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List of Abstracts

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Christine Moreau: AI and Addressing the Abstraction of Knowledge Production with Middle-School Students

The continuing proliferation of AI technologies has made accessible AI-powered technologies to internet users of all ages, including young people/children completing their primary education. In the middle-school, students use AI for a myriad of inquiries and work production. Using technology, such as ChatGPT, students produce essays to prove personal points to their friends (ex. comparing soccer stars Messi and Ronaldo) or to upload their creative stories and ask AI to provide feedback. Professional training for new teachers (pre-service teachers) is meant to reflect the best practice for the field of teaching. Education programs tell pre-service teachers AI is 'here to stay' and they must adapt to the use of these technologies in their classrooms. Pre-service teachers are failed when not provided with a robust theoretical interpretation of AI that includes the ways in which intellectual labour, knowledge creation, and communities and histories of knowledge exchange are extracted and reproduced as a product for the end user. When the creation of knowledge is abstracted from its relational, dialectical process, young people are not brought into learning from a space of knowledge creators. Rather, they are simply accessing information in which they assume answers are already fixed and provided as definitive fact. In this way, young people are not encouraged to think critically, contribute to discussion, or foster debate. This paper will use the authors observational data from completing a Bachelor of Education and associated practicums at a rural maritime institution to engage an analysis of AI use in middle-school education. The discussion further explores how pre-service teachers are not given tools for understanding, addressing, or contextualizing AI for their students.

For young people, this leaves their understanding and use of the technology as a sort of 'magical' space in which immediate answers and works can be generated at their request. The paper will investigate Marxist debates surrounding the ethics of AI and the processes of human and intellectual labour abstraction. In the abstraction I am exploring, knowledge increasingly becomes removed from the communities in which it is produced; and young people do not know where, how, and through what relations the information they have accessed was created. When pre-service teachers are not equipped properly, they cannot appropriately contextualize the use of AI technologies to young people and provide them with the skills to find communities online for knowledge production, participate meaningfully, and share in the knowledge creation that is built into the content students request and receive. The abstraction prevents young people from building their own capacity to participate in relational knowledge exchange and creation. From an educational perspective, the paper will outline the current practices in education

surrounding digital literacy. It will detail how current practices fail to introduce pre-service teachers to critical theory, dialectical and relational understandings of learning and knowledge, and building skills for young people through relationships of learning and critique.

Dr. Mike Zaijko: Theorizing AI

What should social science and humanities scholars make of AI (artificial intelligence) as a social phenomenon? While critical scholarship has pushed back against the most recent waves of AI hype (in both its utopian and dystopian variants), there remains a need to further theorize what AI means for society in a way that avoids contributing to its reification and promotion. One way to do so is to engage with AI as a cultural object rooted in mythical, sociotechnical, and capitalist imaginaries, but we must also contend with the numerous existing technologies that are labelled as AI, and which are now being used across many social domains: to generate media, control weapon systems, make hiring decisions, and identify deviance. Theorizing AI is complicated by the lack of a consistent referent behind this term, which has often been used to obfuscate more than it explains. However, the incoherence of AI should not be used to dismiss what has been an important social shift, and sociologists in particular need to consider how their theories of society relate, or require further development given the existence of systems that are increasingly occupying or modifying the roles previously played by human subjects. This paper will review and survey theoretical approaches to AI as a social phenomenon, with the aim of assisting scholars who are grappling with how to approach this topic. Because of the many dimensions of AI as a social phenomenon, no single theorization is adequate, and much will depend on the nature of the research question or problematization. However, cultural representations, imaginings, and expectations of AI are crucial, as these inform how present and future technologies are developed. Political economy remains an important perspective, given the billions of dollars in investment capital fueling the current AI boom (driven in large part by exuberant and mythologized expectations), and attempts to use AI technologies to cement the dominance of major players in the tech industries. Theories of governance through technology, often indebted to Foucault, remain highly relevant given the continuity of AI-based systems with prior forms of control. AI's relation to social order (including systemic forms of inequality, violence, exploitation, and intersectional oppression) have been traced by scholars linking AI to colonialism, heteropatriarchy, and other systems of power. Finally, sociologists must grapple with entanglements between humans and machines, human-AI assemblages, or hybrid forms of agency. This requires revisiting theoretical debates, often informed by STS, about the use of agency, materiality, and technology in social theory, as well as engaging empirically and critically with the human labor underpinning AI 'autonomous' systems and their use in social relations.

Osman Osman: Framing the Anti-Finance Bill Protests in Kenya: A Comparative Analysis of Legacy and Digital Media Coverage

In the context of Kenya's recent anti-Finance Bill protests, this study investigates the framing strategies of two prominent media outlets: Citizen Digital, representing traditional media with an extensive online presence, and Kenyans.co.ke, a digital-native news platform. The proposed Finance Bill of 2024, which sought to implement significant tax hikes, led to protests that were both unprecedented in scale and impactful in political outcomes.

This research utilizes framing and field theory to analyze how media constructs and presents news stories. As articulated by Entman (1993), framing provides a lens to understand the strategic selection and emphasis of specific aspects of perceived reality within news texts. This concept helps to dissect how the media frames protests, defines problems, diagnoses cause, makes moral judgments, and suggests remedies. Pierre Bourdieu's Field Theory also contextualizes the professional norms and practices within the journalistic field that shape media framing.

The study employs a qualitative content analysis approach, focusing on paragraphs as the unit of analysis from 100 articles from each media outlet. The frames analyzed include Law and Order, Victimization, Political Critique, Public Sentiment and Mobilization, and Economic Impact.

Findings from Citizen Digital reveal a dominant focus on the Law-and-Order frame (32.6%), emphasizing enforcement actions and depicting protests as events requiring control due to potential or actual violence. The Victimization frame (25.9%) highlights the human rights violations and the impact on individuals, particularly victims of police brutality. Political Critique (19.3%), Public Sentiment and Mobilization (13.3%), and Economic Impact (8.9%) frames further illustrate the multifaceted nature of the coverage, with significant attention to political dynamics and public mobilization efforts.

In contrast, Kenyans.co.ke shows a more balanced distribution of frames. Law and Order (30.0%) and Victimization (27.1%) remain prominent. Still, there is a notable increase in the Political Critique frame (21.4%), reflecting a deeper engagement with the political context and implications of the Finance Bill. The Public Sentiment and Mobilization (11.4%) and Economic Impact (10.0%) frames also highlight the grassroots nature of the protests and the broader economic concerns driving public dissent.

This comparative analysis underscores the evolving dynamics of media representation and public engagement in the digital age. While traditional media like Citizen Digital emphasize

control and enforcement, digital-native platforms like Kenyans.co.ke provide a more nuanced view that includes significant political critique and grassroots mobilization. The solid online presence of Kenyans on X demonstrates the decisive role of digital activism in shaping public discourse and mobilizing collective action, a phenomenon that still needs to be explored and requires further scholarly attention.

These findings have broader implications for understanding the role of media in democratic societies, particularly in how different media types can influence public opinion and policy responses. This study contributes to the theoretical discourse on digital media by highlighting the distinct framing strategies of legacy and digital news platforms in covering significant socio-political events. It underscores the pressing need for further research on the impact of media framing on public perception and the potential of digital platforms to empower citizens and hold those in power accountable.

