowledge, ethnometodology, rhetorical studies of science, symbolic anthropology, feminist theory and post-structuralist literary theory, social constructionism is not so much a foundational theory of knowledge as an anti-foundational dialogue. Primary emphasis of this dialogue are based on: the social discursive matrix from which knowledge claims emerge and from which their justification is derived; the values/ideology implicit within knowledge posits; the modes of informal and institutional life sustained and replenished by ontological and epistemological commitments; and the distribution of power and privilege favoured by disciplinary beliefs. Much attention is also given to the creation and transformation of cultural constructions; the adjustment of competing belief/value systems; and the generation of new modes of pedagogy, scholarly expression and disciplinary relations.

That is a full plate, a set of academic smörgåsbord that may keep the faculty of a mid-size university busy for a couple of years. The question, of course, is: would we like to visit that university? Promising a broad ranging and critical overview of themes of social constructionism and its relevance to contemporary social and political issues, this anthology may help to answer that question.

The book consists of four parts: Formulating Constructionism, The Limits of Constructionism, 'Applying Constructionism' and 'The Politics of Constructionism'. In keeping with the thrust of many of its contributors, I should not bother the readers with dumb facts like this. Instead, the reviewer would like to point out that this volume is constructed in four parts, each including a number of papers (texts, inscriptions) while excluding others, i.e., silencing voices, which is generally considered a bad thing to do. To the unsophisticated eye the division may look like a quite natural one, but of course it isn't. Isn't there already politics in formulating constructionism? Can we seriously apply constructionism before the dialogue on its limits has come to an end? I'm glad you asked.

Work in constructionism often seems to be driven primarily by the Charlie Brown fear of not being smart enough and losing friends. To fight this fear, authors enter into battles with the spectres of old-fashioned philosophy and other forms of naive thinking. Most of the time, they think that showing the flag will be enough to take a stand and to deter the enemy. Take one example out of many. Tom Shakespeare is interested in a 'schematic analysis' of the rhetorical uses of social constructionism within social movement contexts. He reconstructs this problem in terms of a debate between essentialist and constructionist explanations of minority group experience. Reconstructed in this way, the problem circles around a supposed contrast between biological and social/cultural features. A true constructionist is of course sceptical about this dichotomy. Didn't Shakespeare know this? Of course he does, so he immediately warns us that he does "not wish to imply a correspondence
theory of truth, or a simplistic positivism" -- did anyone bring that up? -- and continues to state that 'external reality and personal embodiment are clearly not accessible except via contingent language and concepts, and the crude dichotomy between society and biology which I rely on throughout this chapter should not be taken as a denial that the natural is already and always social.' For an analysis - however schematic - of the debate this is not relevant, but Shakespeare's friends will be glad he wrote that.

The first three sections of this collection go on and on with the game of name-dropping, preemptive strikes to silence criticism that has not been - and probably never will be - aired, and give-and-take prose that results in positions that require more acrobatic skills to keep all balls in the air than most authors have acquired. Even some critics of constructivism in this volume seem to have been infected by the virus that causes tedious, boring, pompous writing. Now that social constructivism has turned into an academic industry, the days of sharp and clear and funny writing that marked the work of Collin, Latour, and Shapin seem to be over. There is little progress to report ('progress' being - of course - a concept that constructivists mistrust). The one exception here is Ian Lam Hacking, who presents a crystal clear paper that dissects the metaphor of 'social constructivism' (a phrase that in the course of the book takes over from 'constructivism'). But that paper is no reason to buy or even borrow this book, since Hacking has expanded his argument in The Social Construction of What? (Harvard UP, 1999).

Section Four of the volume, however, is a different matter. No more recycling of worn-out ideas, no more unnecessary name-dropping, no historical introductions that try to position the author in a long list of fancy and famous thinkers. The papers in this section face a real problem: the relation of constructivism to politics and moral issues.

The problem is easy to formulate. As Hacking points out, there are roughly two bodies of constructivist work. The first one applies constructivist analysis primarily to ideas about people, knowledge of people, or practices that involve the interactions of people. This brand of constructivism has primarily socio-political aims. It shows that many forms of labelling and categorisation of practices that may look natural and necessary are 'in fact' constructed and contingent. The second one applies constructivist analysis to knowledge of inanimate nature. This brand has epistemological aims; that is, as defended in mainstream philosophy of science and argues for relativism, i.e., metaphysical agnosticism.

In the political arena, these two forms of constructivism have reverse effects. Whereas the first brand shows that because of the contingent basis of existing ways of thinking and action, there is space for alternatives and political action. The second one results in political immobility. If we can deconstruct the strong realist claims that come with the natural sciences, it must be easy to deconstruct also the real pain of real people. So why bother? Being a 'left-wing relativist' is a contradiction in terms. A first prerequisite for changing the world is the recognition that there is a world out there that has to be changed. The result of mixing up these two brands of constructivism are balancing acts, of the type Donna Haraway (in a passage cited by Shapin just after the above criticized quotation) tries to perform: 'how to have simultaneously an account of radical historical contingency for all knowledge claims and knowing subjects ... and a no-nonsense commitment to faithful accounts of a 'real world.'

Balancing acts may be amusing in the circus, in academia they are not. There are several possible ways to get away from this. The first one is to take the route of Bruno Latour's recent work, i.e., to try to construct a metaphysics that goes beyond the asymmetric relation between epistemology and ontology that is taken for granted in most of the Western tradition since Kant. Although many authors in this volume pay lip service to Latour, his recent work is not discussed in this volume.

