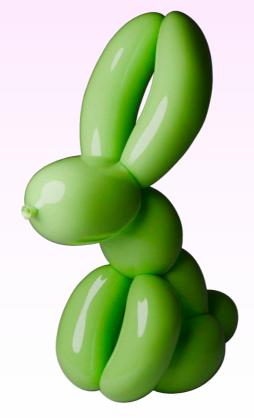*10 – 12th September 2025*

HYPE STUDIES
CONFERENCE

Universitat Oberta de Catalunya
Barcelona

Abstract Booklet

(Don't) believe the hype!

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Welcome to the Hype Studies Conference!

The Hype Studies Conference is an experiment in collective thinking and doing. As researchers, designers, and practitioners, we are all curious about hype, not just as exaggeration, but as a force that composes and directs attention, markets, politics, emotions, and imaginations. We're here to share our ideas about how hype shapes technologies, economies, and cultures, with real consequences for how the future is imagined and acted upon.

As you'll see, the programme brings together a heady mix of talks, a keynote, a plenary panel session, workshops, video art, and installations. Through these sessions (as well as through informal moments and exchanges), we hope you'll be able to explore hype as a performative force, reflect on its mechanisms and effects, and share ways of understanding (and intervening in) the politics of hype.

The idea of this event is to provide an open space, whether you're an academic, student, artist, policymaker, technologist, journalist, student, or just hype-curious: We welcome you to join in, connect, contribute, and experiment with us.

For more information about the conference and party venue, responsibilities, and other conference activities, make sure to download our Conference Programme!

PANELS

Online // In-person

Panel session 1

10th of September, 10:30–12:30

Panel 1. (AI) Hype: Between Power and Resistance

Chair: Jacek Manko

Jacek Manko

AI narratives – between superintelligence and power

Since its inception in the 1950s, artificial intelligence (AI) has been marked by ambiguity about its goals. Initially, AI aimed to computationally simulate intelligent behaviours, like playing logical games, Yet AI founders like John McCarthy and Marvin Minsky boldly envisioned "fully intelligent machines" or ones with human-level intelligence. Today, even though AI focuses on statistical data processing via machine learning, yet bold visions persist. OpenAI, with its 2022 ChatGPT release, revived narratives of AI "surpassing humans," referencing vague concepts like artificial general intelligence (AGI) and "superintelligence," which loosely suggest technology exceeding human intellect.

The study aims to examine contemporary forms of narratives regarding both the current state and further development of AI. Specifically, the study sought answers to the following questions:

• How do the largest companies in the AI industry define AI?
• How do they envision the further development of AI?
• Does the way AI is defined translate into the way these companies operate on a business level?

To this end, a qualitative content analysis method supported by virtual ethnography was applied. The analysis covered press releases, charters, or other public documents from major AI companies such as OpenAI, Anthropic or DeepMind.

Preliminary findings suggest that AI companies often invoke visions of "AI surpassing human intellect" yet fail to clarify what this means. This vagueness is intentional, as the focus is not on the technology itself, but primarily on power. Therefore, such arguments appear to be used instrumentally. That is, they serve as tools – initially for grabbing symbolic and imaginative power by shaping a specific vision of an AI-determined future. This, in turn, facilitates the acquisition of tangible power, such as securing investment funding and/or favorable political regulations.

Dan Kotliar

Can't Stop the Hype? Scrutinizing AI's Realities

In recent years, we have been inundated with reports about the revolutions brought upon by AI. Nevertheless, much of our knowledge about such "revolutions" arises from media sensationalism, advertising clamor, or, in short – from AI hype. AI hype often also serves as our primary data source, but it can also act as a heavy smokescreen, obscuring the "true" socioalgorithmic phenomena before our eyes. Therefore, to understand the societal impacts of AI, we must first grapple with its hype and ask: what truly transpires in the "revolutions" allegedly brought upon by AI? And what role does hype play in them? This paper addresses this need by offering a methodological framework for studying AI – a way to scrutinize AI Hype while acknowledging its performative power.

The STATE typology differentiates AI hype into five core categories: Social effects (claims about AI-driven societal transformations), Temporal promises (forecasts of imminent breakthroughs), Adoption narratives (assertions about widespread implementation), Technological assertions (statements emphasizing technical capabilities), and Economic projections (optimistic financial forecasts). Together, these categories provide a structured approach for analyzing discursive claims surrounding AI technologies.

Complementing this typology, the paper proposes six heuristics for distinguishing substantive AI developments from exaggerated projections: A) rejecting technological determinism, B) suspecting unfounded temporal leaps, C) historically contextualizing claims, D) understanding the broader socio-economic context, E) scrutinizing technological assertions, and F) identifying the power structures perpetuating hype.

Finally, the paper advocates for a holistic ethnographic methodology, which integrates examinations of AI's scientific foundations, algorithmic production processes, user experiences, and technological implementation. By combining the STATE typology, critical heuristics, and holistic empirical research, scholars can more effectively analyze AI's realworld implications, uncover the sources and intentions behind AI hype, and achieve a nuanced understanding of AI's societal role, beyond sensationalist discourse.

Tianqi Kou; Dana Calacci; Nasser Eledroos

Tracing the Genealogy of Hype within the Supply Chain of AI-based Policing Tools – Case Studies on the Communicative Production of Technological Hype

Hype plays a central role in the premature and inflated adoption of machine-learning (ML) technologies in high-stakes domains like policing. AI-based tools are frequently accompanied by sweeping capability claims that misalign their actual performance. While they face functional challenges such as inaccuracies, they also introduce ethically fraught issues including racial bias, opacity, and dislocated accountability. Efforts to mitigate these harms have largely been ex-post, addressing problems only after deployment. In a techno-solutionist culture driven by hype, such limitations have enabled a recurring cycle of overpromise and under-delivery. This project intervenes at the level of communicative production, seeking to trace and unsettle the lifecycle of these capability claims across the supply chain of AI-based policing tools.

The project is situated at the intersection of two concerns: first, how hype is constituted as a communicative and epistemic phenomenon; and second, how different stakeholders engage with, produce, and experience hype in practice. It therefore speaks directly to two of the conference's thematic tracks: Concepts and characteristics and Engaging.

We examine 3 deployed AI-based policing tools, mapping their trajectories from research and development through deployment. For each case, we collect communication artifacts - research papers, press releases,

solicitations, vendor documents – and identify the stakeholders associated with them. Interviews will then be conducted with these stakeholders to surface perspectives that are absent or underrepresented in the public record.

Our analysis combines document and discourse analysis to identify how hype manifests in specific linguistic, narrative, and institutional forms – how capability claims are constructed, amplified, and stabilized, or alternatively contested and resisted. In doing so, the project contributes to conceptual debates by distinguishing "hype" from adjacent terms like imaginaries, visions, and expectations, while also grounding those distinctions in lived communicative practices.

Kat Fuller

Manufacturing Fear: How Detransitioning Became a Tool of Anti-Trans Hype and Moral Panic

Moral panics thrive on hype. In recent years, few issues have generated more intense and distorted fear regarding the so-called "gender ideology" or "cultural Marxism" and the mere existence of trans people. Among these, the topic of detransitioning has been seized upon as a central narrative within a broader, hype-driven panic. Isolated and rare experiences are elevated into cautionary tales, recast as evidence that gender transition itself is a dangerous experiment and a contagious social threat.

This panic is not only stoked by exaggerated fears about bodily autonomy, but also by conspiracy theories claiming that LGBTQ+ people—and by extension, educators, doctors, and activists—are "grooming" children. These hyped narratives echo earlier moral panics, from witch hunts to McCarthyism to the Satanic ritual abuse hysteria. In each case, marginalized communities are cast as existential threats to a vulnerable social order.

Through a literature review of fascism and radicalization theories, this presentation examines how detransition stories and conspiracy theories are weaponized by anti-LGBTQ+ movements to build political momentum, distort medical discourse, and roll back rights. It situates the anti-trans panic within a broader economy of hype, where media sensationalism, political opportunism, and algorithmic amplification converge to produce a reactionary affective atmosphere. Understanding these dynamics is crucial—not only to debunk myths about detransition and gender identity, but also to recognize how hype transforms marginalized lives into objects of fear and dehumanization.

Panel 2. Energy Hype: Green Futures and Controversies

Chair: Masafumi Nishi

Isabella Wilkinson

Interrogating "green AI" and (re)constituting hype

Since the mid-2010s, policy communities have rhetorically twinned 'digital' and 'green' revolutions. In some contexts, this coupling carries policy implications, resulting in measures mitigating the environmental impact of emerging technologies or using green technologies to build technological infrastructure. Pledges to 'green' digital futures have generated hype, as have pledges to 'go digital' with transitions to green energy.

National policy and industry initiatives to build sovereign AI present a (re)constitution of digital-green hype. Dominant policy discourse in the UK frames sustainability as essential to the development of sovereign AI capabilities. Powerful industry players have also socialised the potentials of green (or, controversially, nuclear energy) to fulfil AI's ballooning demands for computing power. Elsewhere, other policy and technology discourse notes AI's impacts but applauds its power to solve environmental challenges.

This paper argues that in UK policy and industry discourse, the 'green AI' coupling and subsequent hype obfuscates substantially less straightforward realities. Interrogating this trend necessitates a broader investigation of technology hype creation, with a view to informing more balanced, evidence-driven discourse that escapes solutionism, breaks down silos between technology and environmental policy, and leverages policy and industrial momentum and creativity for confronting common challenges.

To work towards this, this paper benefits from interdisciplinary literature, considering public policy and political communication literature alongside literature on ecologicaland supply chain-based approaches to understanding AI's impacts. The proposed analytical framework draws from the discourse analysis of five UK case studies (2020- present), from national policy, international policy, the private sector, media and civil society (with a focus on local activism-related content). Across each, this paper qualitatively codifies markers of hype to analyse its (re)constitutions, comparing this with data on AI's localised impacts.

This paper concludes by discussing the implications of the 'green AI' hype, identifying lessons for other energy-stressed nations building sovereign AI capabilities.

Diwakar Kumar

Nuclear Energy in the Age of Climate Change: Addressing Public Hype and Misunderstandings in the Green Energy Debate

India's long-term low-carbon development strategy aims to increase nuclear energy capacity threefold by 2032, saving 41 million tonnes of CO2 emissions annually. However, nuclear power currently generates only 3% of electricity. Major stumbling blocks to nuclear energy growth include the commercial Nuclear Power program, high safety and security standards, and fear among state governments. Nuclear energy has historically evoked profound emotional responses and public protests, stemming from its symbolic representation of industrial authority, modern warfare, and societal transformation. Nuclear anxieties have been shaped by propaganda, media, and archetypal myths, overshadowing rational assessments of risks and benefits. Public perceptions, often rooted in media narratives rather than facts, contribute to the persistent opposition to nuclear technology. Addressing these fears requires transparent, inclusive decision-making, ensuring public trust and equitable stakeholder participation. A balanced understanding of

nuclear energy, free from hyperbolic narratives, is critical to its role in addressing pressing challenges like climate change. The evolution of nuclear anxieties has been complex, with early concerns about radiation being confined to science fiction and later to mainstream fears when Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed. Both opponents and supporters harbor deep concerns, albeit for different reasons. Nuclear weapons could destroy the world or deter such destruction, while nuclear reactors are seen as both saviors of climate change and potential threats to future generations. This study aims to evaluate the level of awareness, understanding, and misconceptions among educated youths (NISER) regarding nuclear radiation, its potential risks, and benefits in energy production, assess the extent to which targeted educational interventions change the perception of the youths about nuclear energy, and analyze the social, cultural, educational, and media-driven factors that shape public perception and attitudes towards nuclear energy as a sustainable energy source.

Masafumi Nishi

Old but still new hype – Is nuclear fusion "close to being achieved" since the 1970s?

