

# CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Published 01 September 2023

## BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

Our conference aims to provide fantastic opportunities and spaces for our members to meet, showcase work and debate current issues facing STIS researchers. The main theme this year is 'Disruption' and all presentations, panels and alternative format sessions work in some way with this.

[AsSIST-UK Conference Planning Team](#)  
Manchester Alliance Business School, UK

# AsSIST-UK: DISruption Conference 2023

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Alliance Manchester Business School, Booth St W, Manchester, M15 6PB, UK  
4 and 5 September 2023

## The AsSIST-UK Conference Planning Team

There will always be someone available in the central area of the venue (where the registration desk is) throughout the conference if you need to come and find us.



Louise Elstow, Lancaster University  
(Conference Planning Team Convenor)



Robin Williams, Edinburgh University  
(Chair of AsSIST-UK)



Julia Kasmire, Manchester University



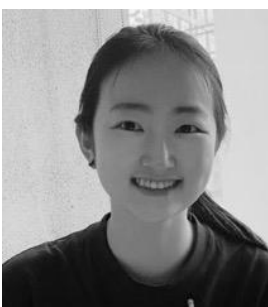
Jenn Chubb, University of York



Kieron Flanagan, Manchester University



Matjaz Vidmar, University of Edinburgh



Xiao Yang, University of Edinburgh









Katerina Psarikidou, University of  
Sussex

Artwork on front cover: KETHERCORTEX (2023)

## DISruption sub-themes:

This year's conference is all about disruption. Various sub-themes run through the conference – so we have indicated for each of the speaker sessions which two sub-themes they most align to help you find the sessions which are of most interest to you

Governance and engagement	
Futures and imaginaries	
Energy and environments	
Disruptive technologies	
Spaces and places	
Bodies and societies	

## Rooms

The rooms are indicated on the schedule overview on pages 3 and 4.

- Registration – second floor reception desk
- 2.008 Main room for keynote speech, prize giving and plenary panel (theatre style)
- 3.004 Central common area for networking and drinks/refreshments
- 3.006a (cabaret/classroom for 90, or theatre for 100)
- 3.006b (cabaret/classroom for 30, or theatre for 60)
- 3.008 (cabaret/classroom for 30, or theatre for 60)

Each session will be allocated technical support throughout the conference to help connect you to the IT and projection/screen network. The rooms will be set up as a standard classroom layout with access to connect to a TV screen / projector. Please flag in advance if you need something special for the room set up.

- **Panel / presentation sessions:** Hosts will need to arrange the front to accommodate their session's speakers. They should check their room and get it set up in the break before their session if needed.
- **Alternative format sessions:** Hosts are responsible for bringing any additional equipment needed for their own session and must set up in the break before their slot. If the layout of the room is changed by the host, the room should be put back to its previous layout at the end of the session.

## Refreshments

- We have built time for drinks and refreshments into the programme, accommodating dietary requirements as indicated on during the booking process.
- Drinks and refreshments are clearly indicated on the programme where they are provided as part of the conference.
- Outside these times, if you need something to eat and drink, there is a café on the ground floor of the building by the entrance, and various cafes and bars on the same block, where you can buy a range of different snacks and drinks.
- There are water fountains throughout the building – please bring your own bottle to fill up.

## Toilets

There are toilets clearly indicated on each floor.

## Lifts

There are lifts available to each floor.

# Conference Schedule Overview

## Day 1: Monday 4 September 2023


1200	1 hr	<p><b>Arrival and registration – Second Floor Registration Desk at top of stairs</b></p> <p><b>Drinks and light snacks – Upstairs in third floor central area (3.004)</b></p>		
1300	1 hr	<p><b>Session 1A, Room 2.008:</b></p> <p><b>The organised irresponsibility of generative artificial intelligence</b></p> <p>Host: Jack Stilgoe</p> <p>Speakers: Jack Stilgoe, James Stewart and Vasillis Galanos</p>		
1400	15 mins	<p><b>15 mins to move, network and take a break – No drinks provided</b></p>		
1415	1 hr	<p><b>Session 2A, Room 3.006a:</b></p> <p><b>Exploring the Coevolution of Autonomous Systems, disruption of “core activities” and Regulation</b></p> <p>Host: Andrey M. Elizondo</p> <p>Speakers: Andrey M. Elizondo, Stuart Anderson and Robin Williams</p>	<p><b>Session 2B, Room 3006b:</b></p> <p><b>Digital Livestock Technologies: Beastly Disruption or Responsible Transformation in Animal Agriculture?</b></p> <p>Hosts: H. Williamson &amp; S. Hartley</p> <p>HW &amp; SH - Shaping responsible digital transformations in animal agriculture: Public and stakeholder perceptions of Digital Livestock Technologies</p> <p>Camille Bellet &amp; Emily Kathryn Morgan - Engaging the senses with cows through technological encounters on the farm</p> <p>Kin Wing (Ray) Chan - Mapping the geographies of adopting digital technologies and power dynamics in the pig farming industry in China</p>	<p><b>Session 2C, Room 3.008:</b></p> <p><b>Workshop:</b></p> <p><b>Disrupting traditional research questions, methods and analyses</b></p> <p><b>Host: Julia Kasmire</b></p>
1515	1 hr	<p><b>Session 3: Welcome by Robin Williams, Chair of AsSIST-UK</b></p> <p><b>Keynote Speech: Maja Horst, President of EASST</b></p> <p><b>Room 2.008</b></p>		
1615	15 mins	<p><b>15 mins to move, network and take a break – Drinks provided (3.004)</b></p>		
1630	1 hr	<p><b>Session 4A, Room 3.006b:</b></p> <p><b>Otherwise in Healthcare</b></p> <p>Lead: Choon Key Chekar</p> <p>Choon Key Chekar: Biographical disruptions in UK doctor's training and placement: still gendered and increasingly more classed?</p> <p>Catherine Montgomery: Disruptive otherising in critical care research: A ludic approach to data-driven futures</p> <p>Jarmo De Vries: Platform Genomics: Disrupting and transforming NHS England's genetic testing services.</p>	<p><b>Session 4B, Room 3.008:</b></p> <p><b>Modelling disruption &amp; disrupting models</b></p> <p>Lead: Salma Elrouby</p> <p>Salma Elrouby: Lockdown, Quarantine, and Social Distancing, and Methods of Spatial Analysis in cities</p> <p>Les Levidow: EcoSol-agroecology initiatives in South America: counter-hegemonic adaptation to Covid-19 disruption</p> <p>Rolien Hoyng: Modeling Disruption: From Climate Models to Smart Farms</p>	<p><b>Session 4C, Room 3.006a:</b></p> <p><b>Disrupting Music</b></p> <p>Hyojung Sun and James Stewart</p> <p>Disruption: Lessons from the Music Industry</p>
1730	1 hr	<p><b>Informal networking, drinks and canapés reception</b></p> <p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> Floor: The Hive</b></p>		<p><b>Session 4D Room 3.006a:</b></p> <p><b>Alt. format</b></p> <p><b>Disrupting the Class, Corrupting the Youth: The Internet Studies Rap DJ Set</b></p> <p><b>DJ: Vassilis Galanos**</b></p>

