

AsSIST-UK SUMMER NEWSLETTER!

UK ASSOCIATION FOR STUDIES IN INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

July 2023

This is the quarterly Newsletter from AsSIST-UK. The Newsletter is sent to all registered members of the Association. Please ensure your contact details are up to date, and if they have changed, contact us at assistuk.info@gmail.com For all ongoing news about the Association visit the website at www.assist-uk.com.

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/>

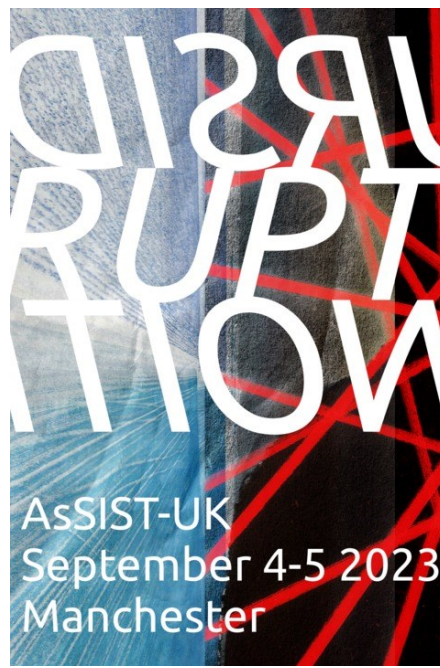
The existing spreadsheet-based register will be phased out over the next few months and due to data protection regulations, we are not able to transfer your names and contact details automatically.

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.

Join us for the AsSIST-UK 2023 Conference: Disruptions

AsSIST-UK will meet for our regular biennial conference in September 2023 at the Manchester Alliance Business School.

The UK Association for Studies in Innovation, Science and Technology (AsSIST-UK) will be hosting its 2023 in-person conference in September 2023. The aim of our biennial conference is to provide fantastic opportunities and spaces for our members to meet, showcase work and debate current issues facing STIS researchers.



Our theme this year is '**Disruption**'. Disruption(s) in the form of war, public health emergencies, energy supply, financial instability, industrial action, climate change, natural hazards etc. Disruptions have affected our ability to eat, to leave the house, to travel, to socialise, to do research, to pay our bills, to participate in major life events (pass exams, get married, attend a funeral).

- But what is disruption? How is it conceptualised? And what does it mean to be disruptive? Who or what is disruptive? Is disruption always negative? Can disruption even be productive as well as disorientating?
- How do we cope or thrive with disruption, when it affects our world, our research, our plans? What does this do to the methods that we might use to research? How do we overcome disruption to our old methods and research plans? How we devise new methods, new plans? What do we do when our steady stream of data is disrupted/interrupted for years? Do we ask different questions, use different methods, evaluate differently, designing products and processes in new lights, etc.?
- What about researching disruption itself? What are the challenges? What kinds of questions should we be asking about disruptive events? What does disruption have to do with innovations, system lock-in, stability and instability, and more? How can disruption from 2023 inform disruptions to come?
- In the digital economy and other areas of emerging technology, claims about the disruptive potential of new technologies are used to leverage huge and sustained investments by innovators and entrepreneurs creating new industries or ways of organising existing industry (eg Uber, AirBnB). Disruptive innovation has become a major buzzword in entrepreneurship and innovation groups. Issues arise about assessing these claims – especially since the call to disruption includes a suggestion that existing

technological models and ways of working (i.e. existing knowledge) have been superseded.

Find out more about the conference, its theme, programme and registration at our dedicated conference website: <https://assistuk.org/biennial-conference/>

MEMBER NEWS AND UPDATES!

With thanks to all our members for sending through your updates!

STS Italia Conference

The 9th STS Italia Conference was held at the University of Bologna, Italy, June 28th-30th, with the theme “Interesting Worlds to Come: Science & Technology Studies facing more-than-human challenges”. The conference is to explore the concept of “interest” in order to address global challenges and design future worlds with justice for all nations, species, and generations. The conference is to reflect on the recent events that have shown current challenges affecting diverse networks of humans and non-humans over the long term. From an STS perspective, the conference aims to understand “interest” as more than just concern but also as agency, involvement, and action.