Tatum Weicker: Social unrest through technological innovation: technocapitalist assetization and monetization and the misinformation epidemic

There has been a recent surge of research on the spread of misinformation across "Big Tech" social media platforms (e.g., Meta, TikTok, etc.). Social science perspectives invite us to view the phenomenon - often referred to as the "infodemic" (Ghebreyesus, 2020) - as an issue of industry and political regulation (Anderson and Rainie, 2017; Yaraghi, 2019; Sun, 2023), and an issue strengthened by user-interaction and experience, linked to confirmation and outgroup homogeneity biases (Bühler et al., 2020; Calero Valdez, 2020; Shu et al., 2020). The assetization and monetization practices of Big Tech corporations are a key component in the process, although they are frequently excluded from existing literature. To fully understand the generation and circulation of misinformation we must acknowledge the effects of these practices on users and user engagement.

In combination with assetization of user engagement metrics, the market power that Big Tech extracts from control over technological innovation/development maintains and augments the active use of Big Tech's digital platforms and ecosystems (i.e., networks of technologies that work to provide user[s] with information) (Birch et al., 2021). The elite nature of these firms within the ecosystems of tech innovation gives them access to significant resources, enabling production and advancement of transformative technologies to be integrated into their platforms, such as generative AI technologies, and algorithmic and machine-learning software.

This paper suggests a causal relationship between moneymaking practices of Big Tech corporations and the amplification and increased transferability of political and cultural misinformation. Insofar as many technologies are designed to be corporate-owned products, Big Tech's methods limit the knowledge of average users about how these technologies operate, including the collection and use of user engagement metrics to craft algorithmic content prioritization for users within a digital ecosystem.

Sondra Charbadze: Thinking Beyond The Book: Is Theorizing Possible in the Digital Age?

Philosopher of technology Bernard Stiegler argued that philosophy has systematically repressed technics, as philosophers sought from Aristotle to distinguish the philosophical epistēmē of real wisdom from the artificial technê (technical knowledge) of the Sophists. Left unaddressed in Stiegler's account of repressed technics is the role played by the technology of literacy in both originating and sustaining the Western philosophical tradition, an influence that has been almost entirely ignored by the philosophers indebted to this technology. Drawing from the work of ancient Greek scholar Eric Havelock and literary scholar Walter Ong, I trace the origin of abstract thought through the technical support of the written word, a revolution that accumulated increasing power as more of the common populace attained access to both literacy and written texts. The era of high literacy, or "typographic culture," marks the apex of interiority, introspection, and the capacity for sustained abstract thought. These cognitive traits that built the academy and its broader culture are now undergoing rapid change in the "electronic age," an age which Marshall McLuhan characterized with prophetic accuracy as the globalization of tribal intelligence. If the core assumptions of Western philosophy rest on the technology of literacy and its accompanying cognitive biases, philosophers and media theorists alike should be asking: what kinds of thought can be practiced and taught in the electronic age? This paper aims to re-center the urgency of this question while encouraging educators and scholars to embrace a panoply of technologically-mediated theoretical postures. One might teach (and practice) pairing the theoretical posture of internet-research—characterized by the rapid acquisition of information and its arrangement in a flat web of interconnected nodes—with the theoretical posture associated with textual mediation—characterized by careful reasoning, hierarchical classification, and depth over breadth—and the theoretical posture associated with the speech-mediation of oral cultures, which privileges memorization, practical embodiment, and group participation. Recognizing the basic cognitive patterns associated with our dominant technologies may allow us to theorize with with more creativity and freedom, while remaining open to the many ways these technological influences remain both invisible and yet-to-be-thought.

Jay Ritchie: Magic: Theorizing a Major Cultural Topos of the Web 2.0 Era

Digital technologies and the internet accelerated the "flexible accumulation" strategies of deindustrialization, intensifying the expansion of the commodity sphere into previously untapped areas of everyday life (Harvey 284). With the inauguration of Web 2.0 in 2004, these accumulation strategies found new markets as an interactive iteration of the internet spread rapidly through culture and society via social media, blogs, and other sites that relied on user-generated content. Under the data-hungry "set of principles and practices" that defined Web 2.0, seemingly every human action was absorbed by digital surveillance (O'Reilly 1). Robert W. Gehl has shown that the absorption of not only labour processes but of sociality, leisure, and affect into the commodity sphere of digitally driven economies is "a social reflection of the internal division of labor that constitutes computers," the Von Neumann Architecture. As "the internal logic of Web 2.0," internet users are the "processor" of the computer, while the data accumulated by "site owners" and stored in servers are the corresponding "archive" (Gehl 1229). With the datafication of interaction and commodification of data, this paper theorizes how Web 2.0 principles and practices affected the process of subject formation during the Web 2.0 era of the internet, creating a seemingly inescapable feedback loop of digitality and embodiment, URL and IRL, from which users could only escape through magic.

Proposing a historicization of Web 2.0 that spans 2004–2020, this paper theorizes two complementary reasons for the emergence of magic as a major cultural topos during this period: 1) Prior to the adoption of digital technologies across work and everyday life, labour and social relations were characterized by "analogue" labour processes wherein humans could "'grasp the link between a movement and its effect'" (Estévez qtd. in Hassan 50). With labour, social life, and leisure underwritten by digital technologies, people are unable to organize and resist the reification and alienation engendered by digitality. Unlike analogue processes, "[t]he digital network is magical because we accept its virtuality, its non-materiality, as evidence of its presence as a non-presence" (Hassan 51). 2) The omnipresence of the digital network causes artists to turn toward magic as way to imagine a world "outside" the intractability of Web 2.0 and its effects on the process of subject formation, as well as means for creating such a world. From Harry Potter and Twilight to the astrology app Co-Star, and from the "occult poetics" of communist poet Sean Bonney to start-up "unicorns," "[t]he resurgence of magic in popular thought and culture" in the twenty-first century can be linked to a mode of production that has increasingly been determined by Web 2.0 technologies (Shoemaker n.p.).

Mads Baker: Prisons, Podcasts, and Panopticon(s): The Colonization and Commodification of "Crime"

Within the past decade, the advent of streaming services has ushered in a new era of cop-aganda, but scant scholarship has been done to interrogate the relationships between true crime media and the pervasive carceral logic that enables the prison-industrial complex. Angela Davis evocatively asked, "Are Prisons Obsolete?," and the abolitionist interventions made by her and her colleagues informs my approach to how we consume true crime and the critical lenses we can use to examine the cultural forms of true crime and the podcast as a medium. I plan to investigate the planned obsolescence of the prison-industrial complex as direct descendant to of the Atlantic Slave Trade and as the lynchpin sustaining late-stage capitalism, culminating in the argument that true crime podcasts (and media) serve as a panoptic ideological apparatus buttressing the carceral system.

