

UK Association for Studies in Innovation Science and Technology (AsSIST-UK)

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 20
October 2023



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Welcome to the quarterly newsletter from AsSIST-UK sent to all registered members of the association. Please ensure that you have registered with our new membership system (see details below) and (if you already have) that your contact details are up to date. For all ongoing news visit the website at <https://assistuk.org/>.

WELCOME NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Since the last newsletter (July 2023), the AsSIST-UK Executive Committee (EC) have met on numerous occasions, including in-person at our biennial national conference in September at the University of Manchester. More details of the conference and other UK STIS news are given below.

The EC will be meeting in person again in early 2024 for our AGM, where we will discuss (amongst other things) learnings from 2023 and plans for our early career focussed events in 2024.

The EC would like to announce that EC member Vanessa Ashall is stepping down from the role. We would like to thank Vanessa for all her service to AsSIST-UK. We would also like to welcome to the EC, Stevienna de Saille from the University of Sheffield.

We would also like to invite expressions of interest in becoming a member of the Executive Committee and working groups, including early career members. Please email EC chair Robin Williams to discuss further (robin.williams@ed.ac.uk).

The current Executive Committee comprises:

Robin Williams (chair) & Matjaz Vidmar, University of Edinburgh robin.williams@ed.ac.uk,
Matjaz.Vidmar@ed.ac.uk

Kieron Flanagan & Julia Kasmire, University of Manchester kieron.flanagan@manchester.ac.uk
j.kasmire@manchester.ac.uk

Jenn Chubb, University of York jennifer.chubb@york.ac.uk

Rachel Hale, Cardiff University HaleR3@cardiff.ac.uk

Katerina Psarikidou, University of Sussex A.Psarikidou@sussex.ac.uk

Stevienna de Saille, the University of Sheffield s.desaille@sheffield.ac.uk

Our EC members from the AsSIST-UK Early Career Group:

Louise Elstow, & Xiao Yang, University of Edinburgh l.elstow@ed.ac.uk Xiao.Yang@ed.ac.uk

New AsSIST UK Membership System

A very warm welcome to all our new members. We have developed a new membership system that enables online profiles to be set up and allows members to easily update their details.

We kindly ask **all** members to register with the new system here: <https://assistuk.org/register/>

The existing spreadsheet-based register will be phased out over the next few months and due to data protection regulations, we are not able to transfer your names and contact details automatically.

Please register with the new system as soon as you can and heed the reminders we will share in due course, as otherwise you may accidentally drop off the register of A-UK members. Many thanks for your support and cooperation.

AsSIST-UK Biennial Conference 2023

A big thank you to everyone who was involved in our Biennial conference, held at the Manchester Alliance Business School on 4th and 5th of September – invited speakers, the conference organising team, conference helpers and of course those who attended as participating speakers or audience members. The 58 attendees from 24 different organisations – with every major STS centre represented. This year's theme was Dis-Ruption, with various strands and subthemes around disruption emerging, including disruptive and disrupting technologies, disruptions of and with 'nature' and the environment, disruptive methods and processes – in research, music, education, healthcare and society.



Breaks were a great time to network and meet people informally

Through our biennial conference we aim to offer our members, STIS researchers and aligned friends and colleagues, fantastic opportunities to meet new people, showcase new work and ideas, and to debate current issues facing the science, technology and innovation studies community (broadly defined). Thank you again to those who attended for your financial support – AsSIST-UK is free to join, and this is our only money raising activity. The profits raised will go straight back into putting on future events for you, our STIS community. And thank you for those who provided feedback. We want our future events to be well-run, enjoyable, inclusive and good value, so we will take onboard your comments, keep the good bits that worked well and will work on addressing any issues where we can make improvements.