## Day 2: Tuesday 5 September 2023


0930	1 hr	<p><b>Session 5A, Room 3.006a: Concepts for Digital Disruption</b></p> <p>Host: Yuhan Wang</p> <p>Yuhan Wang: Platformisation or WeChatlisation? A disruptive path to a platform society</p> <p>Neil Pollock: After Hype: The Business of Taming the Digital Economy</p>	<p><b>Session 5B, Room 3.006b: Governing Disruption</b></p> <p>Host: Jake Barnes</p> <p>Andy Yuille: Neighbourhood planning: disrupting the expert-agency coupling?</p> <p>Jake Barnes: Governing through disruption? Net zero and the UK government's response to Russia's war in Ukraine</p> <p>Andrew MacDonald: "Sometimes you just need to make a lot of noise!": Disruptive youth climate protest as a response to disrupted futures.</p>	<p><b>Session 5C, 3.008:</b></p> <p><b>Alt. format</b></p> <p><b>AsSIST-UK ECR Workshop - How to Write Research Questions</b></p> <p><b>Host: Julia Kasmire</b></p>
1030	20 mins	<b>COFFEE BREAK: Chance for a leg stretch, plus publishers' stalls – Drinks provided (3.004)</b>		
1050	1 hr 10 mins	<p><b>7A, Room 3.006b:</b></p> <p><b>Alt. Format</b></p> <p><b>Meet the publishers and Authors</b></p> <p><b>Facilitated by Katerina Psarikidou</b></p>	<p><b>Session 7B, Room 3.008:</b></p> <p><b>Workshop:</b></p> <p><b>Disruptive Hillside and Bracken - Accounting for trees in the Welsh mountains</b></p> <p><b>Hosts: Louise Elstow &amp; Jenny Knight</b></p>	
1200	1 hr 10 mins	<p><b>LUNCH BREAK – Food and drinks provided (3.004)</b></p> <p><b>Publishers' stalls, sign up to Rent-a-mentor slots</b></p> <p><b>8B: Poster session (3.004)</b></p> <p><b>8A: Academic Speed Dating (3.004)</b></p>		
1310	1 hr	<p><b>Session 9A, Room 3.006a: The Discomfort at the Heart of Innovating Responsibly</b></p> <p>Host: Stephen Hughes</p> <p>Jack Stilgoe: Slow AI - new possibilities for analysis and action</p> <p>Andrés Domínguez: Mobilising STS in Computer Science: Insights from addressing ethical issues in algorithmic (mis)information classification</p> <p>Stephen Hughes: Disruptive Feelings: Saying, "No" to Innovators</p>	<p><b>Session 9B, Room 3.006b: Changing Systems</b></p> <p>Host: Matjaz Vidmar</p> <p>Matjaz Vidmar: Open Engineering: Missing link between science and innovation</p> <p>Les Levidow: Beyond techno-market fixes: disrupting system continuity, counterposing system change</p> <p>Laurie Waller: Demos in flux? How demonstrators of carbon removal disrupt the 'project polity'</p>	<p><b>Session 9C, Room 3.008:</b></p> <p><b>Alt. format:</b></p> <p><b>Disrupting 'Disruption' with LEGO Serious Play</b></p> <p><b>Host: Stevienna de Saille</b></p>
1410	15 mins	<b>BREAK – No drinks provided</b>		
1425	45 mins	<p><b>Session 10A, Room 3.006b: Conversations on Disruptive Infrastructure</b></p> <p>Lead: David Seibt</p> <p>David Seibt: Debunking Disruption: Scenarios of Platformization in Emerging, Stable, and Transforming Fields</p> <p>Ola Michalec: Old Grid, New Grid: how disruptive is digitalisation of the energy industry?</p>	<p><b>Session 10B, Room 3.008:</b></p> <p><b>Technological disruptions and gentle modifications in the infrastructures of care</b></p> <p>Christine Hine</p>	<p><b>Session 10C Central Area 3.004: Rent-a-mentor</b></p>
1510	20 mins	<b>20 mins – refreshments provided move and break</b>		
1530	1 hr 10	<p><b>Session 11, Room 2.008:</b></p> <p><b>Plenary Panel - Disruptive futures, incl. Alan Irwin, Lu Gao and Jack Snape</b></p> <p><b>Hosted by Alan Irwin</b></p>		
1640	20 mins	<p><b>Session 12: Andrew Webster Prize Winner announcement and conference close, Room 2.008.</b></p> <p><b>Robin Williams and Conference Committee</b></p>		

## DAY 1: 4 September 2023, Detailed Schedule



### 1A (Panel): The organised irresponsibility of generative artificial intelligence

Presenters	Title	Keywords	Sub-themes
<b>HOST: Jack Stilgoe (UCL)</b> <b>Jack Stilgoe (UCL) and James Stewart (Edinburgh)</b>	<i>The organised irresponsibility of generative artificial intelligence</i>	<b>AI; governance; responsible innovation;</b>	
<p>The proliferation of excitement, investment, experimentation and concern around generative AI is accompanied by corporate and policy talk of 'responsible AI', 'responsible innovation' or 'responsible development of AI'. If there is to be any hope of bringing AI under control, we should interrogate what its current social and technical dynamics mean in terms of responsibility. A cursory map of issues involving the performance, processes, purposes, people and provenance of AI systems suggests new forms of organised irresponsibility. This promised 'disruptive' technology may, in the final reckoning, be inequitably disruptive, disrupting only the already powerless, while cementing the status of the powerful. What are the prospects for STS to inform a discussion about responsible innovation that connects research and invention to regulation and social movements? I'd like to bring together a panel for some programmatic discussions on the conceptual and methodological tools that we have and the tools that we need if we're going to make a different.</p>			



### 2A (Panel): Exploring the Coevolution of Autonomous Systems, disruption of "core activities" and Regulation

Presenters	Title	Keywords	Sub-themes
<b>HOST: Andrey M. Elizondo (All Edinburgh)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Stuart Anderson</b></li> <li>• <b>Robin Williams</b></li> </ul>	<i>Exploring the Coevolution of Autonomous Systems, disruption of "core activities" and Regulation</i>	<b>Disruption, autonomous systems, highly regulated environments, regulation, coevolution</b>	
<p>Autonomous systems are widely acknowledged to have the potential to disrupt various human activities, including logistics, healthcare, transport, financial services, and journalism. This potential has attracted substantial and sustained investments from innovators, entrepreneurs, and established companies such as Alphabet, Meta, and Amazon. Unlike previous disruptive innovations like Airbnb, Uber, and Amazon, which often targeted under-regulated sectors or aimed to circumvent costly regulatory aspects, autonomous systems have the capability to disrupt core activities in highly regulated sectors like health, transport, and finance.</p> <p>However, the evolution of autonomous systems and their regulation tends to occur gradually, reflecting the emergence and establishment of complex sociotechnical dynamics that are challenging to anticipate. This poses a unique relationship between disruption and regulation, as previous disruptive innovations sought to avoid regulation while autonomous systems are disrupting activities in heavily regulated sectors. In this panel, we aim to explore the intricate relationship between disruption and regulation in the context of autonomous systems. Specifically, we will examine how disruption and regulation coevolve as innovation becomes integrated into existing business practices.</p>			

## 2B (Panel): Digital Livestock Technologies: Bestly Disruption or Responsible Transformation in Animal Agriculture?

Presenters	Title	Keywords	Sub-themes
Hugh Williamson & Sarah Hartley (Exeter), Kin Wing (Ray) Chan (Exeter), Camille Bellet (Man. Univ.)	<i>Digital Livestock Technologies: Bestly Disruption or Responsible Transformation in Animal Agriculture?</i>	Digital Transformation; Data; Responsible Research & Innovation; Agriculture; Animals	 
<p>Digital Livestock Technologies have been positioned as offering radical new possibilities for improving the productivity, efficiency and sustainability of animal agriculture. A range of digital technologies are already established in livestock farming settings, from large-scale robotic milking infrastructures to diverse sensing and imaging technologies, and many more are on the horizon. Moreover, data produced by digital technologies on farms is increasingly understood as an object of value for a number of practical and commercial domains, including not only farm and animal management but also animal breeding and the monitoring and governance of food supply chains. Together with the possibilities afforded by AI and machine learning to extract additional value from diverse data sources, often in unpredictable ways, this digital transformation holds the potential to significantly disrupt existing patterns of practices and relations in animal farming in different geographical contexts, among human actors and between humans and non-human animals.</p> <p>Scholars in STS and Responsible Research and Innovation have begun to identify a range of potential social and ethical implications for both people and non-human animals resulting from the use of Digital Livestock Technologies. Researchers have also raised questions about how digital transformations in animal agriculture can be implemented and governed responsibly. This panel will bring together experts on the social, ethical and governance implications of Digital Livestock Technologies to compare case studies of how digital technologies are being implemented and with what effects, discuss stakeholder and public perceptions of digital transformation in animal agriculture, and analyse the possibilities for governance and co-production of these transformations. The panel will take the form of 10 minute presentations by speakers, with questions, followed by a panel discussion.</p> <p>H. Williamson &amp; S. Hartley: Shaping responsible digital transformations in animal agriculture: Public &amp; stakeholder perceptions of Digital Livestock Technologies</p> <p>Camille Bellet and Emily Kathryn Morgan - Engaging the senses with cows through technological encounters on the farm</p> <p>Kin Wing (Ray) Chan - Mapping the geographies of adopting digital technologies and power dynamics in the pig farming industry in China</p>			