A second way out is to relativise the importance of constructivism and to look for different sources for guidance and inspiration. Mitchell Dean's discussion of Foucault serves this purpose. Dean provides an exegesis of Foucault's paper 'Questions of Method' which discusses the background of Discipline and Punish. Foucault's relation to constructivism is complex, so much is clear. If we consider him to be a 'constructivists', then Kant and even Carnap also deserve this label. His archaeology is a historiied version of Kantian critique with genealogy adding lineages of heterogeneous events of the content released by archaeology. But Foucault's theme is not 'the construction of reality', but the effects in the real to which discourses that set up (among others) true/false distinctions are linked. His work is not directed toward scholarly ends, but to a diagnostics of the present. Dean points out that for Foucault, there is no straight line between discourses and their effects. Effects cannot be read from the realm of truth. Discourses and the programmes of conduct that come with them produce forms of visibility and evaluation. They guide the way we understand ourselves, they make possible various forms of expertise and solidify into particular institutions, and they allow certain forms of persuasive argument, etc. To trace these effects and to open up discussions, one has to go beyond the social constructivist critique of epistemology. One has to set up a 'political ontology' that accounts for the effects of various epistemologies, i.e., that perceives knowledge-related practices as an expanandum, rather than perceives in the constructivist's mode practices as an expanandum for knowledge-claims.

Craig Mackenzie suggests another, and in many respects easier, alternative. Mackenzie points out that both Walzer and Rawls, key authors in the communitarian and libertarian tradition of political theory, argue that their theories are based on convictions and understandings that they claim we share. The empirical adequacy of these claims, however, needs more serious scrutiny than both Walzer and Rawls provide. This is a point where constructivist techniques may be quite helpful. Hacking's discussion of child abuse is exemplary for this approach. Other (non-constructivist) approaches may be added, e.g., the one of Bolenski and Thorenz (De Jusification, Gallimard, 1991). Of course, this is a less ambitious task than the grandiose programme constructivism suggests. But for those constructivists who shy away from the philosophical complexities of Foucault's and Latour's work, i.e., who want to keep their feet on solid British soil, it may be ambition enough - to paraphrase John Locke: - to be employed as an under-labourer in clearing the ground a little, and removing some of the rubbish that lies in the way of politics. That, however, requires also less pretentious prose than most authors in this collection of essays seem to be willing or able to write.

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News of the Association

2000 Graduate Summer School in STS, University of Twente, September 4 - 8, 2000. Anchor teacher: Tom Griesen (Indiana University).

The main theme of the Summer School will be credibility of science and technology in society, and is linked to Tom Griesen's 1998 book Cultural Boundaries of Science: Credibility on the Line. The programme, with an indication of other speakers, will be available by the end of April. The language of the Summer School is English. The Summer School is part of the graduate training of the PhD students in the Dutch national Research School Science, Technology and Modern Culture (WTMC). A limited number of places are available for other (foreign) PhD students.

The fee is Dfl. 1400,-, the reduced rate for EASST members is Dfl. 1200,-. EASST has a tradition of making a few travel stipends available. Please inquire at the EASST secretariat.

For all other information concerning the Summer School: Arie Rip, Director WTMC, University of Twente, POBox 217, 7500 AE Enschede, The Netherlands, T:+31-53-489 3345; F:+31-53-489 4775; e-mail: a.rip@wwm.utwente.nl
Posing With Penguins on Mars' Front Lawn
About Not Being Afraid of the Technological Sublime

by Gerald Wagner


The Nations corralled at the 1998 World Exhibition in Lisbon got a little homework to do. Do some „show and tell“ around the theme „water“ that might teach us something about you and your folks. Water? Yes, just a pavilion about water. Why not, call all the designers in, engineers, artists, scientists ... we gonna teach them something about „water“. The Finns did pretty well though although I wouldn’t like to pay that electricity bill. There was basically a huge walk-in-fridge. Inside they got a little frozen lake with an icekatcher scratching her circles in splendid isolation. And, of course, lots of smaller fridges with lots of beer and vodka. It was cold, dark and quiet – the epitome of a perfect Finnish party. Kippi! The French then. La France did it – well, grand, with style and savoir viire. A deep blue hall of glorious mystery. And beautiful waitresses serving Perrier, champagne and sisters - 4 votre sour! From La douce France to the Netherlands. If any nation in this world knows something about how to tame water, how to canalize it, pump it up and down and dice it, it’s the Dutch. They ought to, otherwise there wouldn’t be much land to found a nation on and thus no invitation to the Expo. But the Dutch love to watch tuned in, how a river can be canalized, steam engines and the rest. It is the epitomy of a technological landscape. Oh, and the visitors got a sample of free cheese.

Three landscapes – the landscape of the soul, the national landscape, and the technological landscape. It’s the latter which this book is about. In 1909, the sociologist Georg Simmel published a short essay „Brücke und Tür“ – the bridge and the door. It was an early attempt of some anthropology of technology avant la lettre. The bridge is the symbol of the difference between the human and the animal. Only the former constructs bridges. By doing so „he transforms the accidental nature into the purely artificial unity“ of a landscape. Consider, however, that a landscape is something we look at, it’s out there, laid out in the sunshine or under a dramatic sky. In order to describe it, the spectator must be outside the landscape. The new landscape, whether thought of in terms of manufactured nature or the technological landscape, consorts a new way of seeing in a technological landscape, it is the organisation of the technology, the aesthetic of the technological landscape and „new nature“ (as the manufactured nature aesthetic may be called)? Which necessitates much of this book, the reader should appreciate that appreciation and recognize the theoretical booties traps in it. Since it’s technology that most of STS is about - more accurate: technology described in texts which claim to be in full control of their subject - statements like the following about the technological sublime “must ring some alarm bells in the community. „The beautiful and the terrifying – that which we do not control.“ (p. 45) But what do we control? „We“ as students of science and technology and landscapes and relevant past futures? Certainly not the sublime. Are there any technological landscapes which are not sublime and thus beyond control and experience? Remember that the sublime is connected with intimidation and fear. Even movies which remember the opening scene of David Lynch’s Blue Velvet (the cut-off ear nesting underneath the front lawn’s accurately trimmed carpet) won’t consider the American front lawn terrifying. Neither are the notorious cases like Robert Moses’ bridges intimidating. But still they are „essentially incommutable narratives“ (Woolgar), which leaves them at least irritating, perhaps offensive but definitely annoying for those who could not agree with Rogers that „these are no definite histories, only those currently considered more plausible than others“ (p. 35). However, it occurs that simply distinguishing „more“ or „less plausible“ (finite) water. That’s why satisfying. The mysteries of the soft forces of textual plausibility might deserve deeper consideration. „Plausible“ could as well mean „ironically serene“, „semantically rich“ or even „warrantedly more entertaining“. Which raises the question if there’s any other guarantee for plausibility than the author’s talent as a gifted storyteller. But that’s the road STS has taken away. The „envisioned user“ of this book - designed by Richard Rogers at the Royal College of Arts in London - is a reader who is challenged by and not afraid of that turn of STS towards literary criticism which is also a loss of scientific control. That loss – and the apparent lack of compensation for it – might terrify some of us. Or at least irritate and make them plea for more methodology or a new realistic turn. I doubt that mainstream STS has finally abandoned that fear. This book and its author definitely have.
Dissertation abstract