Nuclear fusion has been (re)gaining attentions of investors, policymakers, and tech-enthusiasts in recent years, in a hope of achieving virtually unlimited energy. Every time when researchers in a laboratory achieve "some" progress or a start-up announces something, medias feature it as a "breakthrough" that makes nuclear fusion closer to reality. The European Union has invested billions of euros into publicly funded research and development while start-ups collect hundreds of millions from investors including famous billionaires such as Jeff Bezos. Whereas this hype gives the impression that nuclear fusion is a "new" technology, the technology itself has been researched since the 1950s and gaining attentions over decades. Indeed, nuclear fusion was hyped in the 1980s with the very similar narratives of "unlimited energy".

This paper showcases how the similar hypes emerge over time in different contexts with a particular focus on the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) being constructed in South France. Employing interviews, ethnography, document and media analysis, this research shows complex relationships between technological development and hypes. It emphasises societal and political contexts that intensively guide the hypes embracing interests, promises, and hopes. For example, technological stability through pan-European cooperation and the oil shocks fuelled fusion hype in the 1980s, while the climate change and rising startups promote another new hype today. By examining the long-standing technology that has never been achieved, this paper contributes to the discussion of hype studies: reproduction of hypes, sociopolitical context of hypes, and tensions emerged from hypes. Nuclear fusion is an example of how hypes can be recycled.

Adam Svensson

Deliberating Peak-gas: An analysis of hype-cycles of biogas as vehicle-fuel

This article explores the dissemination of hype about biogas as a vehicle fuel by tracing developments of expectations in Swedish national media discussions. Changes in discourse on biogas are traced by identifying storylines in a material covering the three largest Swedish broadsheet papers with a national focus over the period of 2008-2024, following a timeline of growth and stagnation. Hype-constructions of two technological varieties of biogas are compared, the previously hyped compressed biogas (CBG) used in lighter vehicles and the currently hyped liquefied biogas (LBG/bio-LNG) used in heavier vehicles. Drawing on the Gartner-consultancy's theory of hypecycles, the development of expectations on CBG and LBG are analysed through 3 stages of technology hype: peak of expectations, trough of disillusionment and recovery of expectations. The results show drastic changes in assumed production potential of and capacity for biogas to have a significant impact on a sustainable transition process. Finally, the prospects of LBG are discussed against the backdrop of the differences and similarities between the two hypecycles. CBG experienced a stark rise and fall in hype, whereas LBG has steadily increased in hype. These results confirm

previous research on the large nuance in hype cycles and that they do not necessarily follow the Gartner-model.

Panel 3. Commodification, Libido and Emotions in Hype

Chair: Ozan Altinok

Quentin Gervasoni

Hype as an emotional regime: a case study of French Pokémon fans

This communication proposes to explore hype as an emotional phenomenon through the case study of the online reception of the Pokémon main video games series news in 2018-2019, which highlighted, as Devon Powers noted, "the centrality of promotion, as well as its discontents—the disbelief, cynicism, and backlash that are inherent features of a thoroughly commodified communication environment" (Powers, 2012).

Emotions have become a core aspect of capitalism, to the point they have been made into commodities or emodities (Illouz 2019). In order to empirically study how the cultural industries govern the emotional life of consumers, I revisit the concept of "emotional regime" (Reddy, 2001). William Reddy defines an emotional regime as a "set of normative emotions and the official rituals, practices, and emotives that express and inculcate them" (Reddy, 2001, p.129). I propose a pragmatist redefinition of emotional regimes as relatively stable agencements of relevant sets of emotions associated with certain emotives. Building from a definition of hype as "a state of anticipation generated through the circulation of promotion, resulting in a crisis of value" (Powers, 2012), I adress how it produces a viral "affective economy» (Ahmed, 2004) in which a wild variety of affects emotions are embeded in a movement towards consumption : fan's pleasure and leisure becomes grounded not only in consumption but its anticipation.

This communication draws on the heterogenous corpus of data produced during a PhD study of the French speaking online Pokémon fandom: the observation of two French Pokémon Facebook fan groups of several thousand members in 2018-2019 and then archived every 2,003 post around 7 important dates; Twitter data; an online survey (n=2931) of Pokémon fans; and 40 semi-directive interviews. I articulate quantitative analysis of general trends, dynamics and temporalities of hype with a qualitative analysis of its production and circulation by fans.

Edoardo Biscossi

Hype and virality: libidinal investment, speculative temporalities and networked subjectivities

My proposal sets out to study the phenomenon of hype through the framework of contagion and networked subjectivity, drawing from critical theories of virality (Sampson; Parikka), network ontologies (Deleuze & Guattari; Simondon), and affect theory (Blackman; Portanova). The aim is to understand how hype, as a performative force emerging through affective contagion, produces material and discursive effects across economic, political, aesthetic, and techno-cultural fields.

The notion of contagion is used to conceptualise hype as a molecular process of virality and imitation, central to the structuring of contemporary cultures, imaginaries, and hegemonic narratives. Through this molecular framing, my proposal sidesteps notions of social influence derived from neo-Darwinist memetic theory or crowd psychology—where hype would operate through manipulation, deception, or contamination of rational cognition. Instead, I propose an affective topology of hype, in which porous, networked subjectivities come into relation through flows of imitation, suggestion, and desire (drawing from Gabriel Tarde's social epidemiology).

The significance of this proposal is at least twofold. On one hand, it aims to understand the subjective investment of different actors in the speculative and hyperstitional temporalities of hype. This will involve looking at the work of communications practitioners in trend research, foresight, cultural and creative strategy—a sector in which I have over eight years of experience. On the other hand, the proposal reflects on the question of methods and on the role of critique in the study of hype, exploring how critical practices can address hype through libidinal and aesthetic engagement rather than through attempts at deconstruction, prevention, or control.

Yu-Won Youn

Fandom and the Creation of Hype

While hype can be associated with the attention of the general public, its inception is often found in the subculture of fandoms. From sports to pop music, to books and arts and more, fandoms create and maintain attention on subjects that may be overlooked otherwise, shaping the culture people experience. Through a panel of scholars working within the fields of media, information, and culture a conversation about the role of fandom in the creation and maintenance of hype along with the different ways it manifests in different spaces can be had. An exploration of fandom hype allows key questions to be asked including the following: How is hype created within and acting within fandom? What does hype look like within different fandoms and what does this reveal about hype as a subject? What is the role of authenticity in hype within fandom spaces and when it leaves such spaces?

As a diasporic Korean academic with a background in information sciences and cultural studies, I bring a knowledge of the K-Pop fandom and the ways different actors create hype within it. Being a bilingual internet scholar allowed me an insight into how hype surrounding K-Pop operates differently in English and Korean spaces along with the motivations for these differences. This fandom also opens up conversations about the role of new technologies as well as a look into the workings of orientalism and race as a fandom hinged on the ethnicity of an art form. I would love to join in conversation with people studying other fandoms such as sports or books as well as people coming from different backgrounds such as marketers who have experience attempting to utilize this hype (eg Duolingo's marketing strategy) through this panel and open a dialogue about hype through this lens.

Hernán Borisonik

Aesthetics of Hype: Affect and Acceleration

In this talk, we propose a brief critical exploration of hype as an affective technology, a form of anticipatory valorization, and an aesthetic of acceleration. Drawing on its operation within digital economies—where it turns rumours into investments and expectations into spectacle—I aim to examine how this regime impacts the field of contemporary art.

From a philosophical-political perspective, and engaging with recent examples (NFTs, institutional communication campaigns, works designed for virality), I will address two key dimensions:

1] Art as permanent teaser: What happens when the promise replaces the work itself, and novelty becomes value in and of itself? How are forms of creation, circulation, and reception reshaped when value precedes meaning?

2] Tensions between hype, value, and precarity: How do circuits of visibility, speculative logic, and the material conditions of artistic labour intersect? What modes of making are displaced by this anticipatory logic?

Rather than closing the discussion, this intervention seeks to open up a field of questions about how art inhabits the affective regimes of the present. It is an invitation to think about the intersections between art and hype as an ambiguous zone, where capture and potential coexist. Is another temporality imaginable for artistic practices—less reactive, less governed by the urgency of the algorithm?

Panel 4. Hype, Entrepreneurship, Venture Capital, and Emerging Technologies

Chair: Sebastian Roberts

Shawn Skelton

Making Sense of Hype in Funding: A Quantum Technologies Case Study

Within the philosophy of science, hype is usually understood as a science communication problem, relatively inconsequential in science funding. In science and technologies studies, it is agreed that hype is present in science funding, but disagreement remains as to whether it is intrinsically harmful. In practice, most working within the quantum ecosystem accept that hype is really present both within science communication and research.

Grant applications are a direct site through which hype can enter into funding decisions. In this talk, I adopt an idealistic view of grant applications as the process whereby scientists suggest potential knowledge to society, and society exerts pressure on the direction of science.

However, I suggest one concrete pathway to hype that directly targets physics funding. I identify a specific performative speech used by grant applicants for "basic/exploratory research" in physics, "technology by extrapolation" (TbE). I suggest that TbE is neutral and well understood within "basic/exploratory" science funding but can constitute hype when used in applications for "near-term, application-focused" research funding.

I then give two case studies of hype in quantum applications of sustainable development goals. The first case study is a real-life example demonstrating hype in Quantum for SDGs. The second is hypothetical and engineered to illustrate an ethical disagreement in the physics community: Is it commendable to direct funding within a hyped topic towards a socially desirable goal, or do unlikely-to-succeed projects constitute an opportunity cost for socially important research?

I will conclude that this remains an important but underlooked ethical divide within quantum technologies and suggest that the disagreement hinges on two practical judgments. First, whether grants are a rational process with genuine opportunity costs between more and less likely and desirable projects. Second, do unlikely-to-succeed projects constitute an opportunity cost for more interesting research directions within a discipline?

Isa Luiten

Sustaining the Hype: On the Durability of the NewSpace Imaginary in Europe

Hype is the rocket fuel of NewSpace, and NewSpace has become the central force in shaping Europe's outer space industry.

NewSpace is a powerful imaginary that is characterized by the belief that the future of outer space exploration lies not in state-led bureaucracy, but rather in entrepreneurship and commercialization of the industry. NewSpace originated in the US after NASA's setbacks (e.g., the Columbia disaster in 2003) and was later popularized by the Space Frontier Foundation in 2004. It further developed in the shadows of entrepreneurs like Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos, but also travelled to Europe where it has become increasingly

institutionalized in the European Space Agency (ESA). Though in Europe, NewSpace is not a wholesale break, but rather a narrative tool to catalyse hybrid public-private partnerships.

I build on Borup et al. (2006), Heupel et al., (2024) and van Lente et al. (2013) in their notion that (entrepreneurial) hype is a performative force that mobilizes resources, legitimizes actors and shapes the pace and direction of technological development. My research investigates how entrepreneurial hype sustains the NewSpace imaginary and how, in turn, NewSpace creates fertile ground for hype practices to flourish. NewSpace entrepreneurs imagine themselves as revolutionizing the industry and use hype deliberately in pitches and conversations with potential investors, like venture capitalists, but also agencies like ESA and NASA who still play a dominant role in the industry. In turn, the ESA is reinforcing these hype practices through "risktaker" initiatives like the φ-labs, Business Incubation Centres and IRIS².

I aim to contribute to hype studies through the case study of the central role of entrepreneurial hype in Europe's space industry. I also aim to experiment expanding hype studies from discrete technologies to imaginaries and infrastructures. I demonstrate not only how hype can inspire policy and institutional infrastructures, but also how NewSpace has avoided the 'trough of disillusionment' by perpetually rebooting itself and in that way avoiding collapse by staying consistently vague.

Sebastian Roberts

The Yin and Yang of Selling Out: Cool and Hype Between Capital and Race

To sell out or not to sell out is—or, rather, was—a reputation-defining question, policing the border between the "authentically" cool and "mere" hype. Once the most derogatory of accusations against a cultural practitioner, "selling out" has all but vanished from discourses surrounding art and commerce. Does this mark the triumph of hype over cool, or has selling out become cool? Did the concept of "selling out" outlive its usefulness, or was it a false dilemma to begin with?