Within this project, I intend to analyze the terrain of true crime media against abolitionist and Black cultural theorists, create a conversation between incarcerated individuals and the media exploiting their narratives, create an ethnography of the podcast medium, and apply a Foucauldian panoptic lens to true crime. I intend to focus on the time period of podcast creation around the unrest in Ferguson, Missouri after the murder of Michael Brown, 2014, to the present, 2024. The project itself will be a Foucauldian discourse analysis with a continuous juxtaposition with Foucault's Discipline and Punish. I will apply Achille Mbembe's theory of necropolitics to elucidate the "slow death" imposed on Black and Brown citizens by the nation-state. This project also requires a phenomenological and ontological analysis of prisons and policing, and, therefore, will work in conversation with the works of black philosophers like Frantz Fanon, Calvin Warren, and Biko Mandela Gray, and in conversation with white philosophers important to the phenomenological canon, such as Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre.

I intend to develop a corpus of a variety of true crime podcasts from the selected time frame and analyze the politics of the discourse contained within the media and extending from the media, whether in the media's own marketing or through dynamics of the audience/spectactor. Furthermore, I intend to suggest that the podcast form has become a distinguishable form of audio media both in its production and consumption. I would like to explore arguments around the podcast form as a particularly positivistic media format - one that has, more or less intentionally, led to less interpersonal discourse, and, therefore, less interpersonal organizing. Additionally, I intend to explore this argument against/alongside critiques of the panopticon within slavery studies, such as in Simone Browne's Dark Matters. Paired with this will be a critique and contemplation of those in media studies that consider the podcast form, and particularly true crime narrative, to be a

feminist, or generally liberatory, form. I hope to draw attention to the questions that have been occupying my mind: on the precipice of the climate crisis and the collapse of late-stage capitalism, why are we wasting as much as 40-50% of public budgets on policing and incarceration?

Victoria Duan: A New Chinese Digital Identity: Online Reactionary Discourse in Black Myth: Wukong

This article seeks to understand the reactionary discourse within Chinese gaming communities on social media, which increasingly coalesces around articulations of nationalism and the rejection of social justice, often framed as the imposition of elitist Western liberal politics. Specifically, this article examines the discourses within online gaming communities that have emerged in anticipation of the upcoming video game Black Myth: Wukong, developed by the Chinese studio Game Science. The game, based on the heavily adapted classic novel Journey to the West, has been hailed as China's first true AAA production, partly due to its significant development costs and strong emphasis on traditional Chinese cultural signifiers. As anticipation for the game's release grew, lofty expectations have invited scrutiny from Western media outlets on the alleged culture of misogyny within the studio, reflected in the reported lack of varied female characterization within the game. This incident has sparked intense pushback from Chinese gamers and media outlets, driven by strong animosity towards vocabulary aligned with 'Western' ideas of social justice and a nationalistic urge to defend a game that is wholly Chinese in nature.

To better understand the discursive environment surrounding Black Myth: Wukong, I conduct a content analysis of the game's marketing material and the ensuing rhetoric within gamer-oriented digital spaces, both domestic and international. Drawing upon insights from game studies, digital nationalism, and postcolonial scholarship, I argue that as Chinese game productions gain worldwide popularity, the renegotiation of modern Chinese identity in games and the broader digital sphere increasingly hinges on reactionary discourse centered around imaginations of a hostile West that has weaponized matters of social justice. As negative soft power becomes central to official Chinese government rhetoric, the resulting construction of a stringent West/East dichotomy has permeated the daily vocabulary of the general public. Words such as baizuo and zzzq are omnipresent within the gaming sphere and larger digital environment, contributing to the formation of a modern digital Chinese identity that is antagonistic in nature. This article contributes to the intersection of research on game studies and national identity formation within the Chinese context.

Tanvi Gera: Filtered Realities: How TikTok and Instagram Shape Beauty Standards and Self-Perception Among Young Adults

In the digital era, TikTok and Instagram profoundly influence societal beauty standards and individual self-perception. The aim is to explore how these platforms propagate specific beauty ideals and their impact on body image, self-esteem, and identity among young adults. It also examines how users utilize these platforms to resist and redefine these standards.

On TikTok and Instagram, visuals are everything. Curated and edited content often showcases unrealistic beauty ideals, with filters and editing tools distorting reality. This can seriously affect self-worth, leading to issues like body dissatisfaction, anxiety, depression, and eating disorders.

Social media influencers are a big deal, setting trends and shaping how young adults live and what they value. Influencer content is often aspirational, leading to unrealistic expectations and identity crises. Chasing likes, comments, and followers can make people rely too much on external approval, hurting their self-esteem and mental health.

But it's not all bad. These platforms also offer positive spaces. Digital communities and support networks on TikTok and Instagram provide spaces for marginalized voices and body positivity movements, promoting self-acceptance and inclusivity. Young adults use these platforms to challenge dominant beauty standards and assert diverse identities, leveraging social media as a tool for empowerment and cultural redefinition.

The study points out gaps in understanding the long-term effects of social media on body image and mental health. There's a need for more long-term studies, exploration of cultural variations, and intersectional analyses. Also, the role of algorithms in pushing certain beauty standards and the impact of AR filters on how users see themselves need more research.

Ultimately, TikTok and Instagram are a mixed bag when it comes to beauty standards and self-perception. While they can spread harmful ideals, they also offer ways for people to fight back and find empowerment. The paper aims to provide a balanced look at how these platforms affect young adults, aiming to inform educators, policymakers, and mental health professionals about the complex relationship between social media, identity, and mental health. It also includes certain strategies to lessen the negative impacts and boost the positive uses of these platforms.

Benjamin Steel: Temporal Dynamics of Multi-Dimensional User Stance on Political Issues

It's natural for the political stances of individuals and groups to change over time. Moreover, political stances tend to move together - consider, for example, how the platforms of parties tend to move over time. While work has been done on the correlations on stance positions (across topics), very little is known about the correlated movements of stances over time. This is due, in part, to methodological gaps in the ability to robustly measure such simultaneous changes in multiple stances. This is our aim in this work.

We have collected user stance data from a range of salient political issues in the Canadian political landscape, across four of the largest Canadian subreddits on Reddit, using a range of natural language processing techniques. We will use this data first to measure the differing rate of movement of user stance positions across political issues using Bayesian inference methods. Then, using methods from dynamical systems, we will investigate attractors and repellers in this landscape, that is, stable points of political opinion on issues, and unstable points. This will reveal the extent to which user stance movement in a single political issue can induce stance movement in other political issues. We can then do this analysis on a subreddit by subreddit level, investigating if there is a difference in the dynamics of federal and provincial issue discussion, and on a year by year level, exploring whether these dynamics have changed over time.

The dynamical nature of this space has a powerful downstream effect on many topical issues. With the rise of carefully targeted influence operations, small focused efforts on a political issue of interest, combined with potential large dynamical effects, could have outsized effects. It could also help to understand, in combination with stronger knowledge of social platform affordances, the nature by which different events are focused on in the fast paced social media news cycle.

Dr. Muyang Li: Fear of Automation: Conspiratorial Thinking and Skepticism to Algorithm

Describing the AI system as a supervillain, which is quite common in dystopian science fiction, reflects the anxiety that people feel about the increasing role of algorithms in modern society. Facing the algorithmic harms, the legislative and technical efforts failed to increase public trust in the automation of society. Instead, the public's concerns have deepened. Some people developed algorithmic skepticism, aversion, or even "algorithmophobia", the fear and anxiety in relation to algorithms or automated decision-making processes.