Paul Wouters, The Citation Culture, Doctoral dissertation at the Department of Science, Technology, and Society, University of Amsterdam, 1999.

The need for greater accountability of scientific research has created a number of new professions. The scientometrician is one of these experts. She measures science scientifically, often on behalf of science policy officials. The professional scientometricians emerged in the sixties. Their creation is intimately linked to the invention of the Science Citation Index (SCI) by Eugene Garfield and his collaborators in Philadelphia (USA).

The Citation Culture argues that the development of scientometrics can best be understood if we analyze this field as both indicator and embodiment of a recently emerged subculture in science: the citation culture. This subculture has unwittingly and subtly changed core concepts of modern science such as scientific quality and influence. Because of the citation culture, being cited has profoundly changed its meaning over the last two decades, with a number of consequences for scientists. It has moreover contributed to the transformation of the very essence of science policy, notwithstanding scientometricians' apparent lack of outstanding successes. This study attempts to explore the possible meaning of the citation culture for the systematic generation of knowledge.

The citation publication is easily recognized by its references to other scientific articles or books. Citing behavior seems to vary according to personal traits. Nevertheless, the overall citation properties of the publications within a certain field share the same characteristics. The sciences and humanities host many types of specialist for specific citing culture, such slightly different from the other. The historical development of scientific publishing since the nineteenth century has provided for a fairly stable ensemble of citing culture in science.

The gradual development of regular citing behavior in scientific publishing created a new resource for research as well as policy: citation data. It did not take long before these data began to be used. With hindsight, it seems an almost inevitable outcome of some straightforward reasoning. If researchers cite the work they find useful, often cited ("highly cited") work is apparently more useful to scientists than work which receives hardly any citations at all.

Hence, the number of times an article is cited seems to be an accurate measure of its impact, influence or quality. The same is true of the collected articles of one particular scientist, research group, journal or even institution. Sloppy work will not often be cited, except in heated controversies - or so the reasoning goes.

Whatever one's view on the impact of being cited, citation frequency is generally supposed to measure something that already exists. This is based on an implicit realist perspective with respect to the process of scientific communication: the indicator is seen as a more or less direct uptake of scientists' activities. Therefore, citation analysis provides a window onto the communication processes between scientists.

This book questions these realist interpretations of measuring science by citations. The citation culture is not a simple aggregate or derivative of citing culture in science. The citation as used in scientometric analysis and science and technology indicators is not identical to the reference produced at the scientist's desk. In other words, the citation is the product of the citation index, not of the scientist. The Science Citation Index is moreover not merely a bibliographic instrument. It also creates a new picture of science via bibliographic references found in scientific literature. In this way, the SCI provides a fundamentally new representation of science. By focusing on the seemingly most insignificant entity in scientific communication, the inventors of the SCI have created a completely novel set of signs and of a new symbolic universe.

The Citation Culture therefore not only tells how the SCI was created, but also tries to explore its ramifications. It discusses the main properties of the new representation of science as well as its impact on science studies, science policy, and on science itself. The book discusses also the implications of this perspective for the theoretical foundations of scientometric analyses in general. The Citation Culture is forthcoming at Stanford University Press.

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Conference Announcements and Calls for Papers

The The Centenary of Genetics, the 10th Bateson Mendel Centenary Meeting, organised by the Institute of Biology History Network, will be held on 8 May 2000. Mendel's researches revealing the principal issues of genetics were first discussed in the U.K. in a lecture to the Royal Horticultural Society on 8 May 1900. The lecture was by William Bateson, then of St John's College Cambridge. It is said that he read Mendel's paper on the train journey from Cambridge and revised his lecture accordingly. This half-day meeting at the Royal Horticultural Halls and Conference Centre in Westminster, England, will mark the centenary of this important event. Please contact: Committee chairman Brian J Ford, b.j.ford@open.ac.uk.

The International Conference on cultural attitudes towards technology and communication (CATA200), to be held on 12-15 July 2000 in Perth, Australia, has as its theme Cultural Collisions and Creative Interferences in the Global Village. See http://www.it.murdoch.edu.au/~rudweeks/cata200.html. Computer-mediated communication networks, such as the Internet and the World Wide Web, promise to realise the utopian vision of an electronic global village. But efforts to diffuse CMC technologies globally, especially in Asia and among indigenous peoples in Africa, Australia and the United States, have demonstrated that CMC technologies are neither culturally neutral nor communicatively transparent. Rather, diverse cultural attitudes towards technology and communication - those embedded in local CMC technologies, and those shaping the beliefs and behaviours of potential users - often collide. The conference takes up topics as: Communicative attitudes and practices in diverse areas: industrialized countries; Communicative attitudes and practices in industrializing countries and marginalised communities; Impact of new communication technologies on local and indigenous languages and cultures; Politics of the electronic global village in democratising or preserving hierarchy; East/West cultural attitudes and communicative practices; Role of gender in cultural expectations regarding appropriate communicative behaviours; Ethical issues related to new technologies, and their impact on culture and communication behaviours; and Legal implications of communication and technology.