This paper will answer these questions by way of defining cool, hype, and their epistemological mediator, hip. Briefly, cool is a way of being: a particular mode of relating to extrinsic reality based upon phenomenological experience, and consequent suspicion, of that reality. Hip is a way of knowing: a meta-discourse about coolness fueled by a combination of neophilia and subcultural capital. Hype is the commodification and trafficking of hip's specialized knowledge.

However, digging into the American origins of cool, hip, and hype requires attending to the operation of race within and across these three phenomena. The affordances of cool, as a way of being, vary considerably along the color line; so too does the value of hip's specialized knowledge, and its distribution throughout hype's circuits of exchange. Consequently, between subcultures that are differently racialized (e.g. punk as "white," hip-hop as "black"), there are different ramifications to selling out: what is being sold, what is being gained, what is being lost, and whether or not it can be taken back.

Sebastian Roberts is a Ph.D. candidate in the Humanities Department at York University in Toronto, Canada and is the recipient of a 2024 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Doctoral Fellowship. His doctoral research is focused upon "cool" as cultural capital and the politics of right-wing resentment.

Panel 5. Hype in Science and its Histories

Chair: Ivan Flis

Mathieu Fechant

Negentropy; Hype; and Quantum Dreams: On the Entropic Dynamics of Knowledge and Technology

In the first half of this talk , we will explore how meaning , utility and belief coalesce in shapes of information flow, and how hype —far from being accidental— functions as an entropyreduction tool within socio-technical systems. While trying to contrast self-organizing hype with obvious propaganda, we will address the moral risk and global dynamic of the cognitive global system and try to situate that discourse in terms of cognitive ecology, and econophysics.

In a second part we will make use of the speaker personal knowledge of quantum computing field to comment and elaborate on hype processes at play in it. From NISQ-era promises to the engineering-research tensions within corporate labs (e.g., Google, IBM, Alice Bob), we analyze the technological, epistemological, and organizational stakes. By trying to disentangle real development and merely purposeful misunderstandings we will try to give a clear minded presentation of the structure of the scientific work and its questions.

Drawing on literature around energy consumption, computational irreversibility, and the "entropy of knowledge," we also ask the mirror question: Can quantum computing deliver on its hype, and is it a structural mirror of broader cognitive-economic dynamics?

Muhammad Unggul Karami

The hype of quantum in the academic sphere: Promises and expectation of the future of quantum technology in peer-reviewed literature

Quantum technology is a term that combines two seemingly different concepts (Roberson, 2021). 'Quantum' has traditionally been perceived as a domain so complex that it is accessible primarily to specialists, while 'technology' is something that everyone can use. The emergence of this term signals the transition of quantum theory from a purely theoretical framework in physics to a source of new technology development. Quantum technology is nowadays regarded as an emerging technology that expected to have novel applications in computing, sensing, and communication.

In the field of emerging technology, expectations and promises play important roles (Borup et al., 2006). Not only do expectations align scientists around common goals, but they can also stimulate resources and support (Eames et al., 2006). Using the concept of sociotechnical imaginaries (Jasanoff and Kim, 2015), one can to relate expectations and promises of the future to the individuals, institutions, and practices shaping the present.

Previous research has shown that these expectations travel through our society (Konrad and Alvial Palavicino, 2017). Moreover, in the context of emerging technology, expectations articulated by scientists and researchers within academia shape the expectations in other spheres, such as media and policy (Caulfield and Condit, 2012).

In this study, we conducted a qualitative content analysis of highly cited papers on the topic of quantum technologies from 2007 to 2023. Each year, we analysed the top 10 articles to capture the discourse.

Drawing on the concepts from the sociology of expectations and sociotechnical imaginaries, we interpreted the embedded expectations and promises regarding quantum technology. Our analysis revealed two distinct ways of conveying expectations: the 'use case' and 'goal'. The 'use case' is related to the notion that quantum technology can address problems. While the 'goal' is related to the forms of the future in which quantum technology will be widely available.

Ivan Flis

Is longue durée hype just plain old fam? Some historical notes on the cycles of Nikola Tesla's fame

"The space people have now stated that Nikola was born on board their ship on a flight from Venus, and that they landed on the Earth at midnight, between July 9 and 10, 1856," wrote Margaret Storm, an American fashion journalist-turned-New-Ager in her 1959 samizdat book Return of the Dove. Tesla, and his mother Đuka; as Storm told it, disembarked from a spaceship in the mountains of Lika, right at the Austrian military frontier with the Ottomans. They were taken up by Milutin Tesla, a local Orthodox parish priest, as his wife and son. In 1856, two Venusians became Serbian frontiersfolk, and as the nineteenth century would come to a close, Nikola would move to New York and invent electrical modernity. So it goes, as one strange version of this famous story. In this talk, I will contrast the New Age construction of Tesla the Venusian with two other Tesla's – first, the 1977 Tesla as the perfect Yugoslav in the hands of the Zagreb-based electrical engineer Tomo Bosanac. Second, the 1919 construction of Tesla by Tesla himself and his editor Hugo Gernsback into an inspirational ideal inventor for American boy experimenters. My aim is to provoke the conceptual frameworks of hype studies by carefully retracting how the audiences of Nikola Tesla throughout the 20th century absorbed, inflected, and amplified his fame, layering and intermixing it with early amateur tech cultures, New Age counterculture, and Yugoslav state communism. I hope that my analysis will provoke a discussion about the contrasts between the analytical concepts of hype, fame, reputation, and self-fashioning, and how the careful deployment of their distinctions in a historical reconstruction allows us to understand how a nineteenth century inventor of some renown could become everything from a synecdoche for electrical modernity to the brand name of twenty-first century technofascism.

Tomás Criado; Brais Estévez Vilariño

How hot is heat? The hype of extreme weather and its predicaments

We live in a time of overheated atmospheres, both in meteorological and political terms. A hard-to-grasp climatic mutation – as Bruno Latour called it – is underway. Yet, every summer, red-saturated satellite images flood our screens, news of temperature records being broken spread constantly one extreme weather event at a time. Forecasts have become central in popular culture, and visualizations of extreme meteorological events circulate with unprecedented intensity: is heat a hype? Indeed, heat appears everywhere yet strangely absent. Despite its rising presence and our omnipresent worries – not to mention its enraged negation – extreme heat feels like a hype that doesn't quite manage to alter modernist ways of inhabiting. Heat is indeed becoming an innovation hype affecting policies and triggering technological solutions, also activating citizen initiatives. However, in some of these instances something doesn't seem to click, heat appearing as a sinister, abstract or metaphorical entity, a proxy for other conversations, like capitalism or class struggle. In this contribution, we explore the recent explosion of interest in heat in popular culture, bridging hype studies with the STS-inflicted political ecology of Bruno Latour, Isabelle Stengers and others. Drawing on press analysis and a study of social media from the Spanish public sphere since 2023, part of our ongoing ethnographic interest in the transformation of urban inhabiting in conditions of extreme heat, we wish to reflect on Gaia's overheated hype and its predicaments. Rather than debunking hype, we wish to treat it as a symptom in a psychoanalytic sense: of a fundamental disorientation and an unease to forge plural inhabitable futures beyond modern forms of living. We ask: how hot is heat? Put

otherwise, how might its hype help heat turn into a mobilising force, not just a problem, enabling to translate our contemporary worries into more careful practices transforming our modes of inhabiting?

Panel session 2

11th of September, 9:00–11:00

Panel 6. Socio-Ethical Dilemmas and Health Hype

Chair: Roanne van Voorst

Thomas Tsakalakis

Adverse and (Potentially) Beneficial Effects of Science Hype on How the Socio-Ethical Conundrums Concerning Rare Diseases Are Addressed

Pharmaceutical companies are reluctant to fund the development of medicines that might prevent/treat rare life-threatening diseases because small patient populations do not constitute a viable market. Low-prevalence diseases and the drugs that could potentially cure them have been named "orphan." Nonetheless, there are about 8,000 distinct rare medical conditions, which afflict over 350 million people worldwide. Hence, the fact that the terms "rare" and "orphan" have been established in public discourse by science communicators constitutes a case of hype in reverse, given that the extent and the importance of this issue are deliberately, unfairly, and exaggeratedly downplayed; when it comes to the public dialogue amongst citizens, experts, and policymakers about how best to address the ethico-political controversies related to rare disorders, this exacerbates a problem that is already knotty due to the differing priorities and values that come into play. The "median voter" finds it unreasonable, at least from a utilitarian perspective, that a budget-constrained healthcare system should divert its attention from common diseases to rare ones. However, the media's strategical deflation of expectations regarding the likely effectiveness of new orphan drugs should not affect the pertinent biomedical research, which may help us better understand the genetic basis of common diseases and thereby achieve breakthroughs in treating them; additionally, it abides by the social obligation to promote the expansion of medical knowledge in general. Science hype can occupy a critical role in reframing the aforementioned issue, thus contributing to the fight against rare diseases. The way to achieve this is not by arousing overly optimistic expectations about alleged "wonder drugs" that will provide maximum health benefits with minimal cost, as this might erode the public's trust in science, but by overemphasizing the fact that civic space will be dangerously constricted if the welfare of the worse off is not prioritized.

Gili Yaron; Violet Petit-Steeghs

Hyping healthcare: the dynamics of innovative healthcare concepts

In recent decades, healthcare has seen the rise of numerous 'innovative concepts' that aim to transform care provision—from person-centered care and resilience to more recent additions like culturally responsive care. In shaping stakeholders' understanding and delivery of care, such concepts can be understood as 'linguistic technologies' (Dehue 2023). As they circulate in policy and practice, healthcare concepts often exhibit hype-like dynamics, including temporal booms, overpromising, and strategic rhetoric (Bareis et al. 2023). Yet, apart from scattered work on healthcare 'buzzwords,' little attention has been paid to healthcare concepts as hypes (Bensaude Vincent 2014; Penkler et al. 2019).

To better understand the hype-like dynamics of healthcare concepts, we explored the emergence and embedding of three key examples: person-centered care, evidence-based medicine, and positive health. Drawing on an analysis of twenty scientific publications, we identify strikingly similar trajectories across all

three. Each concept begins as the catchphrase of a critical movement within science and/or science policy, aiming to challenge the status quo. Proponents' emancipatory rhetoric then mobilizes field actors—policy-makers, managers, healthcare professionals—to 'implement' or 'roll out' the concept using various tools developed for this purpose. These efforts, however, often take a top-down approach to conceptual innovation, marked by excessive optimism, instrumentalism, and a limited grasp of complexity. In practice, this approach leads to poor tailoring, conceptual fuzziness, and tokenism—often resulting in cynical disillusionment about the 'hype'.

We conclude that while conceptual innovation holds real transformative potential due to its rallying force, stakeholders must nevertheless avoid the pitfalls of hype. This requires fostering a complexityinformed approach that supports sustained stakeholder engagement, critical reflection at all organizational levels, and the circulation of diverse forms of knowledge.

Roanne van Voorst

The Productive Power of Hype: Understanding Why AI Expectations Persist in Healthcare

Numerous studies demonstrate that expectations of AI in healthcare are often unrealistically high: real-world examples frequently reveal that the hype surrounding AI is not confirmed by the daily experiences of healthcare professionals. While the question of what can go wrong with AI has been extensively addressed, a more intriguing question remains: why does the hype continue to persist despite setbacks and limitations in practice? What gives the hype its productive force?

This paper explores this question through a case study of the increasing collaboration between healthcare professionals and AI, based on ethnographic research conducted in seven hospitals across different parts of the world. I argue that the hype about AI's role in hospitals is not primarily driven by practical experiences of error-free performance but by a collectively shared belief in its future potential and autonomous development.

Two factors underpin the sustained power of this hype. First, despite acknowledging AI's current limitations, healthcare workers continue to believe in its future possibilities and in its autonomous evolution as an inevitable process. This belief possesses a form of force and autonomy that is difficult to stop, actively fueling further investments and engagement in AI innovations. Second, I demonstrate that healthcare professionals tend to downplay the importance of their diagnostic intuition—an aspect AI does not replicate—in public discourse. This tendency is driven by a desire to conform to narratives of evidence-based and rational practice, which marginalizes vital aspects of caregiving and increases the risk of healthcare being increasingly supplanted by technology.