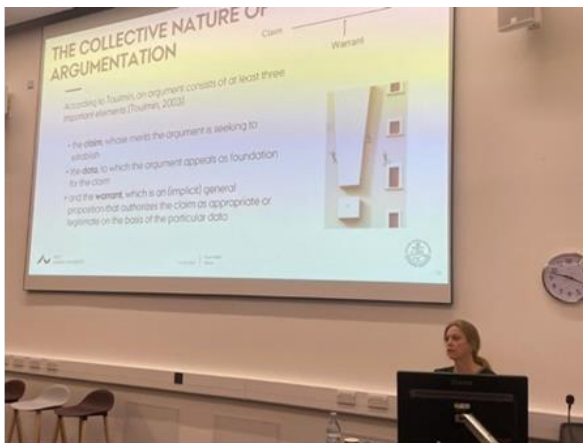
We were lucky to receive a diverse variety of submissions and as a result we had a diverse programme of traditional and disruptive formats. Highlights included: An STS DJ set: Using Lego to think about concerning emergent technologies and 'moving slow and fixing things'

- Getting outside to tackle real 'troublesome' trees and that challenge our ability to account for them
- ECRs making use of the rent-a-mentor scheme
- A meet-the-author and meet-the-publisher session



We had a range of formats - from traditional presentations to interactive sessions

We were delighted too that Maja Horst, President of EASST and Professor of Responsible Technology at Technical University of Denmark (DTU), formally opened the conference with a thought-provoking keynote speech on the subject of *Disruption as narrative*, in which she reflected 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 drew particularly on resources from rhetoric, cultural theory and controversy studies and her slides featured a range of Maya-inspired and AI-generated 'artworks'.



Thank you to our invited speakers, Maja Horst, Alan Irwin, Gao Lu and Jack Snape

Manchester's weather was particularly kind to us during the event which meant that we were able to hold the evening reception on the first day outside in glorious warm sunshine. We took it as a measure of success that we had to shepherd people towards the next part of the programme – perhaps next time we need a gong!



The lovely weather allowed us to enjoy the nearby outside spaces



We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our 2025 AsSIST-UK conference. In the meantime, we hope to see some of you in Amsterdam next year at EASST's 2024 Biennial Conference.

A copy of the organiser's post event report is available on request from the organising committee.

Andrew Webster Ph.D. Prize 2023

AsSIST-UK awards an annual prize for a Ph.D. thesis that demonstrates outstanding quality in the STS/Innovation Studies field. The prize has been dedicated to the memory of AsSIST-UK co-founder, Prof. Andrew Webster, who died in 2021.





The 2023 prize of £250 was awarded to Dr. Rodrigo Liscovsky for his thesis awarded by the University of Edinburgh entitled “Internationalisation Dynamics in Contemporary South American Life Sciences: the Case of Zebrafish”. The judges agreed that Rodrigo’s thesis develops a novel critical perspective on academic discourse and practices of research internationalisation, bridging fields, methods and views from the Global North and South, with relevance both to academic discourse on the internationalisation of research and education and to science policy and practice, in the best traditions of Andrew Webster’s own work.

This year several theses scored very close, and the judges therefore also commended the following authors for their impressive and novel work:

Dr. Andrey Elizondo Solano - Orchestration Spaces in Inter-Organizational Developments of Information Infrastructures: Early orchestration of a large-scale regional interoperability infrastructure in NHS England

Dr. Julius Kob - Realising Catastrophe: The Financial Ontology of the Anthropocene

Dr. Benjamin Weil Bad Blood: A Critical Inquiry into UK Blood Donor Activism

Jane Calvert presents annual Andrew Webster Memorial Lecture on Science, Technology and Society

Professor Jane Calvert from the University of Edinburgh Science, Technology and Innovation Studies group gave the second Andrew Webster Memorial Lecture in the historic National Centre for Early Music, York on 7th September 2023. This public lecture is organised by the University of York and its Science and Technology Studies Unit (SATSU) to commemorate the contribution of Professor Andrew Webster, who established the department.