Theory, Culture & Society and the Network Institute for Global Democraticization are holding a conference on Democratizing Global Economy and Culture, 2-3 June 2000 at the University of Helsinki, Finland. As we prepare to cross the millennium, the idea of cosmopolitanism is attracting increasing interest. For some the term holds out the prospect of global democratization. The hope that cosmopolitan groups will be in the forefront of establishing values, institutions and lifestyles which are less directly embedded within nation-state societies. For others the cosmopolitan is a figure to be reviled as it has become associated with 'the revolt of the elites,' the inability of upper and middle class groups to sustain a sense of responsibility towards the growing numbers of the excluded around the world. These mobile elites who enjoy the freedom of physical movement and communication, stand in stark contrast to those who are confined to place, whose fate is to remain located. Equally harsh in its judgement of cosmopolitanism is the perspective which presents the cosmopolitan as dabbling rootlessly in a variety of cultures. This view of the cosmopolitan as voyer, parasite, or some sort of cultural tourist, again seems to be key negative features of the current world-view. This raises two related questions. Firstly, the extent to which cosmopolitan attitudes are closely associated with cities. Cities have long been the sites for markets and the mixing of people, commodities, ideas and cultures. They have been the homes of a wide range of intellectual and artistic, social and cultural movements and institutions. Secondly, if cosmopolitanism in the arts was associated with modernism in cities such as Paris, London and New York, which now become centres of cultural heritage tourism, how far do more recently
developed global cities such as Sao Paulo, Singapore and Bombay manifest similar processes of transnational cultural exchange and mixing? This points to a more fundamental question: while cosmopolitanism may well be a Western project and projection, how far have varieties of cosmopolitanism avant la lettre, been present outside the West? What equivalent forms of cosmopolitan experiences, practices, representations and carrier groups developed, for example, in China, Japan, India and the Islamic world? What were the characteristic forms of civic and civic virtues, urbanity and urban conduct, and how were notions of urban, exploration and innovation valued? If we look at the origin of the term cosmopolis, it refers to the links between cosmos, the order of nature or the universe, and polis, the order of human society. While many cultures have assumed there is a direct link between the order of nature and the order of society, the dream of Western modernity was that science and technology would eventually discover and exploit the principle forms of order at work in both realms. Technology would implement these findings to tame and control both external nature, along with the inner nature and social life of human beings. Yet the tragic, or dark side of modernity emphasised the sacrifice of all previous existing forms of order through the pursuit of progress. At the end of the second millennium, we are only too well aware of the dangers of this process, of the frutition of nature as a living space for human beings and other life forms, along with the infinitude of our potential to develop culture, to weave narratives around this notion of cosmopolitanism was meant to be someone who in principle could know everything, who would learn how best to act from the scientific knowledge. Yet this technological potential for the archiving and data-basing of cultures does not offer any easy recipes on how to make adequate practical judgements, especially when we globalise the scope of our actions beyond the site of our accustomed set of identifications. In terms of Western notions of practice, the cosmopolitan political ideal derives from the Kantian tradition and entails some notion of a polis extending around the globe. This implies some form of world-state, or federation of states, which would involve the development of cosmopolitan or supra-national law and forms of citizenship and governance. The compatibility of this vision with the continuing impact of global marketisation, along with the de-globalizing reactions of identity politics and balkanization, and the persistence of civilizational and cultural traditions, is an open question. At the very least, if global democratization is to move forward it can be argued that it must not merely be the project of a Western centre, but become gradually assembled from a range of area cultural dialogues. The first day will explore cosmopolitan spaces and representations from a largely theoretical perspective, whereas the second day will focus on more concrete, topical political issues under the rubric of democratic reforms of cosmopolis. Many of the perspectives of the second day have been directly stimulated by the Network Institute for Global Democratization, a Helsinki-based NGO working alongside the Theory, Culture & Society Virtual Institute for Global Culture. Both are experimental projects designed to explore the politics of global citizenship and the new information technologies and have aims which are as much practical-political as academic. The conference has both academic and ethical-political aims. With respect to the academic aim, we intend publishing a selection of conference papers in a special issue of the journal Theory, Culture & Society. We also intend launching a series of ‘travelling seminars’ in conjunction with the TCS Virtual Institute for Global Culture and the Network Institute for Global Democratization (NIGD) to further explore the practical implications of global democratization and public sphere activities. The main ethical-political aim, then, is to open up a public and democratic debate on the meanings of cosmopolitanism and their relation to global reform. The special issue of Theory, Culture & Society will be built around a selection of these conference papers, and will come out in the year 2001. The travelling seminar will be developed out of the work of the conference. The idea is simple: to organise working seminars on strictly delineated topics and with both an academic and a practical-political intent. Based also on the relations and arrangements of the NIGD and TCS Virtual Institute, the travelling seminar will function as a node in a network of academic and political activities, with the aim of trying to help to work towards the solution of practical issues, but also feeding new, theoretically informed ideas and interpretations into practice. The travelling seminar strives to empower cosmopolitan political actors, particularly those excluded or marginalized, as well as contributing to finding more adequate, democratic responses to the problems of the crisis-ridden global economy and culture. There is also a further and more abstract ethical-political aim to this conference as well. By bringing together different voices on cosmopolitanism, the idea is to further a more wide-ranging and participatory discussion of the potential for democratizing global economy and culture. Hence, we would like to invite both sceptics and advocates from a range of different cultures to become involved in a dialogue on the philosophical and practical possibility of cosmopolitan global reforms. Email: cosmopolis@ntu.ac.uk. Theory, Culture & Society Centre, Faculty of Humanities, Nottingham Trent University, Clifton Lane, Nottingham NG11 8NS, United Kingdom, Tel: +44 (0)115 948 6330 / 6332, Fax: +44 (0)115 948 6331, E-mail: tcs@ntu.ac.uk, http://tcs.ntu.ac.uk