## 2C (Workshop): Disrupting traditional research questions, methods and analyses

Presenters	Title	Keywords	
Julia Kasmire (Manchester)	<i>Disrupting traditional research questions, methods and analyses</i>	computational social science, AI, machine learning, text-mining, agent-based modelling	 
<p>Many established fields have standard ways to go about research, which may include oft-unspoken rules about what kinds of questions researchers are "allowed" to ask or the methods they are "supposed" to use. Although such traditional research questions and methods are valuable and should be well-understood by researchers, there are clear gains to be made by disrupting the tradition. Recently developed tools, methods or analyses can contribute to the development of the field by adding to the repertoire available to researchers. Further, and perhaps more importantly, they also have the potential to disrupt the traditions of the field by allowing researchers to ask entirely new research questions, to approach classic questions in novel ways, and to open up established knowledge to re-analysis through innovative interpretations. This proposal is for an interactive workshop in which several new methods are introduced to participants before breaking into small groups to discuss how they might be applied in disruptive ways.</p>			

### Session 3: Keynote Speech *Disruption as narrative*, by Maja Horst

Prompted by contemporary narratives about disruption, this presentation will reflect on how collective narratives serve as sense-making tools. Narratives enable us to understand the world, help us form and maintain identity and suggest ways of interpreting both technologies and the role of science in society. The talk will draw particularly on resources from rhetoric, cultural theory and controversy studies.

#### Maja Horst, Dean of Arts at Aarhus University and President of EASST

Previously Maja has been Professor of Responsible Technology at the Technical University of Denmark and Professor of Science Communication at the University of Copenhagen. Her research focuses on controversies about emerging science and technology, responsible research and innovation, public engagement with science, management and communication of research. She has published widely, including the 2016 book *Science Communication: Culture, Identity and Citizenship* (co-authored with Sarah R Davies) and has also been experimenting with interactive science communication installations inviting citizens to discuss the social responsibility of emerging scientific fields. For this, she was awarded the Danish Science Minister's Communication Prize in 2009.





## 4A: Otherwise in Healthcare



Presenters	Title	Keywords	
<b>Choon Key Chekar (Lancaster Medical School)</b>	<b><i>Biographical disruptions in UK doctor's training and placement: still gendered and increasingly more classed?</i></b>	<b>Medical education, NHS workforce distribution, health equity, health and place, biographical disruption</b>	 
<p>This paper is part of a larger research project entitled "Mapping underdoctored areas", which explores the impact of NHS workforce distribution and medical training on health inequalities. Based on the early analysis of biographical interview data of UK doctors from a wide range of career stages, we explore the gendered, classed, and intersectional nature of the UK doctors' biographical disruptions which, for some, were exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. We also pay attention to the ways in which doctors carve their own career pathways out of, or despite of, personal and professional disruptions.</p>			
<b>Catherine Montgomery (University of Edinburgh)</b>	<b><i>Disruptive otherising in critical care research: A ludic approach to data-driven futures</i></b>	<b>Speculative design; health; public engagement</b>	 
<p>This paper is about how we engage with patients in health research and how it could be otherwise. Its starting position is that for too long, talking to patients about health research has, for the most part, been "dull and uninteresting at best, and de-humanising at worst" (Gaver 2001). Underpinned by serious considerations of bioethics, information governance and value-for money, health research has variously positioned patients as vulnerable (and therefore in need of protection), as potential claimants (who must understand their rights and obligations) and as a scarce commodity (whose use must be efficiently rationalised). In their metamorphosis to research subject, the patient becomes the object of bureaucratic technologies of governance, including patient information sheets, consent forms and GDPR statements. What is lost is a broader conceptualisation of the person; not only someone who endures suffering, but who – like all humans – is an inherently playful being, homo ludens (Huizinga 1950).</p> <p>In this paper, we reflect on a public engagement project which sought to recover homo ludens in health research. Led by an STS scholar, a critical care consultant and a team of designers, the project aimed to disrupt stereotypical representations of the patient – particularly the patient in the intensive care unit – as someone who endures suffering to the exclusion of all else and to experiment with forms of inquiry driven by speculative design methods. The playful and future-oriented possibilities of this approach appealed as a way to explore alternatives to the prevailing bioethical framing of data use in research as a matter of consent. Extending previous STS work on arts-based engagement, which has focused on the aesthetic, we develop the notion of ludic engagement, and ask how this can be used to animate dialogue amongst the constellation of actors involved in health research. This leads us to question the limits of disruptive 'otherising' in STS and to consider the tensions between irony, play and empathy in designerly public engagement.</p>			
<b>Jarmo de Vries (University of Edinburgh)</b>	<b><i>Platform Genomics: Disrupting and transforming NHS England's genetic testing services</i></b>	<b>Platformisation, Genomics, NHS England, Bioeconomy</b>	 
<p>The UK Government and NHS England have committed themselves to the logic of platforms and assetisation. It has become a key part of their industrial strategy to support and develop the UK bioeconomy. This is especially clear in their genomics strategy and the implementation of NHS England's Genomic Medicine Service since 2018. Based on documentary analysis and interviews, I analyse how the commitment to platforms has informed the transformation and overhaul of NHS England's genetic testing services into a new Genomic Medicine Service in which DNA data is regarded as a key asset to foster the bioeconomy.</p> <p>I discuss how the existing genetic testing services were framed as insufficiently innovative or research-oriented. They were especially viewed as not sufficiently collaborative with industry, while genomic and wider NHS data have been reframed as an asset that can be used to support research and foster the bioeconomy. This resulted in a platform model being applied to the transformation of the genetic testing services. A new infrastructure was set up from 2015 onwards through the 100,000 Genomes Project and the government-owned company Genomics England, to circumvent and replace the existing genetic testing infrastructure. Central to this infrastructure was Genomics England's database, which had been set up to enable collaboration with industry and scientists. This forms the basis of the Genomic Medicine Service. To make the platform work, the NHS intends to sell access to their databases and by contractually benefitting from the research done on their data.</p> <p>I trace the infrastructuring of the Genomic Medicine Service and how it has been geared towards the platformisation and assetisation of genomic and wider health data. At the same time, I point out the difficulties posed by the imposition of this new infrastructure over the existing one. My analysis will explore tensions between platformisation and the healthcare goals of the Genomic Medicine Service, as well as the potential risks and consequences of the disruptive platform model of innovation that the Genomic Medicine Service has introduced.</p>			