Theoretically, this article contributes two insights: first, that trust and investment in AI are shaped more by collective beliefs about its future than by practical experience; and second, that the productive power of hype operates in practice through shared expectations, which continue to stimulate AI development and integration—even in the face of disappointment or critique.

Sofie Kronberger

"It's not all that" - Negotiating Data Imperatives in Biomedicine

In the increasingly digitized, datafied, and automated world of audiology, artificial Intelligence promises a revolution of biomedical hearing care. AI-based devices and apps now allow users to impact the configurations of their hearing aids more actively and in a time-sensitive manner, suggesting new forms of medical knowledge production, linked to a promise of user empowerment. This comes hand in hand with a perceived dissolution of boundaries, diminishing the distinctions of medical technologies and consumer

electronics, patients and users, and preferences and pathologies. Drawing on six months of ethnographic research in Austria, Denmark, and Germany, my research suggests that many companies seem to embrace the hype around AI publicly, while at the same time showing a more reserved and nuanced understanding of the technology in more private settings.

In this presentation, I examine not only what hype does, but also how hype is done. I first explore the history of Big Tech in audiology, showcasing how economic interests have always shaped the construction of biomedical hearing, hearing aids, and audiology. I give an overview of some of the effects of the emerging data imperative (Sadowski 2019), impacting current understandings of good patienthood and good hearing. I then examine how actors actively engage in the production and negotiation of myth and hype around AI and Big Data in an effort to shape patient subjectivities, while at the same time counteracting this hype towards other industry players.

Albina Abzalova

Will AI take over our jobs? The Evolution of Algorithmic Technologies in Dialysis Centers. The Case of the United Arab Emirates

The narrative surrounding artificial intelligence (AI) often centers on the fear that it will replace human workers, sparking widespread concerns and anxieties. Many believe that algorithms will primarily take over repetitive tasks and administrative activities, leading to increased efficiency and cost savings. However, others worry that AI-driven automation could result in significant job losses across various industries, potentially causing widespread layoffs and economic disruption. This ongoing debate raises an important question: Are these fears overhyped, or do they reflect a genuine and imminent challenge to the workforce? In this study, we examine collaboration of algorithms and nurses in healthcare, and whether the concerns about job displacement are justified or exaggerated.

This study explores how algorithmic technologies shape nursing work in dialysis centers in the United Arab Emirates from an ethnographic perspective. Data were collected from three dialysis centers and two hospitals through immersive observations over two months, along with semistructured interviews. Additionally, roundtable discussions with senior and emergency dialysis nurses highlighted the implications of algorithm-driven technologies in their daily practice. In this study, we examine collaboration of algorithms and nurses, and whether the concerns about job displacement are justified or exaggerated, and how algorithms are transforming the nature of care in healthcare settings. Based on the research conducted, we argue that nursing work remains irreplaceable, and embodiment plays a key role in the successful implementation of algorithmic technologies

Panel 7. Political Communication and Disinformation

Chair: Muhammad Osama Shafiq

Anna Kraher; Lars Pinkwart

The Politics of Critique in the Economy of AI Hype

Our contribution examines the role of critique in the context of technology hype, with a particular focus on generative AI. We argue that the relationship between hype and can take on co-constitutive qualities, since hype has effectively operationalised critical inquiry by subjecting critique to its logistics of exchange and value. In such cases, critique mirrors the reductive quality of hype – ideal for circulation and proliferation – by distilling critical ideas into shareable takes, talking points and common mantras that spread more easily than their more reflective, self-aware and ambiguous counterparts. This embrace of platform logics, financialization and mythmaking might seem like an appropriate strategy in order to "counter" hype effectively, yet we would caution that it often increases the flattening of discourse that hype produces in the first place. Aside from a reification of the foundational myths of technologies such as AI, critical scholarship has a tendency to iterate on its own myths and casuistries, which have been effectively dispelled but still seem to hang around or have developed a life of their own, such as the myth of the black box. Further, the endless flow of new hyped-up terminology sweeping over from both computer science and corporate AI research brings with it the risk of providing an intriguing array of novel frames for critique which essentially amounts to an important, but repetitive critique of a hazy notion of "technology", which is rejuvenated through the modalities of hype.

Muhammad Osama Shafiq; Sadia Baqar

Hype in Politics and Political Communication: A Case Study of Pakistani Politics

The concept of "hype" in political communication extends beyond established frameworks such as framing, agenda setting, selective perception, and mis/disinformation. While these models explain how political narratives are shaped, hype encompasses a broader, emotionally driven, and digitally amplified form of communication that reshapes public discourse and social behaviour. Situated within the emerging field of hype studies, this research explores how attention economies, emotionally resonant content, and algorithmic amplification influence political communication and civic engagement.

This study examines the role of AI-generated algorithms and social media amplification in producing and sustaining political hype, with a particular focus on Pakistan from 2014 to 2024. This decade witnessed a transformation in the country's political landscape, marked by the integration of digital technologies into political discourse and mobilisation. Using a qualitative, case study approach, the research investigates how digital media contributed to the emergence of new political norms, strategies, and behaviours.

Special attention is given to how youth engagement with digital platforms has driven these changes, turning social media into a central arena for political debate, identity formation, and emotional expression. The study aims to understand how hype is constructed, how it resonates with audiences especially young voters and how it shapes both short-term political outcomes and longer-term societal shifts.

By analysing Pakistan's recent political developments through the lens of hype studies, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the interplay between media, technology, and political culture in the Global South, with broader implications for the study of political communication in digital societies.

Ozan Altan Altinok

Low expectations within conservative wing of discourse coalition for innovation and technoscience: integrating vanguard visions to therapeutic consent

Drawing on the sociology of expectations, this paper inquires what objects, promises, and audiences are invoked in two examples of biotechnology discourse on organoids, MCELS (Multicellular Engineered Living Systems) in the USA and REBIRTH (From REgenerative BIology to Reconstructive THerapy) in Germany, and how that affects therapeutic consent. Therapeutic consent discussion in the literature has been focusing on singular discourse on the objects of biotechnology. This paper focuses on making of organoids embedded in two very large research projects of biotechnology in two comparative cases to fill the gap between cultures of imaginations and discourses. The paper claims that (a) both projects are connected through shared objects within vanguard visions joined through a discourse coalition. The discourse coalitions that are making them further can be connected at the object level both by the low expectations and the techno-scientific imaginaries that are more relevant to public imagination by nested frameworks of vanguard visions and sociotechnical imaginaries. This connection is necessary for the object to be considered within the research and development of the object, whereas when the research programme is finished and the object itself is delivered, the low expectation and the calibration thereafter is dependent on this network (b) When the object [organoid] itself is a research object and a part of a discourse coalition is and an applied healthcare object at the same time, lowering of expectations and recalibration of the higher expectations are necessary for debates around consent as enabling conditions of consent in the very first place.

Salvatore Romano

"From Hype to Factual Errors: Moderating Generative Search for Election Integrity"

Search engines are racing to integrate large-language-model onto their result pages, promising a new era of "generative search." Yet a close look at how these systems behave in live electoral contexts reveals a far uncertain picture. Drawing on the first public dataset of its kind, 5 561 prompt-answer pairs scraped from Microsoft Copilot during the 2023 campaigns in Switzerland, Bavaria and Hesse, AI Forensics shows that enthusiasm should give way to caution. Expert coders found that 30% of replies contained factual errors, while another 39% simply evaded the question, leaving barely a third of answers fully accurate. This evidence underscores the danger of delivering stochastic text generation as authoritative search output.

The panel dissects the mixed-methods workflow behind those numbers: multilingual adversarial prompting in four languages, automated data collection for every response and its citations, and double-blind annotation guided by a codebook. We show how the resulting error patterns like hallucinated polling figures, invented scandals and phantom coalitions are *systemic*, not sporadic, raising immediate compliance questions under the EU Digital Services Act, which designates election information as a high-risk scenario demanding rigorous risk assessment and mitigation.

Hype often celebrates what chatbots *can* do; we focus on what they still *cannot*. Building on daily monitoring of Microsoft Copilot across seven EU languages during the 2024 European Parliament race, we trace how platforms belatedly deployed political-content filters "policy shield" messages, and we will discuss why this opaque, reactive approach remains insufficient.

By the end of the session, participants will take away a replicable audit pipeline for evaluating generative-search answers in any language, fresh empirical evidence that moderation is indispensable yet currently inadequate, and a set of concrete policy proposals to align generative search with democratic norms and DSA obligations.

Panel 8. Decoding Scripts and Rituals of Hype

Chair: Kevin Laibson

Maximilan Roßmann

Are Expectations to Be Believed or Imagined? A Speech-Act Lens on Technology Hype and its Computational Assessment.

The sociology of expectations (SoE) stands as the most influential theory in the study of hypes, making it crucial to distinguish what is to be imagined or believed about the future. This distinction is often overlooked: Under the umbrella term of "expectations", science-fiction claims are often grouped alongside IPCC climate reports or financial statements, despite fundamentally different relationships to truth and obligation. Speech act theory, developed by Austin and Searle, clarifies this difference by showing that language is more than a tool for representing facts but a form of action. Searle's classification highlights how assertives commit the speaker to a proposition's truth, directives urge the hearer to act, commissives promise future action, expressives reveal psychological states, and declarations change social realities when uttered by the right authority and ritual. Most utterances blend these types, and their effect depends on context and culture.

This framework helps explain how forecasts, visionary frames, promises, and scenarios operate within hype. Forecasts and promises seek belief and create obligations, frames seek attention, and imaginative scenarios invite structured discourse without requiring commitment to believe. When these attitudes are conflated, explanation and evaluation suffer: unsupported forecasts and accidental promises mislead cooperation, frames misdirect attention, while imaginative scenarios can still provide insight even if untrue. Tracing SoE's evolution, I map pathologies of hype such as belief inflation, over-commitment, free-floating fantasy, and frame dominance. Computational tools can track trends and language, but often miss the performative force of speech, speaker authority, or the balance between belief and imagination. To address this, I propose a hybrid approach: automated trend screening followed by human audits of evidence, intent, and epistemic value. The aim is clearer diagnostics that respect belief, imagination, and framing, and foster a shared vocabulary for SoE scholars, philosophers, and computational researchers.

Kevin Laibson

The Script Behind the Hype: Decoding the Dramaturgy of Tech Announcements

This presentation applies a dramaturgical lens to high-profile product announcements in the tech industry, focusing particularly on commercial future technologies such as virtual and augmented reality. Drawing from my background in theater and performance, I argue that these product rollouts, especially events like Apple's Vision Pro reveal and Meta's Metaverse keynotes, are not simply informational presentations, but carefully staged performances that mirror the structures and tropes of dramatic theater. From charismatic CEOs as showmen to suspenseful reveals and utopian epilogues, these announcements follow familiar narrative arcs designed to generate emotional investment and public belief.

By reverse-engineering the theatrical structures embedded in these events, we can better understand the implicit values and strategic priorities of the companies behind them. What stories are they telling? Who are they casting as the hero? What realities are they asking us to suspend? This dramaturgical reading invites a broader critical literacy around hype messaging: not as deception or marketing excess, but as a kind of

corporate storytelling—one that reveals not only what these companies want us to see, but how they want us to feel.

Rather than offering a sweeping critique or celebratory analysis, this talk centers on the performance mechanics of hype itself. In doing so, it aims to open a conversation about how we, as audiences, might become more discerning participants; less passive consumers of the next "revolutionary" device, and more engaged readers of the stagecraft behind it.

Sun-ha Hong

Technological Hype and the Rituals of Stasis

If there was a highbrow/lowbrow division for cultural techniques, hype would traditionally rank among the ignoble: a form of modern superstition that deserves scorn, but not the respect of sustained academic analysis. Focusing on technological innovations, I argue that this 'superstitious' element is the point: a public ritual for an eschatological myth of salvation, which sublimates popular desire for social change into impotent anticipation.