This study explores how people form perceptions and imaginaries to understand algorithms, express skepticism and concerns about algorithms, and develop strategies to resist the automation of society. In addition, what role do imagination and conspiratorial thinking play to shape this process? We conducted a case study of Reddit, a social news site in which users are organized around topic-based communities (subreddits). We look at how Reddit's conspiracy communities, in which users rely more on subjective imaginaries rather than reliable information, explicate and react to algorithmic impacts. We collected and analyzed data from four popular conspiracy subreddits, from January 2011 to May 2022.

Our findings reveal that within these conspiracy communities, algorithms are often imagined as tools of hegemonic power, used for surveillance, censorship, propaganda, and social manipulation. These perceptions are shaped by users' experiences, political ideologies, emerging social events, and interactions with algorithmic systems. Conspiracy theorists express concerns that the automation of society could deepen social divisions, alienate individuals, and undermine human free will. Moreover, they question the legitimacy and trustworthiness of public institutions, journalism, and democratic processes that rely on automated decision-making, often developing resistance strategies in response.

This study underscores the importance of understanding the dual nature of algorithms and highlights the need for further research and interventions to address algorithmic aversion. By examining how conspiracy theories influence public attitudes toward algorithms, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the socio-cultural challenges posed by the increasing automation of society.

Dr. Katharine Dunbar Winsor: Conspirituality in the Digital Era: Analyzing the Freebirth Movement and Health Misinformation on Instagram

This paper examines the intersection of conspiracy theories, new age spirituality, and the rise of the freebirth movement on Instagram, situating these within the broader context of conspirituality. Conspirituality, a term coined by Ward & Voas (2011), describes a hybrid of conspiracy theory and alternative spirituality that revolves around the principles of interconnectedness, the idea that nothing happens by accident, and the belief that appearances are deceptive. Both conspiracy theories and new age spirituality offer adherents a sense of control over their lives, countering the uncertainty of random events by attributing them to hidden forces Ward & Voas (2011). While these belief systems share common ground, they diverge significantly in focus and demographics: conspiracy theories tend to be male-dominated and conservative, concentrating on current affairs, whereas new age spirituality is predominantly female and liberal, focusing on personal growth and relationships.

The conspirituality movement has gained significant traction on social media platforms like Instagram, where fitness and wellness and other types of influencers, often with varying levels of education and expertise, shape public discourse (Wellman, 2022). Further, on social media, conspirituality and health misinformation further became entangled during the COVID-19 pandemic and in response to resulting public health responses. Conspirituality influencers wield considerable power over their followers, disseminating content that often blurs the lines between health advice and health misinformation and is often predicated on purchasing products to 'solve' health concerns. The freebirth movement, defined as the intentional decision to give birth without the presence of a healthcare professional, has found a home within this social media space (Higueras et al., 2024). On Instagram, freebirth advocates frequently overlap with those promoting anti-vaccine rhetoric, rejecting mainstream medical care, and expressing distrust of medical professionals. Such influencers encourage others to pursue freebirth, abandon formal prenatal care involving health care professionals, and 'do their own research' about pregnancy, birth and delivery.

This study offers a qualitative content analysis of freebirth posts on Instagram by influencers, exploring how these posts contribute to the broader conspirituality movement. The findings emphasize the urgency of addressing health misinformation, particularly in digital spaces where traditional public health interventions may be less effective. The rise of free birth and other spirituality-aligned movements raises critical questions about who

holds knowledge, authority, and expertise in digital health spaces and how unmet needs and connection-seeking behaviours drive participation in these virtual communities.

By highlighting the complexities of tackling health misinformation, this paper advocates for new strategies in health promotion that are attuned to the digital age, especially social media. It underscores the importance of considering the underlying social and emotional needs that conspirituality movements, including freebirth, seek to fulfill, and the necessity for new strategies to address these needs.

Thiha Wint Aung: Algorithm-Human Interactions in a Revolutionary Situation: Hidden & Public Transcripts of Digital Resistance in Myanmar

This paper explores the dynamic interplay between human agency and AI-driven technologies within the context of Myanmar's socio-political upheaval, particularly following the 2021 military coup. The research critically examines how Myanmar's revolutionary movement, which has become armed resistance, strategically navigate, manipulate, and engage with social media algorithms and generative AI to sustain resistance movements, despite the constraints imposed by digital platforms and algorithmic governance. These platforms, often governed by global capitalist interests and liberal biases against explicit political violence, present both opportunities and challenges for those mobilizing against repressive regimes.

Drawing on the conceptual framework of 'hidden transcripts' and 'public transcripts' articulated by James C. Scott, the study analyzes how activists in Myanmar engage with different platforms—Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, and TikTok—each reflecting varied layers of discourse. The paper identifies three layers of transcripts: public transcripts, hidden transcripts, and deeply hidden transcripts. Public transcripts are designed for global audiences and align with international discourses on democracy and human rights. Hidden transcripts, more attuned to domestic audiences, subtly veil the revolutionary intent from authoritative and algorithmic scrutiny. Deeply hidden transcripts are encrypted within cultural codes, accessible only to specific communities, allowing the messaging to resonate deeply without detection by external entities.

Contrasting deterministic views that see technology as having a static influence on political processes (Howard 2010; Timcke 2021), this research adopts a dynamic perspective. It investigates how the communication of violence, the mobilization of support, and the contestation of political legitimacy are differently mediated across platforms with varying algorithmic biases. The paper also delves into how resistance actors use generative AI to craft narratives that circumvent platform censorship while still effectively rallying support and maintaining the momentum of the resistance movement. Through this lens, the research addresses broader questions regarding the dynamics of domination and resistance within the digital sphere, the interaction between human agency and machine governance, and the possibility of new social and political orders emerging from digital platforms and artificial intelligence. The study underscores the nuanced relationship between digital technologies and socio-political transformation, illustrating how these tools, while facilitating collective agency, also contribute to the datafication and surplus extraction of human activities.

Dr. Rui Hou: Censorship becomes culture: normalizing sensitivity management in China's digital media industry

