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Seminar Datafication and its Discontents

Module Communication, Media and Society
Thursday, 1 to 3 pm, Nikolaistr. 1.01
(Last modified: 22 August 2022)

MOODLE course: https://moodle2.uni-leipzig.de/course/view.php?id=39349

Module: Communication, Media and Society

The module deals with the structural conditions and consequences of media development in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of public communication as a special form of social communication. At the outset, media systems and structures as well as the social conditions that shape them will be analyzed. This includes institutional structures, legal and political conditions, economic imperatives and impact, social norms, history and technical innovations. At the same time, the effects of the media society on social sub-areas such as politics, economy and culture are of interest. To this end, the basic features of the media system with a focus on media policy, law, ethics, economics, media culture and media design as well as intercultural communication are the subject of the courses.

Aims of the seminar

The seminar will focus on the datafication of everything, that is, the increasing and pervasive transformation of all things people do and say into digital format that can be quantified and calculated. Next to thinking about the requirements for this process and its historic formation, the seminar will focus on the consequences of this transformation and possible reactions and tactics to limit or impede data from taking command.

The seminar is designed as a reading and discussion seminar. Students will acquire a critical understanding of date-based societies and gain a deeper insight into their basic elements. They will learn about media and communication science approaches and problems in dealing with questions of connectivity, algorithmization, and profound mediatization. Students practice the transfer of these conceptual foundations into individual areas of action and life. Furthermore, students train teamwork, scientific work and presentation skills.

Participation

The seminar will supposedly mostly be held offline and will include synchronous and asynchronous elements. The ZOOM room will be announced later.

Task of all seminar participants:

Three days before the seminar date, all participants upload the tasks required for the respective event into the MOODLE course of the seminar. For more details see the respective session descriptions.

Task of the expert groups: The expert groups should

a) give a short professional input of max. 20 minutes to selected sessions, which explains the respective horizon of the topic in more detail or introduces further case studies from the respective area (so please DO NOT reproduce the seminar texts, these can be assumed to be known!) For this purpose, please write a short position paper and subsequent minutes of the meeting!

b) formulate further questions and lead a discussion lasting about 30 minutes.

Examination

The examination regulations of the M.A. KMW require a term paper for the successful completion of the module Communication, Media and Society (06-005-551). The duration of the term paper is six weeks. Group work is possible after consultation with the lecturers; the contribution of the individual participants must be clearly recognizable and assessable. The examination regulations do not stipulate a minimum and maximum value for the scope of homework, as this depends on the topic and the question.

Within the module Communication, Media and Society (06-005-551) two seminars have to be attended: Seminar I with Prof. Dr. Patrick Donges or Dr. Kefa Hamidi, Seminar II with Prof. Dr. Christian Pentzold. We will assign in which of the seminars you will write your term paper. However, you can indicate your preferences. Please write an e-mail with your name and the seminar in which you would like to write your term paper to Ms. Nixdorf (nixdorf@uni-leipzig.de) no later than Monday, December 19, 2022. You will receive a notification on December 21, 2022, in which of the two seminars you will write your term paper. We ask for your understanding in advance that we may not be able to consider all first preferences, depending on demand.

The deadline for all term papers is Friday, March 17, 2023. You will receive further information on the content and form of the term papers from the seminar instructors in which you are writing your term paper.

Program

| 13 Oct 2022 | **Introduction to the seminar, organization** |

| 20 Oct 2022 | **Task: My Data Footprint** |

All participants: Think – where are you leaving data traces throughout a normal semester day? Document your traces and write a short reflection about the types of data you are leaving (voluntary – involuntary; consciously – unconsciously) and your ability to negotiate the terms of data collection (300 words). Please upload your reflection until 18 Oct 2022 (to MOODLE)

Hepp, A. et al. (2018): Digital Traces in Context. *International Journal of Communication, 12*. https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/8650

Sharon, T. & Zandbergen, D. (2017): From data fetishism to quantifying selves: self-tracking practices and the other values of data. *New Media & Society, 19*(11): 1695–1709.

| 27 Oct 2022 | **What are data? What is datafication?** (asynchronous, MOODLE course) |

Borgman, C. (2015): *Big Data, Little Data, No Data*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. (Chapter 2)

Gitelman, L. & Jackson, V. (2013): Introduction. In: Gitelman, L. (ed), *"Raw Data" is an Oxymoron.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

3 Nov 2022   *Christian is travelling*

10 Nov 2022   **Datafied Society** (expert group 1)

Van Es, K. & Schäfer, M. (2017): New Brave World. In: Schäfer, M. & Van Es, K. (eds), *The Datafied Society*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Burgess, J. et al. (2022): *Everyday Data Cultures*. Cambridge: Polity.