The apocalyptic-salvific dimensions of technological fantasies are well documented, both in past futures of railroads and telegraphs (e.g. Carolyn Marvin, David Noble) and in present cultures of future predictions (e.g. Joel Dinerstein, Alina Utrata). This mythological production is today organised into routinised rituals of speculation: 21st century consumers are invited to conduct 'detective work' on whether LLMs are 'intelligent' in the same way that 18th century spectators paid to guess whether automata could really play chess or digest food. Unverified predictions become elevated into 'invented laws of nature', which endow these practices with a sense of cosmic meaning: here I relay archival anecdotes around the uptake of Moore's Law.

Throughout, hype as ritual endows technological predictions with a teleological aura; the object of belief is not the artifact itself, but the ritualised experience of temporality. From Google Glass to the Metaverse, the wasteheap of failed predictions avoid accountability by throwing their collective weight toward the wider promissory horizon. It is the very idea of speed and breakthroughs - and its visceral, masculine affects, once eulogised by the Italian Futurists - that organises the cult of belief around, ventures like the Singularity University or SpaceX. I conclude that hype is a powerful ritual for stasis. It keeps us in the waiting room of teleology, in which we are promised transformative technological change will sweep away all present problems. There is no need for action, only ritualised anticipation.

Anthony Stagliano

The Evaluative Imperative

"Four out of five stars." "If I could give it zero stars, I would." And so goes the usual form of review that has exceeded the confines of the newspaper column dedicated to professional culture journalists supposedly applying their expertise in evaluating works of art, music, theater, etc. Now, instead, we have a different, more diffuse, and more universal imperative to evaluate, rank, and review. What we have is a cultural demand to filter experiences of all sorts through public reviews. Likely, in reality, very few of us write such reviews on a regular basis, leaving much of the work to those who have honed expertise in this vernacular art, building hype around things and experiences we might not otherwise have noticed. Nonetheless, and this is the important element, the algorithms that power recommendations—that power much of our networked lives—want and need more and more of these rankings, evaluations, and reviews. Whatever their utility is for us in choosing which vacuum to order from Amazon, such reviews are non-negotiable because they are part of the engine that drives our digital lives. And their tendrils extend into dangerous territory. Speaking of Amazon, for instance, their workforce of delivery drivers, like those for Uber, labor under the

constant threat of their total ranking dipping below a minimal numerical threshold, which would mean being removed from the platform--fired, that is.

At the same time, the evaluative imperative forms a stable set of aesthetic conventions; the imperative to evaluate according to accepted norms; the aesthetic imperative to make something for the purposes of being evaluated. As well as the mediated enjoyment of reviewing experiences, pleasures, events, tastes, sounds, sights, smells, locations, and other people. The mediated enjoyment of having to. It's also a problem of representation, and in that sense, it's doubly aesthetic and sociopolitical. There is a difference, in short, between the effects of a "one-star" review of an Uber driver, and a "one-star" review of a National Park on TripAdvisor, even if the aesthetic norms of reviewing are stable across both.

Meanwhile, this imperative puts into motion an estranged form of we, a potentially and finally pluralized we but one that is trapped in a vectorialist loop, a loop of producing data for the capture of those who control the flows of information.

How does said imperative affect everyone if not everyone posts such reviews or is subject, in an explicit way, to them? What does said imperative reveal about the current moment and its particular risks and opportunities for articulating one's life, self, desires, and aims? What kinds of sociality are enabled or closed-off by the hype driven by constant evaluation, ranking, ordering and so on?

Panel 9. Hype, Emotions and Panics

Chair: Isa Luiten

Oksana Dorofeeva; Dominic Lammar

Laughing at or with hype? An analysis of AI hype memes

AI hype is at its peak – and so are critical scholarly efforts to make sense of it. While research in Science and Technology Studies (STS) has illuminated how hyped expectations circulate in media and policy discourses, the role of digital cultures has received comparatively little attention. This paper examines how AI hype is enacted, negotiated, or contested in memes, offering insight into how hype travels and mutates in everyday digital contexts.

Meme studies have demonstrated that these cultural artifacts play a role in complex societal dynamics, from forging queer solidarity to mainstreaming far right ideologies. Memes are compelling, shareable, adaptable framing devices that easily travel between contexts and generate emotions. These qualities give memes strong promotional qualities that brands have attempted to utilise for viral marketing, showing memes' potential to produce hype. At the same time, memes can parody hyperbolic expectations. Thus, we consider them a compelling lens through which to study the dynamics of AI hype.

Bringing together STS scholarship on expectations, with meme studies, and sociology of humour, this paper conducts a multimodal discursive analysis of a corpus of memes portraying expectations of AI. The aim is to explore how memes reify or critically deconstruct hyperbolic expectations towards AI. In doing so, the analysis identifies a range of positions about AI hype: from 'criti-hype' – a critique of hype that simultaneously feeds on and sustains the hype – to a more thorough deconstruction of its underlying assumptions, and the ambiguous, shifting space in between.

Situated at the intersection of digital culture and critical hype studies, this contribution raises new questions about the dynamics of AI hype. How is AI hype reflected in online cultures? Can memetic framings provide a critical resistance towards hype by subverting the assumptions behind it, or do they reproduce its narrative excesses under the guise of humour?

Aishik Saha; Yash Sharma; Raqib Naik

Digital Vigilantism as Hype: Defining and Mapping Cow-Protection Narratives on Instagram

Under the current period of Hindu nationalist ascendancy in India, anti-minority vigilante has proliferated. A prominent feature of this form of vigilante violence is its digital nature, with regularized 'performances' and 'spectacles' of vigilante violence against minorities being livestreamed or posted online for popular engagement. This paper argues that this form of 'digital vigilantism' in India exemplifies a distinct form of political violence, whose rise can best be understood through the lens of hype—where sensationalism, collective imaginaries, and algorithmic affordances collide. In our paper, we propose an understanding of digital vigilantism as hype that distinguishes it from adjacent phenomena like moral panic or disinformation, emphasizing four key characteristics observed in our original dataset of 1,023 vigilante accounts. This includes amplification via spectacle wherein the degree of graphic imagery in a video is linked to the algorithmic promotion of the account. The nature of amplification is also inextricably tied to narratives of affective mobilization drawing on notions of collective religious and civilizational victimhood that help

manufacture 'hype' around digital vigilante action. These amplified affects subsequently function within a digital network of legitimation wherein linkages of political and ideological affiliation legitimize and imbue impunity to vigilante action. Lastly, we draw attention to the monetization of the aesthetics and affects of ethno-religious nationalism, mediated through digital vigilante content. In doing so, the paper shows how the discursive tropes ("save the cow," "defend dharma") and framings (Hindus vs. the Muslim 'Other') and platform incentives coalesce into a self-reinforcing ecosystem. We conclude by proposing a taxonomy of "vigilante hype" that can guide future studies on online extremism and algorithmic violence.

Khushi Agarwal; Vijayansh Wasson

From Threat to Spectacle: The Temporal Dynamics of Immigration Hype in Western Political Discourse

Hype is a powerful tool that enhances stories, shapes perception, and drives political agendas (Kukla, 2014). In the discussions of Western immigration, hype turns migrants from policy subjects into symbols of fear, economic insecurity, or cultural threat (The Guardian, 2025). This project examines how immigration-related hype gains traction and political utility, showing how emotional and symbolic representations overshadow empirical assessments in public discourse.

The project analyses the emergence and evolution of hype through a discursive and temporal lens, focusing on how narratives are constructed and intensified in political speeches, media coverage, and audience interactions. Drawing on framing theory and discourse analysis, it identifies recurring linguistic patterns and shifts in emphasis that signal the rise of hype. It also takes into account when these narratives emerge, or group around elections, humanitarian crises, or economic-unrest to gain a clearer insight into patterns that allow hype to build momentum and capture public attention.

Immigration-related hype arises from the interaction of political-strategy (Downes, 2017), media-framing (Eberl et al., 2018; Thorbjørnsrud, 2015), and public engagement (Milioni and Vadratsikas, 2016). Politicians highlight immigration during elections to evoke emotions without committing to policies (Downes, 2017). Media reinforce this through conflict-based narratives (Eberl et al., 2018), while online audiences escalate it through discussions of nationalism (Milioni & Vadratsikas, 2016). These dynamics were visible in 2024 U.S. elections, when Donald Trump blamed immigrants for political losses and militarised the Mexican border (Reuters, 2024; NPR, 2024; Teen Vogue, 2018).

The study examines a selection of political speeches, media articles, and audience interactions from Western countries, focusing on shifts surrounding electoral events and migration crises. Methodologically, it applies discourse and framing-analysis, two core approaches for reading hype. This framework combines media studies, political communication, and critical migration research to explain how immigration-related hype is formed and intensified over time and platforms.

Panel 10. What Hype Obscures: Hidden Labour and Environmental Impacts

Chair: Sandeep Mertia

Darja Aksjonova

From Hype to harm: Case study of the project Meaning and Practice of Autonomy in Gig-Work

In scientific research, "hype" refers to sudden, amplified public attention—often driven by media or political discourse—that can misrepresent findings, distort intentions, and place researchers in the public spotlight. Unlike celebrity culture, where hype can be beneficial, researchers are rarely prepared to respond effectively to such exposure. When hype turns into backlash, it may result in reputational damage, loss of institutional support, and erosion of public trust in science.

This paper explores such a case in Latvia, where the Latvian Council of Science funded a project titled "Meaning and Practice of Autonomy in Gig-Work" under its highly competitive Fundamental and Applied Research Programme. Developed by researchers at the Latvian Academy of Culture, the study examined both the precarities and potentials of gig work—an especially relevant topic during the post-pandemic period. Although it initially received funding following a rigorous expert review, in 2023 the project became the focus of sharp political and media criticism. Public discourse quickly escalated, generating a wave of negative hype that targeted not only the researchers but also the funding agency and government ministry. This reaction exposed deeper tensions surrounding public expectations of science, ideological views on labor, and contested roles of social science in public discourse.

Using a qualitative methodology—discourse analysis of media coverage, policy documents, and social media posts, complemented by semi-structured interviews with researchers, policymakers, journalists, and critics—this study investigates how ideological narratives shaped the backlash. Key research questions include: How did criticism reflect broader ideological tensions? What role did media play in shaping perceptions? How can scientists better prepare for such situations?

This paper argues for the need to support researchers with communication training, support and audience monitoring tools to navigate controversial topics responsibly and reduce the risks of public misunderstanding in science communication.

Sara Milkes Espinosa

Hype as a tool of extraction: Case study – Online Marketplace Labor

I'd like to propose a Panel Presentation about how secondhand marketplaces like eBay, Poshmark, dePop, etc have been implementing their AI, especially their generative AI features to "streamline" sellers' labor on their platforms. Here, I will be using feminist economics perspectives to conceive of hype as an extractive pressure on the work of resellers, who are imposed generative AI features that are overinflated by company marketing, to then need to correct the poor outcomes of these AI features. The hype, via the marketing promises and the design integration, which craft a narrative around the valorization of the seller's time, becomes a fold to shore up further labor value extraction, all while building the company's "technological stack" as gig workers like online sellers become free data workers for the platforms. This work is anchored in a larger research project about labor in secondhand marketplaces using ethnographic, design and arts-based methods.

Sandeep Mertia

Where Does the Hype Cycle? Fieldnotes on Post-COVID Venture Capitalism in Non-Metropolitan India

Drawing on over two years of in-person and virtual ethnographic fieldwork and archival research, my work explores the rise of techno-entrepreneurship and the governance of aspiration in India. The federal government's flagship 'Startup India' program, launched in 2016, now has 1,60,000+ registered start-ups, many also supported by allied initiatives of state governments across small cities. Focusing on the intertwining of digital infrastructure, state policies for start-up incubation, and the aspirational self-making practices of entrepreneurs in different urban contexts, my project shifts attention away from global technology hubs such as Bangalore to smaller cities such as Jodhpur and Jaipur.