## 4B (Panel): Modelling Disruption and Disrupting Models

Presenters	Title	Keywords	
<b>Salma Elrouby (Warwick University)</b>	<b><i>Lockdown, Quarantine, and Social Distancing, and Methods of Spatial Analysis in cities</i></b>	<b>Spatial Analysis. Post-Pandemic City. Methods. Representation of Space.</b>	 
<p>The disruption created by the pandemic has affected our use of space. But I argue that it didn't disrupt methods of aggregating spatial information to show a shift in the use and understanding of space. Some changes were easier to follow and trace. The hallowing out of urban city centres announced a shift in corporate real estate markets. The work from home policies rendered a major drop in public commute. However, other trends were harder to monitor. The primary interest of this presentation is highlighting ways in which methods of spatial analysis evolved or not as a result of the pandemic. Highlighting crowdedness versus population density as a clear example of how population densities became irrelevant when the question became whether or not you can self-isolate within actual built-up floor area. Another example is the use of nocturnal and diurnal timely metrics. At one point there was a clear distinction between home, school, workplace, and leisure space. Taking a diurnal measurement of residential areas meant people are at work but is it any longer. These issues among others are crucial in our understanding and mapping of cities. Especially when we are seeing many cities rush to plan and put in place policies like the 15/20-min city. A connected city that aims to work as an archipelago of islands in perpetual lockdown.</p>			
<b>Les Levidow (Open University)</b>	<b><i>Counter-hegemonic adaptation to Covid-19 disruption: EcoSol-agroecology initiatives in South America</i></b>	<b>Covid-19 pandemic, solidarity economy, agroecology, resilience, Latin America</b>	 
<p>In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, hygiene restrictions disrupted supply chains of many products, especially food. The hegemonic agri-industrial system found ways of resiliently restoring the status quo ante, thus perpetuating its systemic environmental and social harms. By contrast, agroecology-based agri-food networks depended on creative solidaristic efforts to devise alternative means of distributing their products.</p> <p>In Latin America such networks had been already well-established through a convergence between social movements for agroecology and a solidarity economy (economía solidaria or EcoSol). Often led by women, they had developed short food-supply chains (called circuitos cortos) through collective marketing in various forms such as farmers' markets, public procurement and Community-Supported Agriculture. Those EcoSol-agroecology networks adapted to the Covid-19 disruption in ways which strengthened their solidaristic links with each other, with more consumers than before and with external experts or advisors. All those innovations provided opportunities to engage new publics around the several benefits of agroecological production. They promoted artisanal production methods and solidarity economy more generally, as an alternative to the hegemonic system. They sought to undermine the dominant agri-food chains selling unhealthy ultra-processed food and causing environmental harm through year-round global imports.</p> <p>Those networks defended and demanded public policy measures that could strengthen their EcoSol-agroecology alternatives, while opposing measures that would undermine them. More small-scale producers gained a citizenship role by engaging with public officials and election candidates. At several levels those conflicts illustrate rival adaptations to disruption: The hegemonic system was resiliently bouncing back to the status quo ante, while counter-hegemonic networks were resiliently bouncing forwards to a different future.</p>			
<b>Rolien Hoyng (Lancaster University)</b>	<b><i>Modeling Disruption: From Climate Models to Smart Farms</i></b>	<b>modeling, climate change, uncertainty, smart farming, risk</b>	 
<p>Climate change modeling in policy context assumes a planet and a world with a rather stable ontology, a system that is more or less fixed. Modeling here follows logics of if/then (Bucher 2018): "if this" (policy/behavior), "then that" (temperature increase/decrease). However, climate change is not simply the object of a straightforward process of measuring and modeling. Rather, looking at climate science, the notion of a changing climate is constituted by models that contain a host of proxies, speculations, and conjectures. The suggestion of an objective system abiding by logics of "if/then" dissipates in much more experimental and speculative dynamics in the gist of "what if": what if conditions are as such and such, what if there is a relation, what if weights are such and such. The logic of "if/then" and the gist of "what if" are at tension. The question is: How does this tension unfold when modeling technologies and knowledge "travel" from the context of climate science to the context of policy and, further on, to situated contexts of practice? To start unpacking and addressing this huge question, this presentation will focus on three select models: General Circulation Models, Integrated Assessment Models, and the interfaces of apps deployed in smart farming.</p>			

## 4C/D (Paper and Alternative Format): Disrupting Music





Presenters	Title	Keywords	Sub-themes
<b>Hyojung Sun (U. of York)</b> <b>James Stewart (University of Edinburgh)</b>	<i><b>Disruption: Lessons from the Music Industry</b></i>	<b>digital disruption, music industry, streaming music, NFT, AI</b>	
<p>Napster, a pioneering Peer-to-Peer (P2P) file-sharing network that arose in 1999, suggested a seismic shift in the music business by enabling a perfect duplication of a copy with no loss of quality, which then can be shared and distributed for free on the Internet. Schumpeter (1934)'s 'gales of creative destruction' was frequently summoned, predicting a dramatic upheaval in the music industry, in which the control will be overturned to empower musicians, rendering intermediaries redundant. The seemingly unstoppable wave of P2P file-sharing eventually gave way to legal digital music consumption platforms, crystallised in the subscription-based music streaming business, such as Spotify, Apple Music and Amazon Music.</p> <p>Following on, the music industry faced another potential challenge from Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs), blockchain-based digital assets that can be issued to individual music creations. More recently, the generative AI-enabled music has posed another phase of potential disruption by challenging the concept of originality and the copyright issues involved. It is envisioned that a generative AI music composition and distribution system will bring power back to the musicians, entirely changing the way music is listened to, and monetised.</p> <p>At the centre of all the debate around the disruption in the music industry lies the democratisation of music consumption, in which artists can bypass the control by the intermediaries, particularly major music corporations. It is conceived that this will offer a more intimate experience of interacting with music. Is this vision just a nostalgic dream led by technological determinism, or will it bring gales of creative destruction? In this presentation, we will revisit the innovation process of the digital music business that evolved in the face of digital disruption and extrapolate implications for the disruption in the music industry and aim to contribute to the conceptualisation of disruption.</p>			
<b>Vassilis Galanos (University of Edinburgh)</b>	<i><b>Disrupting the Class, Corrupting the Youth: The Internet Studies Rap DJ Set</b></i>	<b>Internet Studies, Education, Music, DJ Set, Decentralisation</b>	
<p>The origins of rap music and the internet are to be traced around the same period (1960-1975). Both of them created expectations of grassroots disruption through decentralisation of means of expression. However, through commercialisation and capitalist appropriation, such expectations have been disrupted, with a re-centralisation of power through the lock-in of forces of production in the hands of colossal music distribution and internet companies. In this DJ set, I play rap songs about the internet from a playlist curated as part of an exercise for students attending a postgraduate course that bridges Internet, Media, and Science and Technology Studies. The exercise aims at allowing students to identify course themes and theories as expressed by those who utilise rap music as a form of expression and the internet as a form of mediation, including but not limited to technological determinism, filter bubbles/echo chambers, technophobia, sociotechnical imaginaries (including cryptocurrencies), the digital divide, gig work, and online/offline symbolic interactionism. I hereby invite AsSIST-UK Conference: DISruption's participants to attend the DJ set and either (a) pay close attention to the lyrics and take part in an "open mic" deconstruction of the lyrics following the session, or (b) to simply dance, as a reminder of a tradition long lost in contemporary academic choreographies of "academic capitalism." Trigger warnings: potentially offensive language that will be displayed acoustically (an equivalent to reporting on offensive findings within dataset interrogations or ethnographic investigations). It is hoped that the event may spark interesting conversations about the transmedial disruption between music and network technologies, as well as the use of music as educational tool, disruptive at least in the context of most existing STS courses in the UK. This DJ set (a) acts disruptively as conference presentation and education method, (b) describes the promises/failures of, and potential alternative routes to, disruption.</p>			

## Evening



We end the day with drinks, canapés and 'mingling' in the central area.