PDC 2000 - the Participatory Design Conference, entitled Designing Digital Environments: Bringing in More Voices, will be held on Nov. 28 - Dec. 1, 2000 at the City University of New York Conference Center, New York City, USA. The organisers have issued a call for participation. Participatory Design (PD) is a set of diverse ways of thinking, planning, and acting through which people make their work, technologies, and social institutions more responsive to human needs. The sixth Participatory Design Conference, PDC 2000, is a forum for researchers, practitioners, and examples of design through participation that foster early intervention on the part of future users and active and democratic involvement of both current and future users. We encourage academics, practitioners, and users to document and demonstrate ways that multiple voices can be heard in technical design environments. In particular we are interested in research and experience about participation of active users in the following environments: 1. Community-based systems; 2. Health care systems; 3. Governmental and GIS systems at local, regional and international levels; 4. Education, instructional technologies and learning communities across distance; 5. Media, broadcast and new media environments; 6. Virtual communities and constructive designs; 7. Union - management relations; 8. Curriculum for participatory design. Submission requirements are available at http://www.cprj.com/conferences/pdc2000

Physical Interpretations of Relativity Theory (PIRT-VII) will be held on 15-18 September 2000 in the Civil Engineering Building at

Imperial College, London. The objective of the 7th Physical Interpretations of Relativity Theory (PIRT) conference is to examine physical theories, models, and interpretations of the relativistic formal structure. The meeting is intended for physicists, mathematicians, engineers, philosophers of science and historians of science. The conference will examine: Cosmology, Gravitation and space-time; Structure Time, Reference Frames and the Fundamentals of Relativity; Nature and Models of the Physical Vacuum; Formal Structures and Physical Interpretations of Relativity; Epistemology, Physical Measurement and the Interpretation of Formal Structures; Experimental Aspects of Relativity; The Poincaré- Lorentz and the Einstein-Minkowski Expositions of the Relativity Principle; Relativistic Ether Theory: Ether Geometries, Dina's Ether and Ether Models: The Vortex Sponge: Analogues of Chaos and Quantum Mechanical Phenomena. This list is not exclusive and papers dealing with other themes are sought. The meeting is sponsored by the British Society for Philosophy of Science, and the School of Computing, Engineering & Technology of the University of Sunderland. See http://www.su.et.sunderland.ac.uk/CET/ENG/Brochure.htm, Contact M.C. Duffy, School of Computing, Engineering & Technology, University of Sunderland, Chester Road, SUNDERLAND, SR1 3SD, United Kingdom. Tel 44 191 515 2856, Fax 44 191 515 2703, email michael.duffy@sun.ac.uk.
dialogue that engages the practical and theoretical challenges of "taking nature seriously," that illuminates the value of interdisciplinary and inter-community collaboration, and that envisions new models of scholarship and policy that can move us beyond culturally constructed barriers. We will explore whether and how scholars studying scientific practices can contribute to more effective scientific research and policy formation, and we will investigate the ways practicing scientists and environmental activists can and do work together on pressing environmental issues. Such a dialogue promises to enable both a richer understanding of similarities and differences in our approaches to environmental problems and a realization of the common ground shared in our ultimate goals.

Among the keynote speakers are Donna Haraway and Andrew Pickering. Suggested conference topics include: Empirical analyses of specific environmental issues and proposed/implemented actions (for example: salmon restoration, forest protection and management, toxic waste management, ozone depletion, genetically modified organisms); Questions of expertise, citizenship, and sustainability; Environmental justice: the relationship between protecting the environment and implementing equity among people; The roles of humanistic and scientific rhetoric in environmental arguments and activism, including how best to translate theories and research results into public environmental discourses; The nature and potential of Public-Interest Science (i.e. scientific research developed and conducted with the collaboration of an active, informed citizenry); The value of science studies for environmental studies and vice versa; Investigations of the current real/social constructivism debates; The history and role of the idea of an independent reality, free of human interaction; Analyses of distinctions such as body/mind, nature/culture - whether and how they might be productively reconceived; Assessments of recent models and metaphors for framing the material and social aspects of nature, such as the cyborg, biodiversity, actor network theory, the mangle of practice, and the transgenic organism, etc.; The contributions of feminist science studies and race theories to the bridging of science studies and environmental studies / scholarship and activism. Abstracts for proposed papers, research presentations, panels, and forums are encouraged. Please send three copies of a page abstract and one copy of an abbreviated curriculum vitae for each participant. Prospective presenters should keep in mind an interdisciplinary and inter-community audience rather than a specialist audience. Proposals are due no later than May 1st, 2000. Send proposals to: "Taking Nature Seriously," East View Science Studies Program, 10 Pacific Hall, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97401-5223, USA, http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~tvss, Phone: 1 541 346-5399, Fax: 1 541 346-5096, E-mail: tvss@darkwing.uoregon.edu.

Science Communication, Education and the History of Science, a conference at the Royal Society, 6 Carlton House Terrace, London W1, arranged by the British Society for the History of Science with support from the Royal Society, will take place on 12-13 July 2000. This meeting comes at a time of re-appraisal of the "public understanding" of science, of renewed discussion about the form and purposes of science education in schools, and of increasing popular interest in history of science, catalysed by David Soble's *Longitude*, Michael Frayn's *Copenhagen* and various other works. Since the day we represent its past plays a significant role in framing contemporary attitudes towards science, it is important to examine critically the role of history of science in these public debates. The conference will bring together leading science communicators, educationists and historians of science for a critical examination of the ways in which history of science is used in popular writing, in the media, in museums and in schools.

The Society for the History of Technology holds its next annual meeting in Munich, Germany, from August 17-20, 2000. Contact Dr. Michael Allen, SHOT Program Chair, Zentralinstitut fuer Geschichte der Technik, Deutsches Museum, Museumstrasse 1, D-80336 Munich, Germany, Phone (49/89) 2179 402, Fax (49/89) 2179 324, email: Mike.Allen@zmw.gmwn.de.