In this presentation, I map the narrativization of "post-COVID" futures to examine how entrepreneurs pivoted the pandemic as a crisis into a mega hype-cycle of digital economic growth. Indian start-ups raised more capital in 2020 and 2021 than ever before, ranking second in the world after the USA. My interlocutors, in the government and start-ups, claim they are "building a startup ecosystem from scratch" in small cities by leveraging the very digital technologies that have supposedly made location "irrelevant in post-covid times". Yet, many of them move to big cities as soon as they raise enough capital to scaleup their start-ups. I describe how my interlocutors, who claim that "COVID has been a big boom," spatialize global techno-optimistic hype in context. Exploring the shifting logics of presence, remote work, scale, and venture capital, I offer an ethnographic analysis of anticipatory practices of digital future-making and their many failures in / from small cities in India. Mapping the diverging temporal and spatial imaginaries of techno-futures in/from a small city, I present some traces of an emergent horizon of alterity and 'technodiversity' (Hui 2020) from a context where most of the current and future users and subjects of digital media live.

Jack Stilgoe

Hype and control in Artificial Intelligence

Many commentators have struggled to make sense of a dynamic of AI hype, in which the companies selling the biggest, most expensive models are also those most publicly worried about the catastrophic risks that, we are told, could come from the technology escaping human control. Generative AI is an almost-perfect case for the sociology of hype. We should see hype not as mere exuberance, but as an attention-seeking and attention-grabbing strategy, tuned to an attention economy that is characterised by blitzscaling and regulatory arbitrage. The breathless hype belies a more complicated reality for AI companies, that most of what needs to happen for them to succeed is beyond their control. Self-driving cars are not as autonomous as their makers claim, and we are already seeing their makers lobby governments for new rules, resources and exemptions. With generative AI, as Harro Van Lente (2000) predicted, the promises have quickly become requirements: in particular for new computing infrastructures and new rules on copyright and data use. While investors worry about the bubble bursting, those versed in the sociology of expectations are wondering what lengths others will go to to keep the bubble aloft. I would like to reflect on my own involvement in institutions and research programmes focussed on governance 'responsible AI' to argue that hype is a key part of the new organisation of irresponsibility.

Panel session 3

Panel 11. Materiality and Infrastructure of Hype

Chair: Ola Michalec

Ola Michalec; Cian O'Donovan; Joshua Moon

Can buzzwords create infrastructures? Reflecting on the Water-Energy-Food Nexus approach

Over the past few decades, the increasing pressures on water, energy and food have widened social inequalities and furthered environmental damage. The scholarship on the Water-Energy-Food Nexus (WEF Nexus) has responded with policy-oriented interdisciplinary research on modelling the use of environmental resources. While the WEF Nexus covers some elements of complexity, it has been critiqued by social scientists for ignoring questions of power and justice. On the other hand, the WEF Nexus has succeeded in mobilising funding and the attention of policymakers. How have sustainability researchers used the 'WEF Nexus' buzzword to engage with complexity and what are the underlying capabilities required to support this engagement?

While current reviews of the WEF Nexus research focus on methodologies for integration and optimisation, we examine nexus research as an interdisciplinary practice, contingent on capabilities and politics. As such, we show how the WEF Nexus programme engaged with the notion of complexity, while acknowledging the notions of power and justice. We argue that the WEF Nexus buzzword was successful in building cognitive capabilities for researching complexity by giving researchers the flexibility to reconceptualise it as well as the freedom to assemble novel configurations of teams. However, the time-limited nature of the hype around the Nexus meant that researchers and programme leads were less able to translate their research agendas into transgressive, political action. This was particularly visible in the case of early career and overseas scholars who did not have the pre-existing 'backstage' capabilities, i.e. networks, access to relevant software or domain-specific knowledge.

Émile Pronovost

Crypto without credibility?: Understanding discourses and materiality of digital infrastructures through a case study in Sherbrooke; Canada

This paper explores the dynamics of hype surrounding discourse on digital infrastructures by focusing on the case of Bitfarms, Canada's second largest crypto-mining company operating in the municipality of Sherbrooke, Quebec. In a saga that lasted four years, one of Bitfarms crypto-mining center was delocalized : the constant ventilation noise that prevented its mining machines from overheating disturbed more than 500 hundreds residents from 2018 until it moved, in 2022.

A panoply of actors and discourses contributed to the installation, unveiling and delocalization of Bitfarms's crypto-mining center, an infrastructure that wasn't trying to be seen. Beyond grounding digital

infrastructure in its material form, this case study offers a means to trace the discursive logics that shape, legitimize, and move through it.

Through a revised typology of data centers, this study identifies crypto-mining centers as a controversial sub-type whose legitimacy is often questioned in public discourse. Using empirical data from fieldwork, interviews, press review and municipal councils, it analyzes how the Bitfarms saga became a local flashpoint, and how this case contrasts with the hyped framing surrounding AI infrastructures elsewhere in Quebec.

By reclassifying crypto-mining centers within the broader category of data centers, this paper proposes to evaluate these infrastructures both by the discursives processes they are entangled with—local development promises, hype and bad press— and by their material footprint—energy use, spatial occupation, and socio-political impact on host communities. Focusing both on material and discursives dimensions of an infrastructure opens up a perspective to "deflate the hype" and re-ground debates in democratic accountability and ecological cost.

In response to the question of whether hype can be prevented, this paper proposes a potential avenue for its mitigation: grounding the analysis of techno-hyped narratives— whether training large language models or mining cryptocurrencies —through their material infrastructures and territorial manifestations.

Pietro Autorino

Antihype: on compost non-scalability

A wave of enthusiasm is generating great expectations in ecological agriculture under the tag of "regenerative farming" (Gosnell, 2022), moving the interest of different agrarian stakeholders, ranging from peasant smallholders, to policy-makers, multilateral organisations, and big corporations (Krzywoszynska, 2024). The main emphasis of regenerative agriculture lies on introducing soil care practices that enhance soil productivity, amongst which techniques of composting have gained particular traction (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2015). Yet, when soil becomes a matter of care, how does this interrogate and reconfigure the politics of scale in agroecological transitions (Ghelfi and Papadopoulos, 2022)?

I focus on a particular approach to regenerative farming commercialised and popularised by Dr Elaine Ingham as "Soil Food Web" (Ingham, 2004) and frame the current hype (Kastenhofer, 2023) around this specific approach, also amidst the broader promises of a microbial turn in agroecology (Muenster, 2018). I shed light on how the applied use of biocomplete compost and microbiological approaches to soil repair reframe soil remediation (Aachen and Eichmann, 2009; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2021) as a pluriverse multiscalar and translocal process of reconfiguring more-than-human relationalities.

I propose the concept of "Anti-hype", to highlight the frictions that arise when ontologies that take seriously multispecies care and relational complexity in human-soil ecotones such as the realm of composting on the one hand, meet with attempts of performing scalability, systematising, standardising and/or coopting compost experimentalism into agroindustrial processes. I emphasise how practices and imaginaries of composting activate material-semiotic (Hamilton and Neimanis 2018) abundance which in this phase of radical grassroots elaboration of alternatives articulate thick ambiguities (Abrahamsson and Bertoni, 2014) about scalability (Tsing, 2016). Yet, the point is not solving dilemmas about how and whether to scale these processes, but rather exploring how the material politics of the compost resist and decompose the problems of scale vis-à-vis extractivism and productivist growth in agrarian ecologies in the late stages of the long green revolution (Patel, 2012).

Panel 12. Awards, Fashions, and Social Dynamics

Chair: Mirna Zeman

Mirna Zeman

Hypes; Fashions and Automatisms

Diagnosis "hype" applied to massively consumed, popular, marketable media artefacts (including literature, arts and technology) has been filling sections in journals and magazines in recent years and has mostly taken a form of value statement, criticizing hypes as a negative effect of the late capitalist economy. Despite the conjuncture of the term, we still miss a theory defining hypes in the field of culture, explaining how they emerge and what role they play in circulation of themes and motives around the globe and in dynamics of cultural/literary/media evolution.

I define literary/popcultural/media hypes as largely non-predictable, short-term clusters/accumulations of similar content (including its cross-media translations and material spin-offs), having an impact on a consumer and frequently facing practical "realizations" on the recipient's side (e.g. in form of cults). My presentation proposes to think of hypes in analogy to (vestimentary) fashions. Hypes follow the law of (variant as well as invariant) repetition inherent to the mechanism of fashion. Both hypes and fashions can be identified on the basis of abundance of similar material, both are short-term, temporary phenomena depending on an ability of a model to reproduce large number of variants of its kind.

Focusing on examples of hypes in European Literatures, the presentation offers a cyclical concept of (literary) hypes/fashions, aiming to discuss its applicability on other spheres of hype studies in the plenum of the conference. The concept employs the notions of cumulation, seriality and iteration in describing literary hypes, and poses the question whether changes in prevailing hypes move through a series of recurring cycles. Furthermore, the presentation proposes the concept of "automatisms", that was introduced in the theory of literature by Russian Formalists and that was being further developed in an interdisciplinary context by the research training group "Automatisms. Cultural Techniques of Complexity Reduction" at Paderborn University, as useful descriptive model for hype. "Automatisms" are defined as processes that largely elude conscious control. They exist on the level of individual and collective action as well as in interactions with technology. Since they are rooted in repetition – rather than in creativity, planning, or design – automatisms are close to the mechanical. At the same time, these processes do not function like technical automata. There are neither prior definitions nor programmings. It is the execution itself, and the scattered activity of many, that create the structure of hype. Virtually behind the backs of those involved, automatisms of hypes generate new structures.

Rebecca DeWael

Cultural Prizes as Hype: The Case of the Oscars

Devon Powers (2012) defines hype as "a state of anticipation generated through the circulation of promotion, resulting in a crisis of value" (pp. 863, emphasis in original). This paper uses this definition to consider the Oscars Best Picture competition. For nearly a century, industry professionals, film enthusiasts, and pop culture fans alike have participated in the celebration of and debate around the films and filmmakers honoured by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in their annual Oscars Awards. This ceremony, affectionately dubbed "Hollywood's Biggest Night," is the final event in a string of awards ceremonies for the American film industry which take place in the early months of each year. All of these other cultural prize ceremonies, like the Golden Globes and the Emmys, act as precursors and predictors for

the Oscars, contributing to the hype around the films nominated for the Best Picture. Here, winning other prizes and gaining public attention builds the hype of nominated films, which is paired with studio For Your Consideration campaigns which act to convince Academy members to choose their film while voting, which increases the chance of the film winning the Oscar. This ultimately also leads to increased box office sales for nominated films. But James F. English (2009) suggests that awarding bodies give cultural prizes because they want to maintain their own cultural and symbolic power. In other words, prizes increase the hype not only for the film that receives the prize, but also the organization which gives the prize. I suggest that combining English's theorization of cultural prizes and Powers' definition of hype allows for a deeper understanding of how the Oscars functions within social discourses.

Eileen Stephens

In Defence of Unsexiness: Hype as a Tool of Neoliberal Cultural Policy

Neoliberalism via New Public Management (NPM) has restructured public policy, and cultural policy is no exception. The shift from operational funding transfers to a competitive grantmaking process focussing on time-based projects reflects a move from government service delivery to one relying on external consultants. While the project model rewards spectacle and innovation, it produces two consequences : hyperbolic writing and sidelining background work in cultural institutions. The resulting competition mindset features application and review language that requires every project to be boundary breaking, transgressive, and disruptive, all while having matching funding while not using funding to support administrative staff or building expenses, otherwise known as the unsexy aspects of the art world. Decades of this model have left cultural institutions stretched to a breaking point.

This presentation critiques the political and linguistic economies of cultural funding hype. Funders' prioritization of visibility, novelty, quantifiable outcomes and deliverables, and the hyperbolic language used to communicate them, require permanent hyperbole and contribute to the ongoing precarity in the arts. A call to action for funders to move away from constant cycles of project-based financing and reprioritize unrestricted operating funding – a return to unsexiness – is issued.

Natalia Stanusch

Platformatted Hype: How to Operationalize the Formalities of AI "Slop"?

This paper is an invitation to conceptualize and operationalize a set of formalities of hype - defined as 'platformatted' (following MacKenzie and Munster, 2019) hype – by turning to study a selection of visuals generated by text-to-image/video AI models. Using a multitude of interdisciplinary approaches, such as feminist critique, media studies, art history, and critical AI studies, this paper aims to further critical engagement with the social implications of algorithmic systems and AI at large.