## DAY 2: 5 September 2023, Detailed Schedule

### 5A (Conversation): Concepts for Digital Disruption

Presenters	Title	Keywords	Sub-themss
<b>Yuhan Wang</b> (University of Bristol)	<b><i>Platformisation or WeChatlisation? A disruptive path to a platform society</i></b>	<b>platformisation, WeChat, WeChat Mini Program, national space, platform designs</b>	 
<p>Platformisation is originally outlined as an outwards extension that network other platforms (Nieborg and Helmond, 2019). For example, Facebook Marketplace provides merchants with a platform for promoting their products. In doing so, Facebook extends its infrastructures to third-party websites and platforms through boundary sources. When browsing the products, users will be directed to merchants' own webpages leaving the platform of Facebook. Such infrastructures designed for networking platforms are core blocks in Western platform society (Van Dijck et al., 2018; Poell et al., 2019). In comparison with the original trajectory of platformisation in Western society, WeChat has been practising it in a disruptive manner. Instead of expanding the infrastructures to third-parties, WeChat absorbs other platforms and websites into its own mega system, enabling users to complete everyday tasks without ever leaving the platform.</p> <p>This paper will discuss WeChat's disruptive path of platformisation and its impacts on nation building. It aims to provide an everyday approach to study the relationship between digital technologies and nationhood constructing through unpacking WeChat's innovative designs of networking and integrating third party platforms. WeChat Mini Programs (WMPs) will be used as a case study to examine how this light version of mobile applications nesting in the platform have enabled companies, organisations, and even governmental institutions to become more accessible to users. Meanwhile, with the high integration of platforms, such standardisation formulated by WeChat may gradually become a standardisation of everyday practices.</p> <p>As arguably the most popular platform in China and has integrated into Chinese users' everyday life, WeChat has been extensively studies with the attention being paid to China's techno-nationalist ambitions (e.g., Plantin and de Seta, 2019) when WeChat, and its parent company Tencent, has become an neglectable force in the emerging scholarship on platform societies. Through the STS lens, this paper proposes a material perspective, rejecting a priori knowledge of WeChat merely being a nationalised platform subjected to governmental control. Instead, China could also become a WeChatlised nation as the configuration of users and platform designs, which were not necessarily made for the nation building, could become an unexpected key player.</p>			
<b>Neil Pollock</b> (University of Edinburgh)	<b><i>After Hype: The Business of Taming the Digital Economy</i></b>	<b>disruption, digital innovation, Gartner Hype Cycle, sociology of expectations</b>	 
<p>We live in an era in which claims about the disruptive character of (digital) innovation call into question existing understandings of economic life. Economists bewail 'black swan' events and the combinatorial complexity of unfolding futures for generating 'Knightian uncertainty' - leaving decision makers struggling to deal with an ocean of hype.</p> <p>Innovation communities, however, seem remarkably unphased by this state of affairs. We examine how new kinds of expert intermediary - Industry Analysts - have responded to accelerating digital innovation by creating new knowledge products like the Gartner Hype Cycle. We explore how these new tools are used to help would be adopters and investors, innovators and new kinds of expert intermediary take decisions in the face of these uncertain and contested claims.</p>			

### 5B (Panel): Governing Disruption

Presenters	Title	Keywords	Sub-themes
<b>Andy Yuille</b> (Lancaster University)	<b><i>Neighbourhood planning: disrupting the expert-agency coupling?</i></b>	<b>neighbourhood planning, participation, assemblage, knowledge, expertise</b>	 
<p>There has been an international turn to participatory democracy – enabling people to play an active role in decision-making that affects them – over the past three decades. Neighbourhood planning in England is a particularly striking example of this turn, with community groups given the power to write statutory planning policies. It is portrayed as a straightforward transfer of power from state to community which prioritises local knowledge and care for place. It was supposed to disrupt the way that planning was done, turning it from an arcane practice only accessible to specialists, those with expert knowledge and those with the resources to employ them, to a more open and democratic process. I argue that rather than transferring power to pre-existing communities, both the neighbourhood and the Neighbourhood Planning Group (NPG, the collective that leads the process) are actively assembled through the practices of neighbourhood planning to produce new instantiations of 'community'. I suggest that in order to (provisionally) stabilise the new neighbourhood assemblage, NPGs must perform three conflicting identity relations with their sociomaterial neighbourhood. I explore how the assembling of these identities simultaneously disrupts and reproduces existing power relations. While NPGs are able to make material differences, the rhetoric of community empowerment conceals the continued valorisation of the expert position at the expense of community actors. The 'charmed circle' of expertise is conditionally widened to partially include NPGs, but this simultaneously reproduces problematic expert-lay relations and the expert-agency coupling. As a result, processes that are established with the explicit purpose of enabling communities to have their say on issues which affect them can result in those communities feeling that the things that matter to them are not adequately addressed.</p>			

<b>Jake Barnes (University of Oxford)</b>	<i>Governing through disruption? Net zero and the UK government's response to Russia's war in Ukraine</i>	<b>Disruption, crises, energy policy, heat pumps, governance</b>	
<p>For many years innovation scholars and political theorists have recognised crises and the disruptions they cause, as catalytic events that can be harnessed for productive societal ends. That they can also present missed opportunities is a further truism. In the last decade scholarly attention has increasingly been directed towards understanding the governance of regime destabilisation. This work is important and timely. Yet understanding of how crises can be harnessed as a reflective and responsive mode of governing for sustainability, destabilising the old and bringing in the new, has received insufficient attention to date. Here, we seek to contribute to these debates through examination of governance in-the-making, where pathways of structural change are created (or not) rather than followed.</p> <p>In this presentation we will reflect on work in which we have explored the implications of recent disruptive events on UK heat pump deployment pathways. We will reflect on some the challenges of researching disruption and system change in real time and on our efforts to foster more responsive and responsible forms of governance for sustainability.</p>			
<b>Andrew MacDonald (York)</b>	<i>"Sometimes you just need to make a lot of noise!": Disruptive youth climate protest as a response to disrupted futures.</i>	<b>Protest, Youth Climate Activism, Climate Anxiety, Disrupted Futures</b>	
<p>For my ESRC-funded PhD research, I have interviewed 16 to 24-year-olds who self-identify as Youth Climate activists. Although the climate activism repertoires they present vary, many of my participants choose or have chosen to participate in disruptive protests such as mass mobilisations, blockades and picketing banks. Arguably, these disruptive acts represent a direct response to the climate crisis. However, when interviewing 16 to 24-year-olds about their participation in the disruptive protest, it soon becomes clear that these acts also mitigate a variety of anxieties outlined by my participants as they reflect upon what many young people view as their inevitably disrupted futures. This paper will, utilising my data, discuss how youth climate activists participating in disruptive protest see it as not just a means to attract attention to the climate crisis but, arguably more so, as a way to mitigate what the activists view as their disrupted futures.</p> <p>This paper fits the theme of disruption by discussing disruptive youth climate protest and the anxieties young people have over what they see as significant disruptions to the planet and their futures.</p>			

### 5B: How to write research questions, an ECR Workshop

We are all told that we need good research questions... but what does that even mean?!? What makes a research question good and how do we get started with writing one? This workshop aimed at early career researchers (or indeed, anyone who is baffled by the task of writing research questions at any stage of their career) sets out to clarify some of the most common features of good research questions, gives participants practice on recognizing faults in bad research questions, and lays out one possible process for creating good research questions from scratch.



## 7B: Meet the Publishers and Authors – interactive session

In this interactive session the publishers and authors will each give you their 3 top tips for publishing an academic book; expectations vs reality. A short, facilitated discussion will then take place between the speakers, with Q&As from the audience. At the end of the you'll have a chance to break out and speak to our speakers individually.



**Paul Stevens, Senior Commissioning Editor.** Bristol University Press and its imprint Policy Press publish across a range of social science subjects in research and theory; learning resources; general non-fiction; reference and journals. Policy Press also publishes for a policy and practice audience.