The conference opened with the keynote of “Extreme infrastructures: transversal relationships between the technopolitics of climate change adaptation and international migration”, given by Professor Huub Dijstelbloem. The following panels revolve around the IPCC's goals, medical and AI, to end wars or to prevent pandemics. Besides, topics, such as “In Memoriam of Bruno Latour” were also discussed at the round table. In addition, the conference coincided with the Bologna Cinema Ritrovato Festival, where global STS scholars were able to experience the multifaceted culture of Italy.

Foundations of Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research

Edited by Bianca Vienni-Baptista, ETH Zürich, Isabel Fletcher and Catherine Lyall, The University of Edinburgh.

This groundbreaking reader is designed to lower the barriers to interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity in research. Edited by experienced researchers from a range of different fields, it paves the way for future scholarship and effective research collaborations across disciplines.

Chapters offer extracts from key academic texts on topics such as the design, funding, evaluation and communication of research, providing those new to the field with a thorough grounding. They highlight examples of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary triumphs and challenges. Concluding each chapter is a commentary provided by practitioners from diverse backgrounds, many of whom are themselves developing new approaches to inter- and transdisciplinarity.

The book is:

- the first ever comprehensive reader for interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity;
- essential reading for those seeking to become effective collaborative researchers;
- complete with concise introductions, extracts, commentary and further reading in each chapter.

This is a much-needed primer that improves our understanding of the characteristics of interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity, unlocking their exciting potential in research and teaching within and beyond academia.

Find out more [here](#).

UKRI programme on Responsible AI led by Jack Stilgoe

Jack Stilgoe (UCL STS) is one of the leaders of a new £31 UKRI programme on Responsible AI, which was announced by the Secretary of State at London Tech Week in June. This 5 year programme is an opportunity to bring STS into conversation with computer scientists, engineers and others to inform new rules for AI. Contact Jack for more information.

Digital Festival for the History of Science 2023

The programme for the Digital Festival of the British Society for the History of Science is now available. This is a major international event, with the opportunity to interact with colleagues from around the world. Please spread the word via all your international contacts.

You can check out the contents of the various panels, discussions and activities at: <https://digicon.bshs.org.uk/events/>

The Digital Festival is a single-line 4-day event. It's a festival, not a conference, meaning people are free to dip in and out. There are no parallel panels, so you can enjoy all the exciting sessions live, if you want to. However, we know that this might be a lot even for the most enthusiastic people out there. So, pick your favourite sessions (we are aware that this might be tricky!) and join us either via the stage-button on Zoom or on YouTube. Please note that you can only ask questions via the Zoom Stage. The YouTube Chat will be closed. And if you missed a session, check out our recorded versions on YouTube later on!

The Festival features 28 sessions with speakers from 15 countries, focused on discussion of key topics for everyone interested in the history of science, technology and medicine.

July 3 - Publics

Scholars from across the GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums) sector discuss the relationship between the history of science and their audiences.

July 4 - Geography

A day exploring the role of people, place and perspectives; and the problem of historical erasure.

July 5 - Practice

A fascinating interdisciplinary look and hands-on advice, on how historians of science can enhance their methodologies and develop new approaches.

July 6 - Innovation

Digital technologies have transformed our discipline. Colleagues at the forefront discuss the potential of this revolution for scholarship.

Contact - Dr Charlotte Sleight, Vice-president, British Society for the History of Science

Twitter: @KentCHOTS

Science in Public Early-Career Workshop, 14th July

The Science in Public Network Committee (<https://scienceinpublic.org/>) is immensely pleased to announce we will be running an Early-Career Workshop on the 14th July, University of Exeter, with the support of the International Research Network for the Study of Science and Belief in Society (INSBS), Exeter Engagement Network, and Egenis, Centre for the Study of the Life Sciences.

This will be the first opportunity for new generations of ‘early-career’ researchers and professionals interested in science in the public sphere – in the very broadest sense – to come together: with each other, senior colleagues, SiP Committee members, and expert practitioners, to discuss the present and futures of our community in the UK. Our speakers include Hanah Ayoob, science communicator and illustrator, Professor Emily Dawson of UCL, and the day will also include roundtable reflections on research and practice in SiP, plenty of sticky notes, and lots of time to network. Do come along, meet some great people, and have your say on next steps for the Network.