In a rapidly growing creative economy with a complex system of censorship, how do content creators navigate content regulation, and how do they address sensitive information and controversial topics in their creative processes? In authoritarian regimes like China, social media users face censorship and surveillance from both state agencies and commercial platforms while engaging in content creation. Despite pervasive and intricate content regulation practices, a growing number of individuals in China are actively participating in the country's vibrant creative economy through activities like vlogging, blogging, and livestreaming. Rather than simply accepting censorship as repressive intervention constraining freedom speech, New Censorship Theory considers censors as actors internal to communicative networks and highlights how the dynamic interaction censor-creator interaction underlies cultural production. While the repressive and productive roles of censorship in cultural production have been thoroughly explored in empirical studies on art, literature, movies, and journalism, it remains unclear to what extent these dual roles of censorship are engaged in digital media creation, particularly in grassroots forms of creativity and platform-mediated content. This paper, based on an ethnographic study of the labor process of vlogging and interviewing Chinese creators on algorithm-driven platforms such as TikTok, Bilibili, and Redbook, argues that (1) dealing with sensitivities has evolved from a routine practice for creators into an industrialized service; (2) censorship itself has been developed as an aestheticized cultural object presented with qualities of being novel, interesting, funny, and traffic-attractive. Through the processes of industrialization, contentization, and anesthetization, in the digital media economy, censorship operates as an unequal power relationship that is internalized within the cultural framework and normalized as creators' everyday labor experience. This finding contributes to the ongoing discussion about the culture of censorship. Censorship affects culture not only by regulating cultural production and stifling certain expressions through fear and suppression but also by shaping creativity through the negotiation between censor and censored, as well as through creators' self-regulation. Moreover, an often-overlooked aspect of understanding censorship culture is that censorship itself can become a subject of creativity, a point of interest, and even a cultural symbol for entertainment, thereby gaining cultural significance. When censorship becomes the culture, it intertwines with various emotional and social dynamics, potentially leading to its normalization as a non-confrontational underlying tone within the contemporary digital media landscape. Much like how surveillance is pervasive in daily life, censorship might also become something that ordinary digital media creators and audience comply with—whether willingly or

unknowingly—by negotiating, resisting, satirizing, engaging with, and even initiating and accepting it in novel ways.

Dr. Zhifan Luo: Confiscating Progressivism: How the State Shaped Frames of Domestic Violence on Chinese Social Media Throughout the 2010s

Under authoritarianism, the state and its oppression are commonly seen as barriers to progressive agendas, which, in this paper, specifically refer to reforms and changes aimed at expanding social rights, political participation, and cultural inclusivity. This is particularly true in the age of new media and digital technologies, which initially promised a freer flow of information but increasingly seem to assist authoritarian rule. However, there are instances where authoritarian states have integrated popular progressive discourse from social media and, at times, even translated these ideas into policies. For example, in response to widespread social media campaigns, Saudi Arabia announced reforms in 2018 to allow women to drive and later added provisions related to women's rights to national policies, though these measures had notable limitations. This raises the question of how authoritarian states absorb progressive ideas from social media without losing control of a digital space that could potentially evolve into an autonomous public sphere. How do these states integrate strategies for gaining public support with the more-documented strategies of repression? [1] [SEP]

This study examines how authoritarian states utilize digital platforms to "confiscate" progressive ideas, referring to the process by which the state integrates progressive discourse advocated by civil society and transforms it to align with its own agenda. Specifically, we described the framing of domestic violence on Chinese social media throughout the 2010s and analyzed how government-sponsored frame influenced alternative frames. To do this, we collected a total of 616,441 Weibo posts and adopted a mixed-method approach, integrating unsupervised machine learning, qualitative coding, and regression. The analysis identified four frames of domestic violence: the law-and-crime frame, the perception-transformation frame, the structural frame, and the individualist frame. Among these frames, the first three promoted a somewhat progressive agenda regarding domestic violence, while the last one shifted towards individualist coping mechanisms. We found that the law-and-crime frame was strongly associated with government accounts on Weibo, the social media platform under study. This frame, along with state legislation to criminalize domestic violence, exerted mixed effects on alternative progressive frames. In the long run, the state-endorsed approach tends to reduce the space for bottom-up advocacy on important social issues.

This paper yields three major contributions. For studies of digital authoritarianism, it proposes a holistic approach to understanding the resilience of authoritarian control through not only the state's repressive measures but also its hegemonic ones, an aspect

that has not received much scholarly attention until recently. Furthermore, while most works in this literature study the short-term effects of information control strategies, this study examines the transition of frames in a decade and, therefore, can capture the combined effects of repressive and hegemonic measures over time. For scholars interested in gender and violence in China, this study provides a systematic description and a dataset for domestic violence frames on Chinese social media throughout the 2010s, which is a critical period for criminalizing this violence. This description helps in understanding the advances—and setbacks—of feminist movements within the Chinese context.

Amna Saadat: Virtual Communities in Pakistan´s Feminist Digital Media Landscape

Since the #Meinbhi movement and Aurat Marches (#MeToo and Women's Marches) gained momentum in 2018, Pakistani women have increasingly utilized online platforms to create, share, and amplify feminist content. These movements have sparked a digital awakening, transforming the internet into a vital space for women to engage in activism, dialogue, and community-building. The potential for a feminist internet has been further realized with the launch of the Hamara Internet (Our Internet) Program by the Digital Rights Foundation, which champions safer, more inclusive online spaces for women and marginalized voices. This paper delves into the digital landscape of Pakistan's feminist movements, investigating how virtual communities form, interact, and evolve within this space.

Through the lens of networked theory, the paper explores the intricate web of social connections and discourses that circulate within and across various social media groups and platforms. These feminist networked publics are not merely passive consumers of content but active participants in creating, shaping, and disseminating feminist narratives. The circulation of discourses on issues such as gender-based violence, patriarchy, women's rights, and bodily autonomy has given rise to a new kind of public sphere—one where collective voices and connective actions foster sisterhood, solidarity, and empowerment. However, these online spaces also accommodate divergent views and debates, reflecting the complexities, tensions, and nuances inherent in any social movement.

Employing mini digital ethnography, the paper maps out the contours, interactions, and scope of these virtual communities. By closely observing how participants engage with content, support one another, and negotiate differing opinions, the study provides valuable insights into the potential of these communities to reach broader audiences and sustain a sense of belonging, purpose, and collective identity. The analysis will highlight how these online feminist communities contribute to the broader feminist movement in Pakistan, shaping public discourse, challenging entrenched societal norms, and pushing for meaningful social change.

Geneviève Harvey: The #thatgirl trend on TikTok: A qualitative thematic analysis

In the last few years, TikTok has undeniably become one of the most popular applications among youth with now 1.5 billion users, most of them under the age of 30 (Iqbal, 2023). Since 2021, one of the most notable phenomena on the application include the #thatgirl trend (Sims, 2022). A quick keyword search of the hashtag on TikTok generates countless short videos, some with millions of views. As there is currently no academic literature on the topic, I intend to explore the trend by answering the following question: what themes best characterize #thatgirl video content on TikTok?

I am currently undertaking a qualitative thematic analysis using a newly created TikTok account and the 15 most viewed #thatgirl videos. I intend to build a final sample of about 50 videos and continue to code texts, objects, and actions into recurring themes. This should allow me to briefly describe how each category is presented and assess its prevalence in the sample.

Although the project will only be complete with the submission of my master's thesis in 2026, I identified five different themes in a preliminary analysis. They are listed here from most to least dominant: work/school productivity habits, success, "clean" eating, individualism, and physical exercise. So far, all sampled videos have been created by women. Moreover, in almost every instance, these concepts are mostly promoted through esthetically pleasing environments, objects, and people.

These findings are consistent with patterns identified by previous literature on self-help and lifestyle influencer content, namely the focus on individual agency (Philip, 2009; McIntyre, 2021), the large emphasis on appearance (McIntyre, 2021; Thelwall, 2021), the importance of improving one's productivity (Philip, 2009), and the heavy promotion of sponsors (McIntyre, 2021; Thelwall, 2021). However, perhaps due to the short length of TikTok videos, mainstream #thatgirl content seems to be less nuanced, less diverse, and void of "behind the scenes" snippets.