Home of  
**Policy Press**

**Les Levidow** has recently published 'Beyond Climate Fixes' with Bristol University Press.



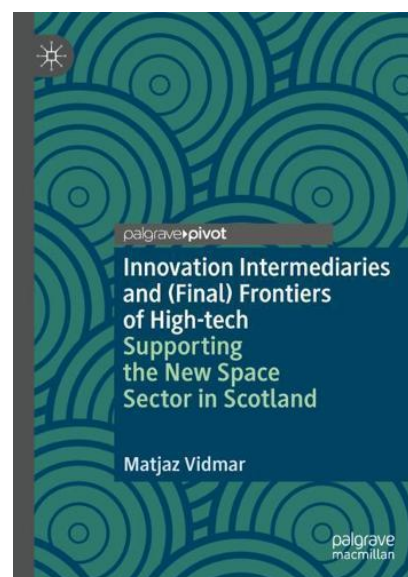
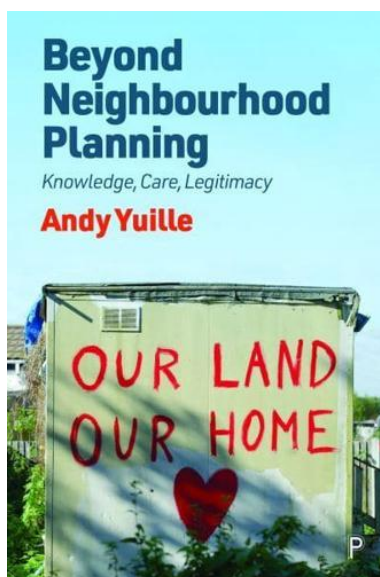
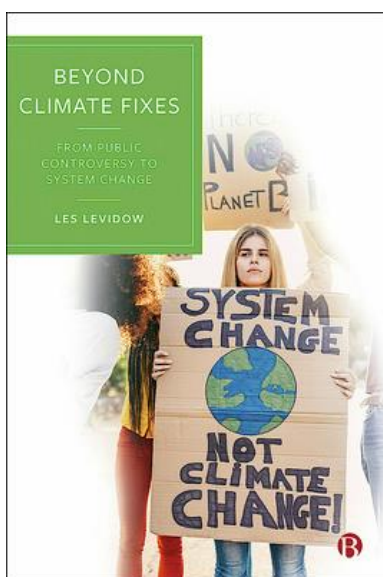
**Andy Yuille** has recently published 'Beyond Neighbourhood Planning through Policy Press.





**Joe Deville, Editor.** Mattering Press is a charity which publishes high quality, peer reviewed open access books about science, technology and society. Joe has also published a co-edited book through Mattering Press.



**Matjaz Vidmar**, published his book 'Innovation Intermediaries and (Final) Frontiers of High Tech' using a new shorter format by Palgrave MacMillan.



## 7C (Alternative Format): Disruptive Hillides and Bracken - Accounting for trees in the Welsh mountains

Presenters	Title	Keywords	Sub-themes
Louise Elstow (Lancaster Uni) Jenny Knight. (Stump Up For Trees)	<i>Disruptive Hillides and Bracken - Accounting for trees in the Welsh mountains</i>	woodland creation, trees, measurement, climate change adaptation, counting	 
<p>Participatory session, featuring real trees (and if the weather is clement, some time outside), Jenny and Louise from Stump Up For Trees (a woodland creation charity in Wales) will lead a practical demonstration exploring the challenges of working out how many trees to plant on Welsh hillsides.</p> <p>Various accounting practices govern and influence woodland creation practices in the UK, such as reporting on numbers of trees planted to funders, planning woodland creation using GIS software, completing standardised Environmental Impact Assessments, and (in)formal systems for knowing who takes 'credit' for the plants - informal kudos for planting trees or formal markets for carbon etc. Many of these activities are prompted by the need for metrics to show that action to address climate change is taking place and could be examples of what Turnhout et al. (2014) describe as 'measurementality'. Jenny and Louise will show how the hillsides disrupt but are also tamed by accounting practices. The landscapes and trees rendered through these practices often fail to match up to the material and physical reality of the pedunculate oak, guelder rose, birch and bird cherry being planted on bracken covered slopes in Wales (and beyond).</p> <p>Participants will be prompted during the session to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What counts as a tree, who counts it and when is it counted?</li> <li>• Does one tree count for more than another?</li> <li>• What is the tree doing - now and in 50-200 years?</li> <li>• How does a tree disrupt accounting practices, the landscape and stakeholder relationships?</li> </ul> <p>Jenny and Louise will ask participants to think about how accounting for trees become more equitable, representative and collective.</p>			





## 8A: Academic Speed Dating

Hosted by AsSIST-UK's Jenn Chubb, why not join in our academic speed dating session. Just a few minutes to tell the person in front of you about your research and interests and to find connections between you, before moving onto the next person. It will be held in the central area – so if you make any good new contacts and want to continue the conversation over lunch you can go and find or drink afterwards.

Great if you want to meet new people, but don't like mingling without a purpose!









## 8B: Posters

Presenters	Title	Keywords	Sub-themes
Ola Michalec (UCL) and Joe Bourne (Lancaster)	<i>Artistic responses to energy digitalisation</i>	energy, infrastructure, digitalisation, innovation, maintenance	 
<p>Energy is often invisible to us, and so are the slowly creeping changes to the infrastructure which delivers, manages and maintains our supply of it. The recent crisis of affordability and increasing need to address a fossil fuel crisis are a context in which it is perhaps necessary to stop and question how we feel about energy; to consider the possible futures we might be moving towards and the ways an increasing data-driven energy supply could change other aspects of our lives, for better and worse. We invited four illustrators to create original artworks in response to the research of the PETRAS-funded Power2 project.</p> <p>Researchers Dr Ola Michalec (University of Bristol) and Joe Bourne (Lancaster University) collaborated to create unique works of fiction as provocations for each artist. The works take an often speculative approach to exploring the intersection of energy, digital technology and emotions.</p>			
John Andrews (Manchester)	<i>Industrial transition movements and technological disruption: veganism, alternative proteins and the protein transition</i>	sustainability transitions; social movements; protein transition; alternative proteins; food systems	 
<p>Social movements seek to influence societal transitions to more sustainable systems of production and consumption through a diversity of means, some of which do not conform to conventional scholarly understandings of activism or protest, including the promotion of disruptive technologies as a means of transforming target industries. This work analyses engagement with 'alternative protein' technologies among the vegan and animal protection movements as part of efforts to disrupt animal-centric food systems, providing insight into the emergence and activities of 'industrial transition movements', processes of strategic reorientation within social movements, and the place of social movements within sustainability transitions.</p>			

## 9A (Panel): The Discomfort at the Heart of Innovating Responsibly


Presenters	Title	Keywords	Sub-themes
Jack Stilgoe (UCL)	<i>Slow AI - new possibilities for analysis and action</i>	AI; responsible innovation; slow; governance	 
<p>Recent excitement about AI is bolstered by narratives of speed, acceleration and inevitability. This has created a dominant impression of AI as a juggernaut, delivering existential risks and world-changing benefits but with little possibility of control. The recent proposal by Silicon Valley tech leaders for a 'pause' in large generative AI models, while deeply problematic, should at least give us pause. Could this be an opportunity to disrupt that technological determinism that pervades AI? Could STS researchers help open a previously heretical discussion of Slow AI that bring us into conversation with AI researchers, regulators and civil society? The challenges of AI may not be as new as its proponents might claim, but the governance debate is characterised by some peculiar novel terminology (For example, AI researchers' talk about 'alignment' is at odds with STS theories of the direction of technological change). In this paper, I will discuss slowness not in terms of quantitative changes in speed, but in terms of qualitative changes in the provenance, journeys and destinations of innovation. I will consider the possibilities for Slow AI as a discursive, analytical and activist approach to new centres of technical, political and economic power. I will draw on data from qualitative expert interviews and surveys of public opinion focussing on self-driving vehicles to interrogate existing ideas of 'responsible' and 'trustworthy' AI.</p>			
Andrés Domínguez (University of Bristol)	<i>Mobilising STS in Computer Science: Insights from addressing ethical issues in algorithmic (mis)information classification</i>	Mobilising STS, misinformation, responsible innovation, machine learning, ground truths	 
<p>Machine learning (ML) enabled classification models are becoming increasingly popular for tackling the sheer volume and speed of online misinformation and other content that could be identified as harmful. In building these models, data scientists need to take a stance on the legitimacy, authoritativeness and objectivity of the sources of "truth" used for model training and testing. This has political, ethical and epistemic implications which are rarely addressed in technical papers. Despite (and due to) their reported high accuracy and performance, ML-driven moderation systems have the potential to shape online public debate and create downstream negative impacts such as undue censorship and the reinforcing of false beliefs. In this talk I will present findings from an interdisciplinary project between STS scholars and ML researchers where we used collaborative ethnography and theoretical insights from social studies of science to critically analyse the process of building ML models for (mis)information classification. In this intervention we identified a series of algorithmic contingencies--key moments during model development that could lead to different future outcomes, uncertainty and harmful effects as these tools are deployed by social media platforms. I will conclude with a tentative path toward reflexive and responsible development of ML tools for moderating misinformation and other harmful content online.</p>			
Stephen Hughes (UCL)	<i>Disruptive Feelings: Saying, "No" to Innovators</i>	Affect, Emotion, Responsible Innovation, Psychoanalysis, Haptics	 
<p>Innovators don't like being told, "no". Why is this the case and what does it say for our ability to stop harmful innovations if those developing new technologies have trouble letting go of their beloved objects? This talk explores the affective relationships between engineers and their technologies and how they manage uncomfortable feelings when being asked to consider stopping an innovation for the purposes of ethical responsibility. The paper draws on interviews with engineers working in a private company on ultrasound-based mid-air haptics devices, where they have been asked to consider scenarios where their technology causes harm and needs to be stopped. The interviews explore how they feel about the prospect of letting go of their innovations, shedding light on the affective connections between engineers and technology in the context of responsibility. The paper uses psychoanalytic psychosocial theory to analyse the interviews, to show how dynamic emotional relationships operate in social contexts to manage difficult or uncomfortable feelings such as loss, anxiety, anger, and hate. These insights can help us think about how to approach issues of governance and regulation in relation emerging technologies in ways that are sensitive to affect and unconscious psychosocial dynamics.</p>			