Jane’s talk, entitled 'Synthetic biology and the social sciences: making room for collaboration', examined the close but contradictory relationships that Science, Technology and Innovation Studies scholars have with scientists, engineers, policymakers and diverse publics, around Synthetic Biology. Jane used the metaphor of different rooms (laboratory, ivory tower, policy room) to examine the challenges of undertaking theoretically-informed critical research while engaging with interdisciplinary collaborative programmes and with public policy. These ideas form the basis of a book to be published by MIT Press next year.

There were also two respondents to Jane’s lecture: Dr Ros Williams’ (University of Sheffield) work spans across Science and Technology Studies (STS), critical media studies,

sociologies of race and ethnicity, and of health and illness. Dr Koichi Mikami (Keio University in Japan) is interested in exploring the role of social sciences and humanities in the governance of science and technology.

Upcoming External Events/Calls

- **Tecnoscienza - Italian Journal of Science and Technology Studies Call for Papers:** Special issue "Making public in the context of migration and border control. On securitization, non-citizenship, and secrecy". Deadline for abstract submissions: October 30th, 2023. **Link to the full call:** <https://tecnoscienza.unibo.it/announcement/view/593>
- **EASST-4S 2024 Call for Open Panels:** The 2024 quadrennial joint meeting of the European Association for the Study of Science and Technology (EASST) and the Society for Social Studies of Science (4S) invites panels, presentations, making & doing contributions, and other events that explore the role of STS in making and doing contributions to transformations in an era of grand societal challenges. The [call for open panels](#) is now live. Please read the [conference theme](#).
- **STS Conference Graz 2024 Call for Panels:** The [22nd Annual STS Conference Graz 2024](#) „Critical Issues in Science, Technology and Society Studies“, to be held from 6-8 May 2024, is now open. Submission Deadline: **October 30, 2023**
- **Eu-SPRI 2024 Conference Call for Tracks & Special Sessions:** Please, submit your proposal on the submission page by **5 November 2023** at the latest: [https://urldefense.com/v3/https://www.aanmelder.nl/148445/author_!!PDiH4ENfjr2Jw!BNVK5MedN8IqdwZhTNp-97iqXkCOBCXexbiFCX8AQIXyacDVTCNtfT0LM5x94dVE90MbJJcYjtwZgmSouO3gYbFr5ARMVzFt\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://www.aanmelder.nl/148445/author_!!PDiH4ENfjr2Jw!BNVK5MedN8IqdwZhTNp-97iqXkCOBCXexbiFCX8AQIXyacDVTCNtfT0LM5x94dVE90MbJJcYjtwZgmSouO3gYbFr5ARMVzFt$)
- **Artificial Intelligence and Transformations of Work Registration Open:** This conference will take place from November 20 to 22, 2023 online and in Grenoble (France) at <https://maci.univ-grenoble-alpes.fr/en/maison-creation-et-innovation/coming-maci>. Here is the program: <https://www.ethics-ai.fr/international-conference-ai-transformations-of-work/>. Registration is required to take part in the conference, either on-site or online, via <https://ai-transfo-work.sciencesconf.org/registration>
- **BSA Virtual Annual Conference 2024 Registration Open:** <https://www.britisoc.co.uk/events/key-bsa-events/bsa-virtual-annual-conference-2024/submissions/>
- **BSA STS events – sign up to mailing list** <https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/wa-jisc.exe?SUBED1=BSA-ST&A=1>

AsSIST-UK Members' Research News

- **Request For Information:**
 - Sam Weiss Evans writes to ask for STS input into ARPA-H's plans for ELSI/RR1. See link for details - [Request For Information: ARPA-H Seeks Ideas for ELSI Initiative | ARPA-H](#)
- **New research centre, collaboration opportunities and mailing list:**
 - Federica Lucivero and Gabrielle Samuel are setting up a multidisciplinary and international Centre, SHADE, at the intersection of Sustainability, Health, AI, Digital and

the Environment. The Centre will include a research arm for projects working at this intersection, relevant resources, as well as a network of academics and stakeholders working/wanting to follow this space. Please contact gabrielle.samuel@kcl.ac.uk if you're interested in being added to the Centre's mailing list or are wanting to collaborate.