Expert group 1: Present – What is the datafied society? What is datafied live? On what do they rest? Who is part of them (and who is not)?

Expert group 1: Please upload your contribution (1,000 words) to MOODLE (until 8 Nov 2022)! Please also upload the minutes of the meeting to MOODLE until 15 Nov 2022.

17 Nov 2022   **Datafied Selves** (expert group 2)

Hearn, A. (2017): Verified: Self-presentation, Identity Management, and Selfhood in the Age of Big Data. *Popular Communication, 15*(2), 62-77.

Cheney-Lippold, J. (2017): *We are Data.* New York: New York University Press. (Chapter 1)

Expert group 2: Present – What are datafied selves? What does datafication to do the way people present themselves, think about themselves, and connect with others?

Expert group 2: Please upload your contribution (1,000 words) to MOODLE (until 15 Nov 2022)! Please also upload the minutes of the meeting to MOODLE until 23 Nov 2022.

24 Nov 2022   **Dataveillance** (expert group 3)

Lyon, D. (2014): Surveillance, Snowden, and Big Data. *Big Data & Society.*
https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/2053951714541861

Van Dijck, J. (2014): Datafication, dataism, and dataveillance. *Surveillance & Society.*
https://ojs.library.queensu.ca/index.php/surveillance-and-society/article/view/4776

Zuboff, S. (2019): *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*. New York: Profile Books (Introduction)

Expert group 3: Present – What is dataveillance? Why is it done? Why should it be rejected? How can it be counter-acted?

Expert group 3: Please upload your contribution (1,000 words) to MOODLE (until 22 Nov 2022)! Please also upload the minutes of the meeting to MOODLE until 30 Nov 2022.

1 Dec 2022   **Critiquing Datafication**

Crawford, K: (2021). *Atlas of A.I.* New Haven: Yale University Press (Chapter 3)

Couldry, N., & Meijas, U (2018): Data Colonialism. *Television & New Media.*
https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1527476418796632?journalCode=tvna

boyd, d. & Crawford, K. (2012): Critical Questions for Big Data. *Information, Communication & Society, 15*(5), 622-679.

8 Dec 2022   **Reading week: Fighting Datafication**

Beraldo, D., & Milan, S. (2019, July/December). From data politics to the contentious politics of data. *Big Data & Society*, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1177/2053951719885967

Schrock, A. R. (2016). Civic hacking as data activism and advocacy: A history from publicity to open government data. *New Media & Society, 18(*4), 581–599. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444816629469

Lehtiniemi, T, Ruckenstein, M (2019) The social imaginaries of data activism. *Big Data & Society* 6(1): 1–12.

All seminar participants: Prepare a short essay(1,000 words) and answer the following questions: What can data fairness look like? How can it be achieved? What are examples of data activism? How can it be successful? Please upload your contributions to MOODLE (until 13 Dec 2022).

15 Dec 2022 **Escaping Datafication**

Kaun, A. (2021): Ways of seeing digital disconnection: A negative sociology of digital culture. *Convergence, 27*(6), 1571-1583.

Kuntsman, A. & Miyake, E. (2019): The paradox and continuum of digital disengagement: denaturalising digital sociality and technological connectivity. *Media, Culture & Society 41*(6): 901–913.

5 Jan 2023 **Data from the South**

Arora, P. (2016). Bottom of the Pyramid: Big data and the global south. *International Journal of Communication,10.* https://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/download/4297/1616

Milan, S., & Treré, E. (2019). Big data from the south(s): Beyond data universalism. *Television & New Media, 20*(4), 319–335. https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476419837739

Lim, M. (2020) The politics and perils of dis/connection in the global south. *Media, Culture & Society, 42*(4), 618-625

12 Jan 2023 **Big Data, Media, and the Public Imagination**

Beer, D. (2018): *The Data Gaze.* London et al.: Sage (Chapter 1).

Couldry, N., & Jun, Y. (2018): Deconstructing datafication's brave new world. *New Media & Society, 20*(12), 4473-4491.

Pentzold, C. et al. (2019): Imagining Big Data: Illustrations of 'Big Data' in US News Articles, 2010–2016. *New Media & Society, 21*(1), 139-167.

19 Jan 2023 and 26 Jan 2023

Topics to be decided

2 Feb 2023 **Discussion of term paper ideas, open questions**