The Third Berlin Internet Economics Workshop will be held in Berlin, Germany's capital on May 26 - 27, 2000. The Berlin Workshop on Internet Economics provides a forum for researchers and practitioners who are interested in and working on economic aspects of the Internet. The first workshop took place in October 1997 with worldwide participation by people working on internet-related topics in industry, universities and government institutions. A selection of workshop papers has been published in various volumes of *Netwirtschaft*. For the third workshop we invite submissions of extended abstracts. In particular, we encourage recently graduated students to contribute with a submission. Topics of interest for the workshop include but are not limited to: economics of the Internet infrastructure (e.g., pricing and capacity issues in packet-switched networks, congestion charges, Internet interconnection strategies), economic issues of content and service provision, economics and pricing of digital goods, regulation and taxation of the Internet and electronic commerce, economics of convergence between Internet and other media, business strategies for the Internet age, economic aspects of electronic payment systems, consequences of the Internet for the "real" economy, empirical analysis of new data sources (e.g., log files) and microeconomic models for electronic markets (e.g., agents). Paper presentations are invited for this workshop. Please submit an abstract (4-5 pages) by email as plain text, PostScript or PDF only including a title, author(s) name(s) and address(es) until March 17, 2000 to the workshop organizer, Thorsten Wichmann (iew@berlecon.de).

The European Molecular Biology Laboratory, the European Molecular Biology Organization, and the European Commission are jointly sponsoring an interdisciplinary conference on Science and Society under the title: "Doubt and Dialogue". It will take place at the EMBL in Heidelberg, Germany 10-12 November 2000. Its aim is to promote mutual interest and understanding between biologists and a variety of other professionals also dealing with biology and biomedicine. Thus, the conference will bring together biologists and ethicists with a range of other professionals engaged in communicating to the public the importance of science. Presentations and panel discussions are invited, either as experts from a variety of fields relating to these topics should bring a variety of perspectives, understanding and interpretations. Such shift across professional boundaries will aim
at a heightened mutual understanding of the meaning and application of scientific evidence in different contexts. Please consult the conference website at http://www.cdd.vt.edu/aoc/. The growth of the Internet is one of the greatest cultural phenomena of our time, influencing almost every aspect of life. It is crucial to build knowledge about the Internet's socio-cultural dimensions. Despite great interest, building knowledge in research on Internet inequality is hindered by a lack of international, centralized opportunities for scholars from different disciplines to interact. This international conference, the first meeting of the Association of Internet Researchers, will focus on the Internet as a distinct interdisciplinary field for research. It will bring together prominent scholars, researchers, and students from multiple disciplines for keynote addresses, paper presentations, formal and informal discussions. The Association of Internet Researchers (A.o.I.R.) invites submissions of between 150 and 250 words on all topics that address any social, cultural, political, economic, or aesthetic aspects of the Internet. We welcome submissions from any discipline and encourage interdisciplinary work as well as submissions from those producing new media or working in multimedia studies. The deadline for submissions of paper/session proposals is 15 MARCH, 2000. Keywords by Manuel Castells and Barry Wellman, among others.

Cultural Diversity and Cyberpace, the conference co-sponsored by the Consortium on Race, Gender and Ethnicity and the Cyberculture Working Group, will be held on May 5, 2000 at the University of Maryland. At the Century turn, fundamental aspects of human experience, including individual and community identity formation, are understood in terms of the ability to access and use the Internet has become, on a global scale, another boundary separating the haves from the have-nots. And, while non-dominant groups have made some inroads onto the information superhighway, these boundaries typically mirror existing borders of difference. To understand the meaning of race, gender, and ethnicity in the 21st Century, the project of examining and understanding cyberculture must be undertaken. Proposals for papers and panels dealing with cultural diversity in and Cyberspace are sought for this interdisciplinary conference. Suggested themes include the construction of race in Cyberspace;

The Museum Computer Network Conference will take place on September 6-9, 2000 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. The statt and traditional "museum" is shedding its straight-jacket and morphing into an organization that reaches out to new audiences and communities using the latest tools. See http://www.mcn.edu/mcn2k/index.htm, or write to Susan Patterson, Program Chair, MCN2000 at spatter@jilam.org.

Internet Research 1:0 - The State of the Internet. Now, the first conference of the Association of Internet Researchers, will be held at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, USA, on 14-17 September 2000. See the barriers non-dominant groups face in obtaining internet access; the construction of gendered, sexual, and non-dominant bodies; teaching issues of diversity and with Cyberspace in the classroom; American/English hegemony of cyberpace; the study of online communities, particularly communities formulated around the articulation of difference. Please submit one page proposals for papers (20 minutes in length) or a two page proposal for a complete panels (2-3 speakers plus a moderator - 1 hour in length) along with a current cv for all presenters by March 1, 2000 to Cyberculture Working Group, c/o Ed Martin, Department of American Studies, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, USA, tel 1 301 485-1354 or by e-mail at emartin@wam.umd.edu.

Promises and Limits of Reductionism in Biomedical Sciences, a conference, will be held on 22-24 May 2000 in Paris, France. The application closing date is April 24. Scientists and philosophers of science will discuss reductionism as a useful research methodology for describing and understanding complex biological systems in terms of their molecular component parts. However, a biological system is not merely the sum of its parts and its functioning is always context-dependent and explainable only in terms of evolution. The limits of reductive explanations in molecular biology, genetics, evolutionary biology, psychology and molecular medicine will be highlighted. Particular attention will be given to the social implications of the human genome project. An attempt will be made to establish if reductionism is compatible with future progress in human biology and medicine. The application form and program is at http://www.inserm.fr/lauat or contact Mr. Philippe Lautet / Inserm 101, rue de Tolbiac, 75654 Paris Cedex 13, France, tel. 33 1 44 23 60 89, Fax 33 1 44 23 60 69, Montserrat@tolbiac.inserm.fr.