- **New grant:**

- Grant awarded from Innovate UK XR in mental health funding stream to Kevin Moss and Dr Kim Smallman for a 2-year project which commenced April 2023. Project title: Utilising music and AI to advance DR.VR™ and co-create a personalised Virtual Reality (VR) solution to reduce anxiety and build mental resilience in adults. See link for more details - [VR-Melody - Centre for Trials Research - Cardiff University](#)

- **New articles:**

- Ndambo, M. K., Pickersgill, M., Bunn, C., Stewart, R. C., Umar, E., Nyasulu, M., McIntosh, A., and Manda-Taylor, L. (2023) 'Maternal mental health research in Malawi: community and healthcare provider perspectives on acceptability and ethicality', *Social Science and Medicine – Mental Health*, 3, 100213, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmmh.2023.100213>
- Garcia Iglesias, J., Nagington, M., Pickersgill, M., Brady, M., Dewsnap, C., Highleyman, L., Membrillo de Novales, F. J., Nutland, W., Thrasher, S., Umar, E., Muchamore, I., and Webb, J. (2023) 'Is mpox an STI? The societal aspects and healthcare implications of a key question', *Wellcome Open Research*, 7, 252, <https://wellcomeopenresearch.org/articles/7-252/v2>.
- Ogoh, G., Akintoye, S., Eke, D., Farisco, M., Fernow, J., Grasenick, K., Guerrero, M., Rosemann, A., Salles, A. and Ulnicane, I. (2023) Developing Capabilities for Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI). *Journal of Responsible Technology*, 15: 100065. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrt.2023.100065>
- Ulnicane, I. and Erkkilä, T. (2023) Politics and policy of Artificial Intelligence. *Review of Policy Research* 40(5): 612-625. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ropr.12574>
- Ulnicane, I. and A. Aden (2023) Politics and power of framing bias in AI policy. *Review of Policy Research* 40(5): 665-687. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ropr.12567>

AsSIST-UK WORKING GROUPS SUPPORTING THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

IT and Technical Working Group

Membership: Kieron Flanagan and Matjaz Vidmar

This is a permanent group and it is responsible for maintaining on a permanent basis: The infrastructure of the AsSIST UK website, currently hosted on WordPress; The administration of the AsSIST_UK WordPress account; A Twitter account (or similar) and posting relevant content to it; The mailing list which allows members to email all other members; The membership registration process.

Development and Professionalisation Working Group

Membership: Katerina Psarikidou, Jenn Chubb

This is a permanent group responsible (and in contact with the ECR group re training opportunities) for providing opportunities for professional development and training for members. Examples include Summer Schools, training, workshops, writing retreats etc.

Conference Planning Working Group

Membership: Louise Elstow, Julia Kasmire, Matjaz Vidmar, Xiao Yang, Robin Williams, Jen Chubb, Katerina Psarikidou

This WG will be convened on the run up to a conference (only held every 2 years in September) and will then be stood down. It is responsible for planning and delivering the biennial AsSIST-UK conference.

Liaison and Collaboration Working Group

Membership: Robin Williams, Kieron Flanagan

This WG is responsible for establishing and maintaining connections with other relevant organisations (centres of STIS research, senior academics in STIS, policy-makers, industry partners, relevant academic associations etc).

Andrew Webster Prize Working Group

Membership: Kieron Flanagan, Julia Kasmire, Rachel Hale

This WG is responsible for organising and administering the AW Prize on an annual basis.

Early Careers Researcher Working Group

Membership: Louise Elstow, Xiao Yang, Matjaz Vidmar, Julia Kasmire

This group is responsible for organising opportunities specifically for early career AsSIST members. In particular they will provide a small conference (alternative years to the main conference), writing retreats and training opportunities (they will coordinate with the main Development and Professionalisation WG on this).