## 9B (Panel): Changing Systems

Presenters	Title	Keywords	Sub-themse
Matjaz Vidmar	<i>Open Engineering: Missing link between science and innovation</i>	Technology, Socio-technical systems, R&D, Open Engineering	 
<p>The paradigms of Open Science and Open Innovation have profoundly disrupted the previously more rigid and culturally closed systems of knowledge production and utilisation. Though neither of these concepts is unproblematic, nonetheless they are galvanising organisational changes as well as analytical exploration. Technology development has similarly entered an era of "openness", with user-centred or even user-led methods being a critical post-modern approach.</p> <p>However, both the practice(s) of "open R&amp;D" and the scholarship on its design and implementation are proliferating without having a core framing of the interplay between complex socio-technical systems. Slipping between technological emergence and the processes of innovation, the engineering work often goes unexplored. Hence, the Open Engineering paradigm is putting in place a more systemic mapping of the contemporary practice in inter-organisational technology development.</p> <p>Spanning between governance frameworks, process coordination, knowledge management and engineering work, the relational interactions of these elements describe a rich field of transformative changes in how new technology is being developed.</p>			
Les Levidow (Open University)	<i>Beyond techno-market fixes: disrupting system continuity, counterposing system change</i>	techno-market policy framework, climate change, false solutions, plunder	 
<p>For a long time, policy elites have been promoting techno-optimistic, market-based solutions for environmental problems, while generally perpetuating them. This techno-market policy framework has protected the hegemonic profit-driven system from disruption. At the same time, protest has sought to disrupt system continuity. Here are two examples:</p> <p>In response to climate change, policy elites devised a system of carbon-credit trading, which supposedly would incentivise decarbonisation technologies. In practice, high-carbon polluters have been cheaply buying the right to pollute, thus protecting high-carbon systems. Moreover, the system has facilitated more enclosures, social disruption and plunder of the global South. This role has provoked much protest through North-South activist networks, eventually discrediting carbon-credit schemes.</p> <p>The EU renewable energy agenda was supposedly meant to reduce GHG emissions, especially by replacing fossil fuels with biofuels in transport. The 2009 EU Directive set rising targets through 2020, thus mandating a biofuels market which otherwise would not exist. In reality its main aim was a favourable 'investment climate' for the Knowledge-Based Bio-Economy, featuring the techno-optimistic promise of 2nd-generation biofuels. This helped to justify the new markets, despite devastating feedstock environments and local livelihoods in the global South. This harm provoked significant Europe-wide protest.</p> <p>Through such protests, counter-publics have generated public controversy. This potentially disrupts the techno-market framework, while counterposing low-carbon, socially just alternatives. Such transformative mobilisations could fulfil the popular slogan, 'System Change Not Climate Change'.</p>			
Laurie Waller (University of Manchester)	<i>Demos in flux? How demonstrators of carbon removal disrupt the 'project polity'</i>	demonstrations; carbon dioxide removal; issue politics; expectations; field research	 
<p>Studies of demonstrations have widely analysed the tactics demonstrators deploy to make experimental interventions congruent with social order. Less consideration has been given to the ways in which demonstrators may actively publicise sociotechnical uncertainties and their potentially disruptive consequences. This paper will discuss an ongoing study centred on interviews with field researchers involved in projects demonstrating methods for removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The paper will discuss the different ways that researchers articulate the 'promise' of their experiments. Scenarios projecting future large-scale carbon removal have mobilised technoscientific programmes and projects demonstrating methods at various stages of development. Controversy over these scenarios has brought into view the socio-economic assumptions underpinning their construction and modelled trajectories of technology development. Demonstrators of carbon removal methods must therefore engage with competing expectations about social and technological futures. I will suggest that field researchers involved in demonstration projects are far more strategic actors than is often assumed in policy debates about carbon removal. I will describe how interviews surfaced entanglements between researcher identities, instruments and sites, highlighting issues absent from much policy discussion. Such entanglements complicate the 'project polity' invoked in innovation literatures on carbon removal, in which projects demonstrating discreet methods compete for public attention and investment. Examining how field researchers present and justify their experiments, I will suggest, offers a view of carbon removal demonstrations centred not on discreet projects but rather around issues involved in making greenhouse gas fluxes visible. I will offer some reflections on how an issue-focused (rather than project-centric) polity of demonstrations may help bring carbon removal scenarios and related technology expectations closer to earth.</p>			





## 9C (Alternative Format): Disrupting 'Disruption' with LEGO Serious Play



Presenters	Title	Keywords	Sub-themes
<b>Stevienna de Saille</b> (University of Sheffield)	<b><i>Disrupting 'Disruption' with LEGO Serious Play</i></b>	<b>responsible innovation, responsible stagnation, LEGO Serious Play, hands-on workshops, disrupting disruption</b>	
<p>Disruptive innovation has been a rallying cry for some time, particularly amongst the technologists of Silicon Valley. But we've also seen that "move fast and break things" doesn't always lead to better outcomes, too often it just breaks things that other people value, even need. What would happen if, instead, we disrupted disruption-for-the-sake-of-disruption with a cry of "move slow and fix things"? In this hands-on interactive workshop I will use LEGO Serious Play along with a concept that I and colleagues from the Fourth Quadrant Research Network have called "Responsible Stagnation", (ie. planned pathways to throughput reduction through growth-agnostic approaches to innovation) to think through that question. Drawing from their own experience as well as their research the workshop asks participants to consider how things they value have been or are about to be unpleasantly disrupted by emergent technologies, and how this might be repaired in innovative (here meaning novel) ways.</p> <p>LEGO Serious Play is a simple facilitation method where participants are asked a question, a model is built to help focus a narrative response, each person shares that story and then the group reflects on that shared knowledge. While normally used for corporate strategizing, as a trained facilitator I have used LSP for teaching, research and consultation on embedding RRI in various projects. This workshop aims to consider some of the conference themes in a fun (and may I say disruptive-of-Powerpoint) way, but as the name suggests, LSP also has a serious objective of surfacing tacit knowledge and values which may provide real insight to take away. Kits will be provided and no previous experience with LEGO is required!</p>			