ISTAS 2000: University as a Bridge from Technology to Society: International Symposium on Technology and Society, co-sponsored by the IEEE Society for Social Implications of Technology (SIST) Department of Electronic Engineering, La Sapienza University of Rome and the Associazione Elettronica ed Elettronica Italiana (AEE), will be held on September 6-8, 2000 in Rome, Italy. Technology is expanding at an unprecedented rate and influence on society reaches every aspect of the life of individuals and groups. However, human needs do not influence the development of technology, as people working in frontier areas of technological research become even more specialized. Focusing their own interest on restricted technical areas, research people are led to loose a global view of the motivations and effects of their accomplishments. University, that by vocation is committed to look at human knowledge and knowledge in a unified perspective, can strongly contribute to fill the gap between technology and society. Contributions are encouraged for topics related to the general themes: How new technologies modify the production and transmission of knowledge; Social implications of technology and research managing; The teaching of social implications of technology; integrations with technical subject; Information technology as a service to community; How science and technology influence culture; Safety and health issues related to: safe energy production, reliability of computer controlled systems in sensitive environments (e.g. healthcare and military); computerised workplaces; electrical safety, etc.; Legal and social issues related to: telework, circulation of individual information and the right to privacy, computer crime, etc.; Submission of extended abstracts of 1000 words by e-mail to the Program Committee Chairman Prof. T. Rousu, ists2000@aelit.fi. Further information: Prof. Valeria Cincitti, Dept Electronic Engineering, University La Sapienza Rome Via Edoardo Osanna 18, 00184 Rome, Italy, Tel: 39-6-4558484, Fax:39-6-4547105, E-mail: ists2000@ict.eing.uniroma1.it, http://tec.eing.uniroma1.it/ists2000/htm.

The Postgraduate Forum on Genetics and Society (PFOS) will convene for its fourth conference on 26-27 June 2000 at the School of Biotechnological Law and Ethics, Sheffield, England. The colloquium offers the unique opportunity to graduate researchers across Europe in the fields of science studies, sociology, philosophy, history, law, cultural studies, anthropology and genetics to meet in an informal and friendly environment to present and discuss their research on aspects of the new genetics. If you are interested in presenting a paper, or would like more information, please contact the
colloquium organisers Shaun Pattinson at s.pattinson@sheffield.ac.uk or Mark Taylor at m.taylor@sheffield.ac.uk, Sheffield Institute of Biotechnological Law and Ethics, Crookesmoor Building, Conduit Road, Sheffield, S10 1FL. Check out the PGFS website to find out more about us, and for details of previous colloquia, at www.comp.lancs.ac.uk/sociology/pgfs.html.

The Digital World Research Center and Hewlett-Packard announce a workshop and edited collection on Wireless World: Social, Cultural and Interactional Issues in Mobile Communications and Computing, April 7, 2000, at the Digital World Research Centre, University of Surrey, England. This workshop aims to provide an interdisciplinary and multi-sector forum to consider the social, cultural and interactional issues involved in the design and use of mobile devices. Recent media reports have described the uptake and use of mobile devices as 'a revolution' which will have a significant impact on innovation in computing and telecommunications industries, as well as widespread effects in the conduct of everyday work and home life. Existing mobile technologies hold the potential to modify established social relationships, and create new ones. Furthermore, increasing convergence in computing and telecommunications technologies provide opportunities for numerous socio-technical futures. What will these futures look like, and what social, cultural and interactional factors will influence their development? How do present uses and social explanations influence the innovation and design process? What relevant social factors impact on the production of mobile technologies, and what are the effects of mobile technology diffusion on social and cultural relationships?

So far, there have been few interdisciplinary forums that provide the opportunity for both academics and industry to discuss current research on social, cultural, and design issues in mobile technologies. The workshop aims to bring together researchers from academic disciplines and IT industries, and is designed to facilitate communication and discussion between qualitative and ethnographic approaches from the social sciences and media technology studies, and approaches derived from HCI (human-computer interaction) research.

Net News

The Media Resource Service (MRS) has merged with AlphaGalileo to form AlphaGalileo: the media resource service for European science. (AlphaGalileo is a project of the British Association for the Advancement of Science to provide an Internet-based press center for European engineering, and technology.) The combination of AlphaGalileo with the MRS will offer journalists world-wide an integrated service and technology news and expert service. Full information about the AlphaGalileo service is at http://www.alphagalileo.org.

A large web site edited by Donald Forsdike contains selected papers and commentary on various aspects of evolution, both current and historical at http://post.queensu.ca/~forsdike/evolution.htm. An online calendar of the Correspondence of Charles Darwin, which includes a summary of every letter, is at http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/Departments/Darwin/caldar.html.

The Netherlands graduate school of Science, Technology and Modern Culture has moved its website to http://www.fdcm.uinamass.nl/etmc.

The new issue of M/C - A Journal of Media and Culture on 'future' is now online at http://www.ug.edu.au/mc. M/C Reviews, a companion to the journal, is at http://www.ug.edu.au/mc/reviews. 'Audience' will be released on 8 March 2000. Dates for other themed issues are - 'culture' (deadline 3 Apr. / release 3 May); 'speed' (deadline 29 May / release 28 June); 'blat' (deadline 24 July / release 23 Aug.); 'game' (deadline 18 Sep. / release 18 Oct.); 'festival' (deadline 13 Nov. / release 13 Dec.). Email Axel Bruns at mc@newline.ug.edu.au.