While most of the comments under these videos are positive, pointing out that such content can fuel motivation, some users have pointed out that the ideals of #thatgirl may be unrealistic, or even "toxic". Indeed, such representations are likely not without consequences for the mental health of young people. Notably, Faelens et al. have found that passively consuming Instagram content in which the creator heavily curated their identity was associated with social comparison, and thus, a negative self-image (2021).

Considering the gap in the literature and the possible implications of the #thatgirl trend for wellbeing, I believe that what it promotes to young viewers should be better understood. Only then can we know whether it should be encouraged, avoided, or consumed cautiously.

Zahra Falahatpisheh: Social Media Adaptation: Analyzing the Challenges and Social Media Use Among International Students in Canada

The number of international students coming to Canada has increased considerably over the previous years to over one million students by the end of 2023. This means that Canada now has almost the same number of international students as the US, even though the US has a significantly larger population. These students come from diverse backgrounds and may face various challenges such as loneliness, language difficulties, and cultural differences, which can influence their adjustment. In this situation, social media platforms have become an important tool in dealing with these challenges by allowing them to connect to a community, maintain relationships with people back home, build relationships in their new environment, and share their experiences. These platforms facilitate seeking emotional, informational, and instrumental support that can help international students deal with the challenges and adjust to their new environment.

Therefore, this study explores the challenges international students at Western University face after coming to Canada and social media's role in helping them deal with these challenges. The theoretical framework of this study is based on the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory, which highlights the active role of individuals in choosing media platforms to satisfy their needs. Thus, this study aims to identify the main social media platforms used by international students at Western University, the motivations behind their use of social media platforms, the demographic factors influencing their preferences, and the types of social support (emotional, informational, and instrumental) they seek to facilitate their adjustment.

Most research in this context is done on international students in the US and China, and few have considered students in Canada. Considering the rising number of international students in Canada and the popularity of social media for international students when moving to a new cultural context, this study aims to address the existing gap. This study follows a quantitative approach, distributing a structured online survey to a representative sample of international students currently enrolled at Western University, stratified by their level of study (undergraduate, master's, and PhD). Descriptive and inferential statistics will be used to analyze data and test the relationships between social media use and social support.

The findings in this study will lead to a better understanding of how social media platforms support the social and cultural adjustment of international students in Canada. Furthermore, the findings in this study can help university administrators and support

services at Western University to tailor support programs based on the specific challenges that international students at this university face. This can help prioritize students' needs and challenges to allocate resources more effectively. Additionally, the results of this study can potentially lead to the development of digital tools and applications specifically designed to support international students.

Larrisa Miller: Unpopular on Reddit, Unpopular in General, Unpopular Here: r/TrueUnpopularOpinion as a Case Study of a Defensive Public in Action

This project serves as a case study of r/TrueUnpopularOpinion, a digital community that I theorize as a defensive public, per Jackson and Kreiss (2023). Defensive public theory expands traditional counterpublic theory by integrating social power into the analysis. Where the existing literature theorizes far left and far right movements as both counterpublic in nature, defensive public theory delineates publics "that stand in alignment with (rather than counter to) and seek to preserve the ordering of systems of inequality (p. 103)." At the time of writing, existing defensive public literature defines the concept but does not document a defensive public in action. The goal of this work is to a) fill this gap and b) explore how the subreddit's ecosystem impacts identity formation and community building amongst its members. r/TrueUnpopularOpinion is a community within the social media platform Reddit, which has been described as a space harboring anti-feminist, toxic technocultures that push users towards the far-right (Massanari 2017; Mamié et al. 2021). r/TrueUnpopularOpinion is a community that describes itself as "a space for civil discussion of unpopular opinions, free of some of the censorship found on many other subreddits" and has 143,000 members. This subreddit has been used as a case study in research on masculinity grievances (Hanson et al. 2022) and is regularly featured on r/AgainstHateSubreddits, a space used by Mamié et al. 2021 to source Alt-right subreddits. The r/AgainstHateSureddits subreddit states that its purpose is to "draw attention to reddit's contributions to the growing problem of radicalization on social media." Users share posts calling out the radicalized, hateful behavior that they find in other subreddits. r/TrueUnpopularOpinion is a space in which users believe their posted opinions are "unpopular," yet many actually align with dominant power structures: users claim "illegal immigrants aren't entitled to anything," "young men turned on gender equality because feminism is a failure that has collapsed into a freak show level of absurdity," "we can't reach gender equality because too many women can't bear it," "equity is bigotry against the capable," "disliking gypsies is normal," and more. Using Communalytic, I have collected 3,683 posts with 279,916 comments from r/TrueUnpopularOpinion ranging from 2/10/2024 to 7/26/24. Using a structural topic model on this textual data, thus far I have found that overarching topics of discussion include women-infidelity-slut-relationships, trump-biden-government-jews, and abortion-birth-autonomy; these topics are reflected in the aforementioned comments and typically indicate pushback against progressive social movements. As I further explore this data, I will examine the change of topics over time and use Critical Discourse Analysis to disentangle how users articulate their "unpopular" positions and their negotiations of community membership.

Dr. Gregory Brophy: "Copulative" Montage: Digital Cinema and the Videographic Essay

This presentation engages questions of digitization through a new form of digital scholarship, the videographic essay. Synchronized with a cultural moment in which increased access to, and compression of, digital media has allowed us to break down and reorganize the film object, the video essay is a dynamic medium for understanding the codes through which media culture is evolving and adapting.

Our presentation will feature a short video essay, entitled Our/Own/Devices. Venturing a mischievous engagement with the contemporary customs of slash or "shipping" fanvids, our video essay seizes on a moment of ecstatic openness in Spike Jonze's Her (2013) as an invitation to insert an ambivalent film history of technophilic desire and technophobic dread into the film's port. Drawing on Sergei Eisenstein's notion of "copulative" montage, we employ editing as a perverse technique of interpenetration and interpretation.

The video essay opens with a rough dub of Scarlett Johansson's voice over HAL's lip-reading sequence in 2001: A Space Odyssey. Eschewing any explanatory voice-over, our video montage relies on Johansson's vocal performance as its animating principle, her disembodied voice amplifying the erotic charge of a series of cinematic encounters with personified technologies in other AI films. In the decade since Her's release, this particular voice has taken on a much broader resonance, persisting in the culture as an idealized AI "personality." Johannson's performance in Her clearly provided the inspiration for the voice of "Sky," the chatbot featured in Sam Altman's ChatGPT 4.0 demo of May 2024. Just days after the demo's release, Johansson would call the voice "eerily similar" to her own. If her use of the term "eerie" is likely little more than cautiously euphemistic pre-litigation discourse, the term nonetheless evokes the "uncanny" media that Naomi Klein explores in her recent memoir, Doppelganger. The technical name for this emergent audio-visual culture is "synthetic media," a general term for data and media produced or manipulated through automated means, often with purpose of changing the original's meaning and misleading audiences.