This paper asks: How can we operationalize hype as a formal (aesthetic) and affective category that can be applied to study both the 'AI' hype at large and generative AI visuals as its symptom? To do so, I offer a framework to understand, critique, and intervene in what I define as 'platformatted hype.' We can approach platformatted hype as a set of formal characteristics aimed to capture attention by 1) *affecting* the viewers to stop (scrolling) through excitement, weird disturbance, or strangeness and 2) recognizing its embeddedness into a technical system oriented towards a specific set of values which translates into particular (aesthetical) formalities that can be best conceptualized as, indeed, hype.

In this research, I focus on visuals-as-case-studies which exemplify platformatted hype in action. To conceptualize it, I relate platformatted hype to the notions of spam, poor image, cyber-phantasmagoria, networked images, noise, enshittification, and slop. I use the concept of *affect* to further bridge platformatted hype's formal qualities with its embeddedness into platforms; platforms are central entities

as they are the (im)material enforcement of power dynamics between monopolistic players of Big Tech, users, and objects. It is on and through platforms where platformatted hype is distributed, circulated, and amplified with its viral spreading, seductive force of simulation, and, ultimately, financial accumulation. I furthermore argue that platformatted hype spills *over* platforms, *outside* social media sites.

Panel 13. Hype, Culture & Identity

Chair: Carolina Cavalcanti Falcão

Shiming Shen

Myth, Power, and Sovereignty: Mapping AI Hype in the Discourse of the Chinese State

Narratives around artificial intelligence often employ what Campolo and Crawford (2020) describe as enchanted determinism—a rhetorical strategy that portrays AI as an unstoppable, quasi-mystical force beyond human understanding or control. In China, technology development plays a central role in official narratives surrounding national rejuvenation and technological sovereignty. Notably, given that all media and enterprises operate under the surveillance of the Communist Party, it becomes particularly compelling to examine the alignment—or collusion—between different actors in producing and sustaining these narratives.

This study explores the mechanisms of AI hype in an authoritarian context by analyzing the official website of the State Council of the People's Republic of China (www.gov.cn). This platform functions as the government's central hub for publishing policies, official documents, press releases, and information on national affairs. A search using the keyword "人工智能" (artificial intelligence) and related terms reveals 10,534 articles on the topic, spanning from 2016 to the present.

This study is structured in two parts, focusing respectively on temporal and relational dimensions:

1. Discursive Strategies: Using computational textual analysis, this part will trace a genealogy of AI narratives, with particular attention to how techno-nationalist discourses are constructed and disseminated in the Chinese context. Programming tools such as Python or R will be used to analyze the discourse and identify recurring patterns and ideological frames.

2. Power Dynamics: To analyze the actor-network involved in shaping dominant AI discourse, we will conduct a network analysis based on metadata from each article on the State Council's website. Each entry includes hyperlinks to original sources, enabling the identification of key actors—ranging from government departments and media outlets to technology firms and research institutions. The network of interactions among these entities will be mapped using Gephi, in order to understand how power circulates and consensus is built.

Through this empirical exploration of discourse and power relations in China's AI ecosystem, the project seeks to illuminate how enchanted determinism and techno-optimism are mobilized by different actors. Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to comparative understandings of how AI hype is constructed across different political systems, particularly between state-led models and capitalist surveillance regimes.

Michael Senters

There Will Be No Silksong News at the Direct: Performative Cynicism; Nega-Hype and Managing Identity in a Terminally Online World.

Hype has been an integral part in fandom culture for many years but in particular it has played a key role in the video game industry where hype surrounding new games and console releases are always surrounded by an immense amount of hype. As the industry and fandom surrounding it has grown, hype and buildup for new releases has grown around it. There have been many instances of games failing to live up to the hype it has generated such as the original releases of No Man's Sky and Cyberpunk 2070. These instances of failure, alongside trolls and others mocking hype culture has led to the creation of a sort of performative cynicism

within the fandom, especially surrounding games that people hope to see made such as Silksong and Bloodborne Remake. As announcement shows like Nintendo Direct and State of Play have become more common, so too has the growth of this kind of performative cynicism to create a form of nega-hype, a hyping of belief that announcements surrounding certain games will never happen or will be unlikely to happen.

Why do people do this performative cynicism about games they clearly care immensely about? I argue in this paper that this form of nega-hype is a kind of defensive reaction to a world where sincerity is often looked down upon. In order to maintain one's social identity in an increasingly online world it becomes necessary to perform this cynicism which I feel leads to tension within individual fans and creates a toxic fandom culture that can only be defeated by choosing to embrace sincerity and embracing hype.

Carolina Cavalcanti Falcão

What's the Hype? Generational Differences as Markers of Behavior and Identity

This project stems from an initial inquiry into the growing use of generational differences as symbolic markers of behavior and identity. It takes as a premise that such differences are not biologically given but discursively constructed, especially within digital culture, where they gain visibility, circulate rapidly, and acquire performative force. The aim is to understand how these distinctions between "young" and "old" are continually updated through cultural and media signs that act as moral, affective, and aesthetic classifications.

The analytical approach is discursive, focusing on the construction of a field of contested signifiers. Expressions such as "cringe," "boomer," "millennial," and "Gen Z" go beyond chronological labeling; they operate as symbolic markers of belonging, adequacy, or displacement. Within this context, the concept of hype plays a central role — not as a tool for forecasting trends, but as a cultural force of traction that drives the emergence and adherence to certain ways of being, dressing, consuming, and positioning oneself. Hype, here, is understood as a cultural operator that produces symbolic value and accelerates generational distinctions, while sustaining the ephemeral and viral logic of digital relevance.

This perspective draws on authors who examine the performative nature of social classification (Butler, 1993; Hall, 1997), youth culture and symbolic struggle (McRobbie, 2009), as well as the production of media value and cultural circulation (Banet-Weiser, 2012; 2018). It also engages with critical views of youth as a historical and political construction (Dayrell, 2003; Pais, 2006), proposing a discursive reading that treats generational markers as floating signifiers, whose fixation is always partial and contingent.

The analytical proposal is to map how hype contributes to the reinvention of generational boundaries — not only by updating stereotypes, but by reshaping the symbolic limits of what it means to be "young" or "old" in digital environments. The research will examine the circulation of memes, short videos, hashtags, and viral expressions on social media, with a special focus on the disputes surrounding signs such as "cringe," "boomer," "ok millennial," and "Gen Z." These signs function performatively, establishing classifications that affect recognition, belonging, and exclusion.

Ana Belen Rojo Ojados

Hyper(Me)

The phenomenon of "hype" within virtualized social spaces—such as social media platforms (SMPs) or video games—acts as a double-edged catalyst, merging marketing spectacle, community fervor, and cultural anticipation to shape consumer behavior and industry trends. In the case of video games, this operates via the viral dissemination of pre-release trailers, influencer endorsements, and social media virality (e.g., GTA

VI, Starfield, Elden Ring, or Silksong). Hype generates artificial scarcity and fear of missing out (FOMO), incentivizing pre-orders and microtransaction investments (the greater the hype, the higher the monetization potential). This performative cycle, rooted in Jean Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality, often decouples player expectations from product reality, triggering adverse reactions when games fail to meet promised outcomes.

On the other hand, social media platforms such as Twitch and TikTok amplify hype through algorithm-driven promotion, transforming video games into transient cultural events rather than enduring works of art. Meanwhile, corporate strategies instrumentalize nostalgia (e.g., remakes, sequels) and early access models, prioritizing economic gains over creative risk-taking. Ethically, hype perpetuates exploitative labor practices (such as the crunch phenomenon) and manipulates younger audiences through loot box psychology. Ultimately, hype reflects the infiltration of neoliberalism into the realm of play, commodifying passion while obscuring systemic inequities in access and representation.

Sustainable innovation demands dismantling the cyclical toxicity of hype by centering player agency over corporate spectacle. The proliferation of virtual worlds, such as Second Life and Inzoi (released in April 2025), has intensified ethical debates surrounding the intersection of identity, visual design, and corporate power in digital spaces. This analysis examines how the aesthetic and structural design of virtual environments—from avatar customization interfaces and branded in-game assets to the algorithmic manipulation of visual content—shapes ethical dilemmas pertaining to selfrepresentation, cultural homogenization, and systemic inequalities. Drawing on visual culture studies, ethics, and design politics, the critique interrogates the neoliberal foundations of virtual identity construction, arguing that hype surrounding creative freedom often conceals exploitative design practices and suppresses alternative perspectives, generating biases and marginalization.

Within these platforms, identity becomes commodified through graphic design choices that prioritize commercial imperatives over values such as inclusivity and diversity. Avatar-creation tools, for instance, frequently replicate reductive visual tropes (e.g., normative or objectified bodies) that reinforce Eurocentric aesthetic standards. These design decisions, rooted in Barthes' (1964) semiotics of visual culture, encode power dynamics into the very interfaces users navigate, reducing identity to a series of consumable aesthetics. Meanwhile, corporate branding infiltrates virtual spaces through hyperrealistic clothing or architecture, as exemplified by Balenciaga's viral 2023 collaboration in Fortnite, which blurs the boundaries between self-expression and consumerist conformity.

Panel 14. Music, Aesthetics and Theatre

Chair: Berk Alkoç

Fabio Morreale

Reductive; Exclusionary; Normalising: Beyond the Hype of Generative AI Music

This presentation offers a critical examination of the reductive, exclusionary, and normalising tendencies embedded in modern Machine Learning approaches to generate music algorithmically (GenAI). In the public discourse, GenAI is often promoted as the ultimate tool that will (finally) allow anyone to generate any type of music with no effort, at little to no cost. This techno-solutionist rhetoric has gained unprecedented traction, leading to claims of having solved and democratised music. In my presentation, I will expose how such claims depend on a strategic erasure of the systemic constraints embedded into GenAI. I identify such constraints as processes of reduction, exclusion, and normalisation as well as multiple arbitrary ontological and epistemological assumptions about music, which drastically delimit what music such systems can generate. In my presentation, I will report the most common architectures and paradigms of GenAI and foreground the specific mechanisms through which they normalise particular musical ontologies and foreclose (most) musical possibilities. In stark opposition to their stated narrative of freedom and democratisation, GenAI tools impose normative constraints by defining what is acceptable, correct, or preferable, and by disallowing deviations from these predefined norms. Thus, I aim to show how hype operates not merely as overstatement, but as a cultural logic that reifies narrow aesthetics and epistemologies, and encodes value judgements under the guise of technological neutrality. Here, hype constructs a fantasy of autonomy, even as the outputs of these systems are tightly constrained by curatorial and raciaslised data regimes and encoded assumptions and by numerous human interventions and corrections that remain necessary at various stages. I will conclude by showing how the veil sustained by hype obscures the true potential of GenAI for musical innovation – a potential that risks remaining untapped unless freed from exploitative ideologies, flawed epistemologies, and hype narratives.

Mark Higgins

Suspended in Hype: Dubstep; Creative Innovation; and Algorithmic Music Generation

In this paper I examine the digital ecosystem within which dubstep music was suspended during the 2010s, a period nestled between hypes. Dubstep enjoyed meteoric hype at the start of that decade. A few years later, reflecting today's salivatory trend, generative AI tools such as Suno can birth original tracks in seconds.

Dubstep first emerged from a small, London subculture. What was originally a sparse and sonically ominous music rapidly evolved into a technocentric showcase of complex robotic sounds, symbolising an electronic-rock attitude. After converging with the American mainstream, the radically reconfigured music had a prominent media presence until the hype evaporated under its own heat.

Post-hype dubstep persisted through the remainder of the 2010s, supported by a new generation of digitally enabled music-makers and a growing trove of online learning materials and creative assets. In contrast to the restless musical innovation of the preceding decade, though, dubstep's core sonic attributes remained unchanged. Even today, prompting Suno with "instrumental dubstep track" yields material with exactly the same sonic characteristics predominant during dubstep's post-hype period.