The full programme is available on the SiP website at this link. Attendance is FREE but please book your place (in-person or online) in advance using Eventbrite: <https://scienceinpublicearlycareers.eventbrite.co.uk>. If you have any questions, then please contact us using our web form.

Member publication!

Andy Yuille (2023) *Beyond Neighbourhood Planning: Knowledge, Care, Legitimacy*.

This new book, published on June 30, centres around an STS analysis of a form of small-scale, community-led land-use planning in England called neighbourhood planning. Described as “*The best thing I’ve ever read about urban planning. Razor-sharp and cutting through jargon and convention*” (Quintin Bradley, Leeds Beckett University), it demonstrates the power of STS approaches to transform understanding of public participation at the nexus of diverse forms of knowledge and expertise. 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 is a particularly striking example of this turn, with community groups given the power to write statutory planning policies for their areas. Its promoters portray it as a straightforward transfer of power from state to community which prioritises local knowledge and care for place. This book examines the complex realities behind that simple picture and the ways in which communities are simultaneously empowered and constrained by the process. It uses neighbourhood planning as a lens to explore how some things are made to matter in participatory practices and others are marginalised. It uses theories and approaches drawn from Science and Technology Studies to understand how community voices achieve legitimacy

and become effective or excluded through the selective enactment of different types of knowledge and care, and explores how this approach might be utilised in other sites of participatory democracy. This new perspective opens possibilities for interventions in research and practice that could better deliver on the democratic claims made for participation, and provides lessons for a wide range of participatory practices that promise community empowerment by giving voice to local knowledge and concerns.

Bristol University Press <https://policy.bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/beyond-neighbourhood-planning>

Call for papers: “Numbers”: Sociological Review Magazine

The Editor of the Sociological Review Magazine is inviting pitches for papers. They have just published their first themed magazine issue which is on the theme of Artificial Intelligence.

Link to June issue – AI: <https://thesociologicalreview.org/magazine/june-2023/>

They are now preparing a second issue linked to this one, out on 10 October. The issue will be titled “Numbers” and continues the theme of digitalisation started in the June issue. **Link to October Issue: Numbers** (deadline for **pitches 27 June**, full **articles 18 July**): <https://thesociologicalreview.org/publish-with-us/magazine/read-more-about-our-october-2023-issue/>

The magazine writes for a broad interdisciplinary audience including readers outside academia, and we are open to unconventional formats (interviews, podcasts, videos, photo-essays, Q&As, literature lists, or any other ideas contributors may have). They provide extensive editorial support and want to encourage also authors whose first language isn't English to write for them.

For more info: Milena Kremakova

milena.kremakova@thesociologicalreview.org

Dr Milena Kremakova [The Sociological Review](#) | Magazine Editor kremakova.com

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Instagram: [the_idle_ethnographer](https://www.instagram.com/the_idle_ethnographer)

Marginalisation and the Microbe: how to mobilise around antimicrobial resistance (AMR) without increasing social inequalities.

Dr Catherine Will wishes to share updates on her project with the Wellcome Trust with the title Marginalisation and the Microbe: how to mobilise around antimicrobial resistance (AMR) without increasing social inequalities. More information can be found here www.marginalisationandthemicrobe.org, or on Twitter, @AMRinterrupted.

Catherine currently has one post-doctoral fellow working with her, Dr Kashouris, who got her PhD on UTIs and her previous research fellow, Dr McKnight, who is now a lecturer in Sociology at the University of Sussex.

AsSIST-UK EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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

Vanessa Ashall & Jenn Chubb, University of York vanessa.ashall@york.ac.uk,
jennifer.chubb@york.ac.uk

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

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

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

Louise Elstow, University of Lancaster, James Besse & Xiao Yang, University of Edinburgh
l.elstow@lancaster.ac.uk, J.W.Besse@sms.ed.ac.uk Xiao.Yang@ed.ac.uk

Executive Committee Working Groups:

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: Vanessa Ashall, 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, Vanessa Ashall, 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 and Vanessa Ashall

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, James Besse

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).