The on-line edition of European Journal of Cultural Studies is a reproduction of the print edition. http://www.sagepub.co.uk/
Opportunities Available

There is to be a new Ionian Centre for Research and Technology, established with European structural funds on the island of Kefalonia, one of whose themes will be science policy studies. One part of the Centre’s programme is likely to be one or more summer schools each year where academics can meet, or initiate exchanges with policymakers and practitioners in industry, government or academic management. Moses Boudourides of the University of Patras in Greece and Peter Healey of the Science Policy Support Group in London will be working together to organise the programme, in collaboration with colleagues who have particular meetings to offer. It is hoped to organise at least one such summer school in September 2000 although the Centre itself may not yet be open. Programmes for the summer school can originate in, or address issues or concerns, from the conceptual to the applied, concerning any or all of the European Union member or candidate member states, and/or issues at the European level. A comparative element is encouraged, and we are hoping to organise a specifically Greek day during every programme during which mutual learning can take place on local issues. Meetings are expected to be to the benefit of European research policy or management, but this does not preclude comparisons with, or learning from, other world regions. Kefalonia is the largest and many would say the most beautiful of the Ionian islands, combining spectacular beaches with dramatic mountain scenery and cave systems. The Ionian Centre will aim to be one of the most cost-effective conference centres in Europe, but cannot finance or subsidise meetings. If you are interested in holding a meeting under the auspices of the Ionian Centre either this year or in 2001 or 2002 in the first instance you should send an e-mail to either mhbosves@upatras.gr or Peter.Healey@spsg.org. Peter Healey, Science Policy Support Group (SPSG), 1 Birdcage Walk, London, SW1H 9JJ, UK, http://www.spsg.org and http://www.sciencecity.org.uk.

The Department of History of the University of California at Los Angeles invites applications for a postdoctoral appointment in the history of science for 2000-01. We invite applications from scholars working on the history of any area of science in any part of the world, and especially from those whose historical research includes a social, cultural, or economic dimension. We also welcome applications from scholars who can link history of science to history of technology, medicine, social science, expertise or the professions. The successful candidate will teach one course in each of the three quarters of the academic year (late September to mid-June). Competitive salary, plus health benefits. Position subject to final funding approval. Send letter of application, cv, one publication or writing sample, a short statement of teaching and research interests, and three letters of recommendation by 30 March 2000 to: Professor Theodore Porter, Postdoctoral Search Committee, Department of History, 6265 Bunche Hall, Box 951473, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1473, USA.

Virginia Tech announces a tenure-track appointment in Science and Technology Studies (STS) at the Assistant Professor or early Associate Professor level beginning August 16, 2000. The successful candidate will serve as a member of the STS faculty and as Assistant Director of the STS Graduate Program at the University’s Northern Virginia Center in Falls Church, Virginia/Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. We seek applications from scholars with demonstrated experience in one or more research traditions in STS and willingness to learn about others. Candidates must have the Ph.D. in hand by August 2000 as well as the ability to engage productively in program development; ability to offer guidance to students who are working professionals and are diverse in background, race, gender, and ethnicity; strong teaching record and willingness to contribute to distance learning; and commitment to an active research program. A major responsibility of this position is to continue building a strong regional presence for the STS Program, expand enrollments for STS courses, and recruit candidates for the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees. The Assistant Director receives some release from teaching for exchange in this important administrative work. The hiring unit for this position is the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies (CIS) in the College of Arts and Sciences.

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Formed in 1995, CIS is comprised of a number of interdisciplinary programs, including the STS Graduate Program and undergraduate programs in Black Studies; Humanities; Humanities, Science, and Technology; Interdisciplinary Studies; Judaic Studies, Religious Studies; and Women’s Studies. The STS Program is run jointly with the Departments of History, Philosophy, and Sociology. The STS Program provides opportunities for students to pursue the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees. The Program has a strong record placing 23 Ph.D. recipients and 54 M.S. recipients in appropriate positions. At present, 44 students are in residence at the Blacksburg campus and 28 students at Falls Church, established in 1995. Interested candidates should send a detailed letter of application, current CV, recent writing sample, syllabi for courses taught or teaching portfolio if available, and at least three letters of recommendation. We will begin screening applications on February 21, 2000. The review process will continue until the position is filled. Please send applications to Gary Downey, Chair, STS Search Committee, Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, VA 24061-0227. You may also call or write: 1 540-231-4761 (ext), 1 540-231-7615 (dept), 1 540-231-7013 (fax), downegy@vt.edu. For a more complete description of the position, consult http://www.cis.vt.edu/impositions/.

CERN, the European Organization for Nuclear Research, in Geneva has an opening for an Information Officer (science writer). Details of the post, in English & French, can be found at http://www.cern.ch/CELENE/Divisions/FR/HRs/re cruiment/ua991241a.PDF Conditions regarding nationality of eligible candidates and instructions on how to apply can be found at: http://www.cern.ch/CELENE/Divisions/FR/HRs/re cruiment/staff.html

The Department of Human Sciences at Brunei University invites applications for ESRC and Departmental PhD Studentships. The Department offers an exciting and stimulating environment for postgraduate research. Applicants should be UK residents and should have, or expect to obtain, a First or Upper Second Class honours degree in a relevant discipline. You should in the first instance contact a potential supervisor directly (preferably by e-mail) to discuss your application and proposal for research. The closing date for applications to the Department is 31st March 2000. Late applications may be considered in exceptional circumstances. We invite applicants who wish to conduct research within the following disciplines: Psychoanalysis, Psychology, Social Anthropology, Sociology (including Media and Communications) and Science, Technology and Innovation Studies. The Departmental PhD Studentships are competitive. They include the cost of home fees and a small bursary (currently £6,200 per annum) for up to three years. There is a small teaching requirement. Applicants should have, or expect to obtain, a First or Upper Second Class honours degree in a relevant discipline. You should in the first instance contact a potential supervisor directly (preferably by e-mail) to discuss your application and proposal for research. Applicants should send a completed application form, a detailed CV, a research proposal and the names and addresses of two academic referees. The deadline for applications for the Departmental Studentships is 30th May 2000. Late applications may be considered in some circumstances. Interviews will be held in the middle of June. If you wish to be considered for a Departmental Studentship as well as for an ESRC Studentship, please indicate this on your application form. For further information and an application form, please contact: Liz Ackroyd, Departmental Research Administrator, Department of Human Sciences, Brunei University, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3PH, United Kingdom, E-mail: liz.ackroyd@brunel.ac.uk, URL: www.brunel.ac.uk/dept/hum.