## 10A (Conversation): Conversations on Disruptive Infrastructure

Presenters	Title	Keywords	Sub-themes
<b>David Seibt</b> (Technical University of Berlin)	<b><i>Debunking Disruption: Scenarios of Platformization in Emerging, Stable, and Transforming Fields</i></b>	<b>platformization, social action field, digital transformation, organizations, sociotechnical architectures</b>	
<p>In current social science debates, digital platforms are thought to signal disruptive changes in the production and consumption of technologies, services, and media content. Many authors identify them as central to a new form of capitalism or even proclaim the platform society, in which platform organizations influence all areas of social life.</p> <p>In this talk, I argue that diagnoses of widespread disruption are based on a success bias that leads them to overestimate the speed and scope of platformization in society. They draw on empirical research that focuses on a few successful platform companies such as Uber, Airbnb, Facebook, or Amazon, which emerged in weakly institutionalized settings such as the early Internet or the Sharing Economy. In contrast, they neglect the challenges platform organizations face in strongly institutionalized fields, including traditional industries or professional and public services.</p> <p>I tackle this bias by shifting the focus from the disruptive effects of existing platforms to contested processes of platformization, understood as the mutual shaping of digital platforms and the social fields in which they operate. More specifically, I ask how and under what conditions digital platforms become established in social fields and how they adapt to the field's prevalent institutions or vice versa.</p> <p>To answer this question, I propose a theoretical framework that combines the architectural view of platforms (Ametowobla and Kirchner 2023) and the theory of social action fields (Fligstein and McAdam 2012). I use this framework to systematically bridge empirical findings from a growing but fragmented literature that examines processes of platformization comparatively and longitudinally.</p> <p>I find that the speed, form, and effect of platformization depend on the conditions of the social action fields in which platform organizations vie for incumbency. I also explore concrete scenarios for each set of conditions. In emerging fields, such as those of the early Internet, the capacity to mediate between different groups is at a premium. Because platform organizations provide the technological and organizational means for structured interaction between heterogeneous groups of actors, they may present themselves as ideal brokers of stable relationships in uncertain environments. In stable fields, such as traditional industries, the level of interaction and mutual awareness among field actors is high, and there is little reason to rely on additional mediators. Moreover, new conceptions of the field will be judged against established rules, norms, and worldviews. Where platformization occurs, it may either be initiated by incumbents themselves or follow prolonged contestation by externally funded challengers. Finally, in transforming fields where previously established structures are called into question, platform organizations may either support struggling incumbents or, indeed, try to disrupt them by offering disenfranchised groups an alternative to the status quo.</p> <p>Overall, the paper suggests that platform organizations will not thrive equally in all areas of society, nor will they invariably supplant other forms of organization. A field perspective challenges diagnoses of ubiquitous disruption by highlighting the differential rates and forms of platformization and explaining why some areas of social life are particularly susceptible or resistant to reorganization around platform architectures.</p>			

<b>Ola Michalec (University of Bristol)</b>	<b><i>Old Grid, New Grid: how disruptive is digitalisation of the energy industry?</i></b>	<b>energy, infrastructure, digitalisation, innovation, maintenance</b>	 
<p>The presentation problematise the notion of 'disruptive innovation' of energy infrastructures, drawing on a case study of digitalisation policy initiatives across the UK. I argue that digitalisation should not be seen as a uniform, single initiative, rather, a set of internally contradictory propositions. Digitalisation initiatives challenge an established logic of pre-planned and state-coordinated infrastructure engineering with their agile and speed-oriented logic. However, this is not happening without pushback from professionals responsible for safety, stability, and security of the grid. As a result, digitalisation is not only the act of introducing new technologies but also maintaining legacy systems, institutions, and power relations. I show that innovation and maintenance are not always dichotomous, as practices of testing, error detection, and standardisation are helping experts to re-draw definitions of 'good practice' enough across IT and safety engineering communities. We theorise digitalisation in critical infrastructures as: piecemeal, contested (by practitioners themselves), slow, and intermittent.</p>			

### 10B (Conversation): Technological disruptions and gentle modifications in the infrastructures of care

<b>Presenters</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Keywords</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>
<b>Christine Hine (University of Surrey)</b>	<b><i>Technological disruptions and gentle modifications in the infrastructures of care</i></b>	<b>artificial intelligence, health, dementia, Internet of Things, infrastructure</b>	 
<p>Healthcare infrastructures are being impacted by an array of new digital means of monitoring, diagnosing and responding to patient needs. Artificial intelligence promises to disrupt the distribution of expertise between healthcare professionals, machines and patients and to impact on long-standing forms of practical and emotional labour in healthcare. This presentation will explore some of these potential disruptions through a case study based on interviews with those involved in developing and delivering an intervention in machine learning enabled at-home remote monitoring for those living with long term conditions such as dementia. The presentation considers the extent to which these potentially disruptive technologies are indeed experienced as disruptions, exploring the extent to which they are accommodated into existing relations and become, instead, viewed as gentle modifications within a recognizable form of the existing arrangements. Such accommodation does not occur seamlessly, however, and additional unrecognized labour is needed by those who navigate the gaps and tensions in the new arrangements. In interrogating the disruptive tendencies of new technologies it is important also to attend to the complex dynamics between change and continuity and to consider who is positioned to experience, and respond to these dynamics.</p>			

## 10C: Rent-a-Mentor

Following on from a successful 'Rent-a-Mentor' session at our event in York in 2022, we want to offer the chance for attendees at our 2023 Conference in Manchester to gain feedback, insights and expertise from other experienced attendees. Attendees can book a 15-minute slot with a mentor to discuss an issue or query - it could related to theory, navigating academia, publishing, research - the floor is open.

The Rent-A-Mentor session is taking place on Day 2, 5th September in the afternoon. Book your slot throughout the event – sign up in the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor central area. You can browse the list of mentors and the skills / experience they can offer. Bookings will be open as long as there are slots left open.

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## 11: Closing Discussion: Disruptive Futures

This closing panel will look forward to how we may engage with disrupted and disruptive futures. Our three panellists will introduce a plenary discussion of the opportunities and challenges that confront scholars in the broad field(s) of science, technology, and innovation studies (STIS).

### **Alan Irwin, Professor in the Department of Organization at Copenhagen Business School.**

Between 2007 and 2014, Alan was Dean of Research at CBS - and for a period Acting President. His PhD is from the University of Manchester and he has previously held academic positions at Manchester, Brunel and Liverpool. Currently, he is editing (with Ulrike Felt) an encyclopaedia of STS. He has also coordinated a thematic collection on STS and Innovation for the open access journal, Engaging Science, Technology, & Society (now in press). He is a member of the Royal Danish Academy of Sciences and Letters, and a fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences.



### **Lu GAO, Associate Professor, Director of STS Center, Institute for the History of Natural Science, Chinese Academy of Sciences**

Gao Lu is passionately engaged in researching emerging biotechnological governance. Her focus extends to studying STS theory and the history of technology governance. She has authored over thirty papers and published two authoritative monographs. Notably, she contributes as an editorial board member for the Journal of Responsible Innovation and East Asia STS. Currently, she's a visiting scholar at the University of Kent (2023-2024), having previously held similar positions at Stanford University (2014-2015) and the University of Edinburgh (2008-2009).



### **Jack Snape, Head of Foresight Projects, Government Office for Science**

Jack is a physicist turned policy analyst. He completed a PhD in fusion energy research before joining the UK Civil Service as an analyst in 2012. He has worked across a range of policy areas including universities, manufacturing, climate change and transport, using modelling and data science approaches to help ensure policy is evidence-based. He now leads the Foresight team in the Government Office for Science, working with government departments and external experts to deliver projects on how to tackle complex future issues.



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## 12: Andrew Webster Prize winner announced, Robin Williams

AsSIST-UK awards an annual prize for a PhD thesis that demonstrates outstanding quality in the STS/Innovation Studies field. The Prize is dedicated to the memory of AsSIST-UK co-founder, Prof. Andrew Webster. We'll announce the winner and hear more about the winning entry.

**Conference close, thank you for your attendance.**