If AI voids the integrity of the individual and its "intellectual property," it is reasonable to ask whether video essay techniques do not tend to inflict similar operations on the texts and voices that they incorporate. The work of breaking down the text and the subject is of course fundamental to intertextual analysis. The splicing and recombination of texts performs synthetic mediations of genre, canon, and tradition, thereby opening new pathways for generative, networked readings of cultural meanings. Videographic form's signature gesture is montage, a technique that aligns the form with Eisenstein's

understanding of the vital power of cinema to radically reorganize perception and experience. In this critical spirit, our presentation answers the spectacle of AI synthesis pitched in Jonze's film with an antithetical work of critical splicing. The former operation reifies corporate interests through synthetic media products rendered seductively smooth by homogenizing algorithms of desire. The latter employs montage to generate friction, shock, and provocative juxtaposition.

Stevie Paraskevopoulos: Becoming the Gamepad: The Video Game Genre's New Form of Immediacy

This paper explores the emergence of a new type of immediacy in cinema which is heavily present in the video-game style of film. It examines the history and definition of immediacy in art and media, arguing that modern, media-conscious audiences subconsciously demand a revised approach to realism in film in order to connect. Since spectators are now accustomed to various other media conventions or aesthetics, films that refer to those outside technologies cannot do so effectively with standard cinematic techniques. Taking what is suggested as "the video game genre of film," this paper examines how hypermediacy is put at the forefront of a new type of immediacy. Since video games involve interactivity, they arguably favour immediacy much more than film does. Directors like Tom Tykwer and The Wachoswkis leverage video game conventions, imitating this feeling of interactivity that video games possess. Techniques of remediation like the do-over or the avoidance of death are also used to further reinforce this connection to video games. This genre of film shifts audience's expectations and their pre-established notions of cinematic conventions, turning a movie into a faux video game instead. The immersive quality of cinema thus no longer depends on realism but the imitation of gameplay. Video games give its players a certain amount of agency through the ability to choose characters or decide story outcomes. In order to overcome this feat in cinema, video game movies favour character likability. Edgar Wright's Scott Pilgrim vs. The World (2010) or The Wachowskis The Matrix (1999), for instance, both include several admirable but humanly flawed characters to identify with. Even films with forced identification, such as Crank (2006) or Run Lola Run (1998), emulate action-adventure games where there is only one character option, then depending on impressive physical prowess to lure the viewer in. Finally, these hypermediated films feed on the video game's weakness being the lack of human expression. The use of real actors in a live-action film where emotional impact is much more explicit through close-up shots and other editing techniques fosters audience identification. Ultimately, this paper argues that cinema and film theory in general are beginning to adapt to heavy media consumption, which is proven through the cases of hypermediated video game films.

Daniel Liu: Inferential laundering and privacy in the digital age

Big Data, machine learning, and AI-powered algorithms have given rise to concerns over what Niko Kolodny has named "inferential laundering". To use his example, suppose that a doctor has a patient who is at risk of heart disease because of a smoking habit. It would be a violation of the patient's privacy for the doctor to share this information with a third party. But it may not be a violation for the doctor to share a different piece of information—that in general, people who have a smoking habit are at risk of heart disease—with the third party, even if the third party is aware of the patient's smoking habit and is able to infer from these two pieces of information that the patient is at risk of heart disease. In this example, the same information—that the patient is at risk of heart disease—is thought to be a violation of privacy if revealed outright, but not a violation if it is merely inferred. This is a case of inferential laundering.

Inferential laundering is a growing worry in the age of digital and social media, because the algorithms that power them are able to build highly detailed profiles of individual users on the basis of seemingly innocuous information. Given enough interactions, these algorithms are capable of discerning what we take to be sensitive and private details about our lives that we never intended to share. If inferential laundering is valid, that seems to leave us with the unpleasant conclusion that such algorithms do not violate our privacy at all when they do such things.

My aim here is therefore to criticize the argument for inferential laundering. Specifically, I dispute a necessary premise of inferential laundering, that an inference cannot violate privacy so long as all the information the inference is based upon does not violate privacy. I begin by assessing existing theories on the nature of privacy. This includes theories of privacy as being derivative of other rights, as control over information, as well as Helen Nissenbaum's (2004) contextual integrity theory of privacy. I argue that all three, at least in their traditional forms, are unable to show why inferential laundering is problematic. In part, by showing that existing theories struggle, I hope to motivate inferential laundering as a difficult problem worth addressing from a theoretical basis. This leads me to present a modified version of contextual integrity theory under which inferential laundering violates what I call norms of acquisition. Though contextual integrity theory may still face criticisms from other directions, this modified version is our best available framework for understanding the problem with the pervasive reach of digital media and AI algorithms into the intimate side of our lives that we have not chosen to share.

Samantha Puzzi: Transaction-Sorted Geographies: Transactional Data and Spatial Control

Recent decades have seen an explosion in the gathering and sale of transactional data, and with it an increased concern about the privacy and autonomy of consumers. While existing literature tracks the historical growth of transactional data and argues that big data practices contain a distinctly disciplinary element, few analyses explore the spatial implications of these practices and the potential for a uniquely geographic component to consumer discipline based on spending records. This paper takes up this task and investigates the spatial concerns attached to the gathering and sale of transactional data by expanding on Lana Swartz's concept of "transaction-sorted geographies." In a short, anecdotal article, Swartz presents the idea that technologies of money are linked to individual-level mobility through a discussion of wallet apps on mobile phones. Despite not providing commentary on the normative problems attached to the idea of transaction-sorted geographies, Swartz presents the crucial and understudied insight that there are important linkages to be uncovered between mobile payment platforms, big data, and movement through physical space. Wallet apps are only a small fraction of this story, and this paper provides a more robust—and more firmly normative—account of transaction-sorted geographies given the transactional data activities of credit card companies and mobile payment platforms and their attachments to mapping apps and location-based marketing practices.

To do this, I connect the literatures on transactional data, data surveillance, and urban walking. I argue that the collection of transactional data and its use in digital marketing disciplines consumers spatially, or constrains their everyday movements through physical space. The paper's first part emphasizes key innovations in the growth of transactional data, highlighting the importance of credit cards companies and mobile payment platforms. The paper's second part discusses how transactional data activities connect to the broader literatures on panoptic and modular data surveillance and argues that a knowledge-power logic is valuable for understanding the impacts of transactional data monetization on consumers. Segueing between the paper's second and third parts, I argue that Foucauldian security, concerned with regulating circulation, provides a useful resource for thinking about the normative concerns attached to transaction-sorted geographies. The paper's final part describes the spatial implications of the connection between transactional data and consumer control, especially that mediated by mobile technologies which collect live location data. I discuss the use of transactional data in digital marketing strategies with distinctly geographic elements, including GIS marketing analysis, geofencing, and the monetization of ads on mapping apps, connecting these

practices to the literature on urban walking in order to raise normative concerns surrounding transactional data based on questions of freedom of movement.

Matthew Valiquette: Technological Freedom in the Age of Big Data

Should privacy concerns guide regulations aimed at protecting autonomy in the age of digital technologies? How should we protect autonomy, if infringements on privacy increasingly threaten to undermine rational deliberation? There is little doubt in the literature that privacy is of major concern. Of the arguments put forward, some say that privacy is important, not just because it protects people from unwarranted interference, but because it is required for autonomy. The problem is that privacy is increasingly encroached upon by digital technologies, in ways that seem to threaten people's capacity for self-determination. It is also becoming increasingly difficult to secure people's right to privacy: notice-and-consent models that limit unwarranted interference are failing; the boundaries of what is accessible to the public eye are expanding; and the malleability and uncertainty of people's privacy concerns are increasingly subject to exploitation by design. This leads to an impasse. If privacy is required for autonomy, but digital technologies continue to encroach on personal information, how do we protect autonomy for digital service users?

If autonomy is of concern, I do not think we should focus on creating regulations that protect privacy as a form of non-interference. The reasons for this are fourfold. First, it is unclear that contemporary privacy theories give sufficient guidance on when infringements on privacy are warranted; authors index the permissibility of privacy interferences to social norms and reasonable expectations, yet this fails to account for how digital technologies change the normative landscape. Second, digital technologies only exacerbate the uncertainty and malleability of people's privacy preferences, suggesting that privacy is not necessarily the best source of intervention for strengthening autonomy online. Third, it is unclear that privacy is required for autonomy, nor that a lack of privacy is necessarily harmful to autonomy, since many cases seem to suggest the opposite. Last, the real threat to autonomy seems to be manipulation, as opposed to infringements on privacy tout court, suggesting that our focus should not be on creating regulations that limit informational and decisional interference, but that limit hidden influence.

From this, I will argue that we should instead focus on creating regulations aimed at 'technological freedom', inspired from Philip Pettit's account of freedom as non-domination. The concern for digital autonomy is not so much that increasing amounts of personal and decisional information are accessible full stop, but that there exists a dearth of institutional constraints protecting people from the opportunity for arbitrary interference, insofar as tech companies and commercial enterprises are not forced to track the best interests of users whose information is repurposed and analyzed by big data-driven technologies. I will argue that protecting individuals from the opportunity for

arbitrary interference offers a better path towards the conditions required to strengthen autonomy online. This is because an account of non-domination can: (1) more clearly explain when privacy interferences are warranted; (2) account for the intuitions of contemporary privacy theories without succumbing to their shortcomings; and (3) secure the conditions truly required for democratic self-government and autonomy.

Taylor Brethauer: "Do You Want to Tell the Vlog?": Exploitation on Family Vlog Channels and What Can Be Done to Protect Children

Social media has provided numerous opportunities for monetary gain through influencer culture, brand deals, and sponsored video blogs. A subculture within the realm of social media influencers are family vlog channels or "mommy vloggers." In recent years, news about the children featured on these channels has been difficult to hear – reports of mistreatment, exploitation, objectification, and alienation are common as the former child stars speak out.

Through the lens of media studies, children's media, and child psychology, this presentation investigates the manner in which this growing problem should be challenged. Using Albert Bandura's social learning theory and David Gauntlett's theories of identities, I plan on dissecting the long-term effects of children being heavily featured in digital media from birth through adolescence. By way of content analysis, I will be looking at first-hand accounts of teens and young adults previously featured on vlog channels and the channels themselves. It is a sad truth that children popularized on the Internet for views and sponsorships are stuck in an ever-present predicament: the production never stops because the camera is always on. Their home and day-to-day life is the set. Without being given the choice, they become entities in family vlogs and the performance never stops.

Legislation has started to pick up steam in a few states, at least in regards to the financial side of the business. As recently as this year, states have begun amending their child labor laws in order to allow children to be properly compensated for their appearances on monetized videos. I argue that these rulings indicate a significant reassessment of how digital media is affecting our youth and their personal, social, and mental well-being, especially in front of the camera. This presentation, by exploring the social and cultural implications of digital media's role in the day-to-day lives of children, will illuminate the rarely acknowledged issue of family vlog channels.

C Icart: We need to care: foregrounding care in data justice activism

Law enforcement and governments can and have been scouring social media to collect information about people. Advancements in facial recognition technologies enable them to capture individuals' biometric data (Digital Rights Watch, 2023). This is an invasion of privacy and can lead to retaliation against people in the photos. The rest of being identifiable in protest photos online has been a concern for activists involved in protests against the ongoing genocide in Palestine. Digital Rights Watch recommends "concealing people's faces in your protest material" as "an important form of digital community care." This is an important perspective to data rights. How-to articles about how to protect your personal data online abound. But what about other people's data that we may be inadvertently collecting and sharing? Amidst a genocide and an ongoing pandemic, the question of what we owe each other is crucial. According to sociologist Eman Abdelhadi (2023), "we owe Gaza endurance." According to Digital Rights Watch (2023), we owe protestors "digital community care." This paper explores the concept of "digital community care" and how an ethic of care is central to data justice and data rights. Drawing on insights about care from disability justice scholars and activists, I argue that caring about and for each other online is primordial when it comes to resisting the harms of dataveillance. I argue that centring care is fundamental to building resilient activist communities online and rejecting hyperindividualistic attitudes and practices. To do so, I first turn to disability justice scholars and activists to define care, then I place those concepts and insights in conversation with existing challenges activists face when it comes to dataveillance. Finally, I demonstrate how digital safety is a public health issue. Questions of liberation, safety, and data justice are not for individuals to solve for themselves. We need each other, and what if that was not that bad?

Dr. Genner Llanes-Ortiz: Digital indigeneities: Recrafting technologies for the next 7 generations

Common theoretical approaches to the transformations introduced by information and communication technologies in various societies often problematize the continuous, fast-moving emergence of "digital cultures" (Bollmer, 2018, among others), frequently leaning on a subtle technologically deterministic perspective. In contrast, a different current of scholarship (exemplified by the work of dana boyd, 2014, and Daniel Miller et al., 2016), argues that it is humans who shape the incorporation and direction of these technologies, often in unexpected ways. Since the turn of the century, a similar viewpoint has been adopted by scholars working with Indigenous peoples (Landzelius, 2006; De la Garza, 2016; Srinivasan and Fish, 2017, among others), as well as by Indigenous scholars themselves (Cajete, 2000; Galla, 2018; Lewis et al., 2018; GIDA, 2019; IP AI, 2019; among others). In this paper, I will discuss how Indigenous communities and individuals are recrafting digital technologies—a process I refer to as "digital indigeneities," following other Indigenous thinkers. On one hand, these efforts are often constrained by colonial legacies, infrastructural inequalities, and powerful corporate interests. On the other hand, these Indigenous practices demonstrate remarkable agency and resourcefulness, particularly by leveraging the multimodal affinities between digital technologies and Indigenous knowledge systems. These are exemplified by how Indigenous communities and individuals seek to define and occupy digital territories, to expand storytelling repertoires, to uphold data sovereignty, or to Indigenize algorithmic principles. These contributions clearly call for a complex theorization of Indigenous agency in creative tension with multiple forms of digital affordance, which my research on Indigenous digital activism is particularly interested in. Through these processes, Indigenous practitioners do not merely adopt and integrate external digital tools, techniques, and methods into their longstanding practices; they also transform and expand them to ensure the continuity of Indigenous cultures, languages and forms of knowledge for the next seven generations.