In this paper, I show the relationship between the enduring sonic-homology of post-hype dubstep and a highly prescriptive, proceduralised approach to music-making, promoted by readily accessible digital resources. I further consider how the technologised epistemological infrastructure effectively suspended music-makers within an algorithmic creative space, prefiguring the algorithms that underpin music generation with AI today. In conclusion, I consider the contrast between the kind of vitality that enabled dubstep's rapid evolution during the comparably offline 2000s with the apparent stultification of the heavily digitised 2010s. Amid the current hype surrounding AI, this leaves a timely question hanging: what might the heavily technologised, algorithmic musicking that characterised post-hype dubstep foreshadow with regards to the future of novel creative innovation in an increasingly automated popular music ecosystem?

Gabriel Gutierrez

The Hype of Urban Music in Brazil and Around the World

Urban music is currently experiencing a significant surge in popularity both in Brazil and in the global market. In the latest report by the IFPI, produced by the world's leading record companies, two out of the three case studies presented focus on urban music artists: Tyler, The Creator (rap) and Myke Towers (reggaeton). Among the ten most-streamed artists globally in 2024, five belong to the urban music genre.

As a musical genre, urban music encompasses contemporary sounds that have emerged from major global cities, often originating in peripheral areas and marked by strong Afro-diasporic influences. These aesthetics include rap (trap, grime, drill), Brazilian funk (miami, tamborzão, mandelão, MTG), reggaeton, dancehall, afropop, among others.

As early as 2017, a Nielsen study indicated that rap had become the most consumed music genre in the United States, surpassing rock. In Brazil, the only genre capable of challenging the dominance of pop sertanejo is urban music, represented by artists such as Anitta, Ludmilla, Gloria Groove, Matuê, MC Ryan, Xamã, Kevin O Chris, Felipe Ret, Tasha & Tracie, Veigh, Kayblack, among others. These artists are increasingly gaining prominence, featuring in editorial playlists and performing at both national and international festivals. Consequently, between 2022 and 2023, urban music consumption on streaming platforms grew by 90%, reaching a total of 2 billion streams, according to Crowley.

The hype surrounding urban music is a global phenomenon, consolidated by Puerto Rican reggaeton, American rap/trap, and the growing potential for exporting Brazilian funk. Originating in urban peripheries and produced with digital audio technologies, Brazilian urban music intersects with economic sectors such as fashion, beverages, and creative industries like television.

This article investigates the economic, cultural, technological, and aesthetic factors contributing to the rise of Brazilian urban music, particularly rap and funk from Rio de Janeiro. It seeks to understand the reasons behind its success by analyzing urban music through the lenses of popular cultural matrices, global postmodernism, Afro-diasporic music, and pop music. The aim is to contribute to research on the communication and music markets in the contemporary world.

Ilja Mirsky

Hypertexting: Theater & Hype as Performance Machines

This session proposes a critical and historically contextualized inquiry into the co-evolution of theater and hype as mutually reinforcing modalities of performance. It posits that both function as technologies of anticipation—structuring public attention, shaping narrative expectations, and producing affective engagement. Drawing on performance studies, media theory, and cultural history, the session interrogates

how theatrical institutions have historically contributed to the architecture of hype, and how contemporary hype systems exhibit theatrical logics.

The session is structured around two concise scholarly inputs:

Historical Input: An overview of the theatrical genealogy of hype, spanning from early modern promotional cultures (e.g. Elizabethan playbills and 18th-century celebrity actors) to avant-garde and postdramatic theater's self-reflexive engagements with publicity and spectacle. This segment will trace how theater not only anticipated modern hype mechanisms but actively developed dramaturgies of expectation, visibility, and temporality.

Contemporary Input: A case-based analysis of how contemporary theater practices (e.g. immersive theater, digital dramaturgies, and festival circuits) operate within and against the logics of hype culture, including algorithmic amplification, influencer economies, and viral aesthetics.

The subsequent open discussion will be facilitated through Mentimeter, employing live polling, word clouds, and audience-generated questions to simulate a hypertextual mode of scholarly exchange. This interactivity models the associative, decentralized logic of digital hype circulation.

Guiding questions include: How do the dramaturgies of theater and hype intersect or diverge? What historical continuities underlie contemporary attention economies? Can theater mobilize hype critically without being subsumed by it?

This session aims to contribute to the theorization of hype as a performative, temporally-structured phenomenon, offering an interdisciplinary lens that bridges aesthetics, media, and cultural production.

Panel 15. Governing through Hype: Politics & Legitimacy

Chair: Jascha Bareis

Jasmine Erdener

Hype as hegemonic spectacle in technological development

This paper considers technological hype as a form of cultural hegemony and technological determinism that allows tech industries to focus attention on the services and products that they are interested in developing, while effectively masking or obscuring the problematic social and cultural repercussions of this tech. Recent examples include generative AI and humanoid robots, which are each predicted to radically reshape existing labor practices. Rodney Brooks argues that AI and robotics often overpromise their capabilities and their transformative potential for society. These promises allow tech companies to generate billions of dollars in investments before they have produced any actual tech, and to foreclose potential critiques or concerns.

As with generative AI, which now appears as inevitable and as impossible to regulate or restrict, hype functions as a hegemonic tool for the tech industry to generate astronomical revenues and make ambitious promises which they are under no obligation to fulfill. In particular, this paper focuses on the burgeoning hype around AI and humanoid robots as a means of replicating individual identity. In 2024, journalist Evan Ratliff cloned his voice and linked it to an AI chatbot. Ratliff had his voice-clone interview sources and even go to therapy in order to test the limits of contemporary technologies in professional and personal contexts. Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI, forecast that 2025 would see the first "AI agents" entering the workforce. The use of AI to clone individual people has the potential to reshape online social interactions, individual identities, and the nature of digital labor, but the discourse surrounding them demonstrates how hype is constructed and orchestrated as a hegemonic spectacle.

Jascha Bareis

Between hype and hypernormality: performing the democratic preconditions for hype

This contribution explores how unreachable liberal democratic promises are bridged with the societal performance of hype, pointing to the ideological and hegemonic character of hype as a stabilizer of a dysfunctional liberal/capitalist system.

There is growing skepticism from democratic theory based on empirical insights that liberal democratic countries are increasingly dysfunctional and implausible in delivering on their promises. "Listen to the science", elite control, pacification of inequalities or equal inclusion and participation in discourse & representation are not feasible politics (anymore). For the privileged demos such drastic interventions in their project of self-realization and autonomy are too demanding, too stressful and simply overburdening – as they question their individualist, consumption- and inequality-based life style.

A reaction to compensate this unpleasant realization and bridge these obvious tensions is a politics of hype: Obscene escapism into bold promises, the emotional celebration of technology/progress/capital as an efficient and sustainable trajectory, without really politically changing anything - except for the stock value of some privileged financial strata. Hype celebrates "extreme politization without political consequences" (Jäger 2023). This takes reminiscence of what Guy Debord once described as "society of spectacle" (1967). This spectacle works with the staging of bold promises, the performance of bullshit (Frankfurt, 2005) as laudable and feasible.

As a counter - reaction to the realization of double standards of elites and the dysfunctionality of the liberal system, increasing parts of the demos choose to question or even rage against Western liberal democracy. It remains an open question if liberal democracy will be able to deal with these inherent tensions or degenerate.

Endalkachew Abera Mekuriya

From Euphoria to Entrenchment: The Role of Public Hype in Military Coups and Authoritarian Consolidation in Africa

In Sub-Saharan Africa, military coups are commonly portrayed as corrective interventions against corrupt leadership, failed democracies, or electoral authoritarianism. From Ghana (1966) to Gabon (2023), coup leaders frequently invoke narratives of reform, national renewal, and anticorruption.

However, this paper argues that such portrayals conceal a deeper strategy: the orchestration of public hype – a wave of emotional enthusiasm following military takeovers. Public hype is not a spontaneous public reaction but a calculated political instrument leveraged to legitimize military rule, manipulate public emotion, and solidify authoritarian regimes under new guises.

Through case studies from Mali (2020, 2021), Guinea (2021), Burkina Faso (2022, twice), and Gabon (2023), this paper adopts a theoretical and interpretive approach grounded in political theory and discourse analysis to examine how emotional narratives and symbolic performances are mobilized during military coups in Sub-Saharan Africa. Drawing on media reports, public speeches, and social media content, it examines how emotional narratives and symbolic performances are employed to depict military interventions as popular and redemptive. These narratives enable military juntas to delay democratic transitions, rebrand themselves as civilian leaders, and suppress genuine democratic voices, often replicating the same authoritarian structures they claimed to dismantle.

The study highlights the cyclical nature of emotional politics: public discontent transforms into euphoria during coups, only to devolve into disappointment as promises of reform fade. Social media has become central to amplifying pro-coup sentiments and mobilizing anti-freedom rhetoric. While acknowledging the failures of many civilian leaders through constitutional manipulation, staged elections, and patronage politics, the paper states that military coups deepen democratic backsliding rather than resolve it.

To disrupt this recurring pattern of public hype during military coups, the study advocates for civic education, digital media literacy and fact-checking initiatives, and stronger civil society efforts to challenge the performative appeal of coups. By unpacking the strategic use of public hype, this paper offers a critical African perspective on authoritarian populism, emotional governance, and the fragile foundations of political legitimacy in transitional contexts.

Emerson Johnston

From Counterculture to Counterhype: Rethinking Digital Resistance

TikTok represents an unprecedented hype-generation engine in the music industry, fundamentally transforming not just how musical trends propagate but how music itself is created and valued. While technological platforms have always influenced creative expression, TikTok's algorithm-driven ecosystem has institutionalized hype as a central organizing principle of musical production and consumption.

This paper examines TikTok as a case study in platform-engineered hype cycles, analyzing how its unique infrastructure - descended from Musical.ly's audio-centric design - has compressed traditional publicity timelines and created new imperatives for artists. Using the potential TikTok ban as a thought experiment,

we explore how the deliberate cultivation of music-based hype has reshaped sonic aesthetics, from the prevalence of algorithmically-optimized "hook" construction to the emergence of what Chayka (2024) calls "filtered" creativity.

More significantly, this research investigates the phenomenon of "influencer creep" (Bishop, 2023) as a hype-driven transformation, where musicians increasingly function as hype generators within platform ecosystems rather than primarily as artists. The paper contextualizes these changes within a longer history of technological constraints on music, comparing TikTok's influence to previous hype-generating mechanisms while examining what a "post-algorithmic hype" musical landscape might reveal about the durability of platform-cultivated aesthetic norms.

Key Research Questions

1. How has TikTok institutionalized hype as a compositional strategy in contemporary music production?
2. How do TikTok's hype cycles differ from traditional music publicity in terms of intensity, duration, and creative impact?
3. What constitutes "hype-optimized" musical aesthetics, and how have these features permeated mainstream production beyond the platform?
4. How does "influencer creep" represent a fundamental shift in how musical hype is generated and maintained?
5. What historical parallels exist between TikTok's hype mechanisms and previous technological constraints on music?
6. What might a "post-algorithmic hype" music landscape reveal about which aesthetic changes are temporary versus lasting?

Through this analysis, the paper contributes to understanding hype not merely as marketing exaggeration but as a performative force encoded into platform architectures, actively reshaping cultural production and potentially leaving lasting imprints on musical aesthetics even after specific hype-generation mechanisms fade.

Panel session 4

12th of September, 10:00–12:00

Panel 16. AI in Daily Life: Affective and Everyday Interventions

Chair: Mallika Dharmaraj

Anees M

Afterlife of Hype: Resisting the smart wearables in Everyday life in India

In the growing technology market in India, smart wearables are portrayed as a tool for health benefits and connectivity. This paper explores how the everyday lives of Indian users reflect and disrupt the hype around smart wearable devices. Drawing on 35 in-depth interviews and 20 informal conversations conducted as part of the PhD data collection, primarily carried out in the southern states of India and with some representation from other regions—this study focuses on users who eventually disbanded their devices, either actively or passively.

Many participants reported purchasing smartwatches under the influence of Instagram advertisements, peer recommendations, and the general social buzz surrounding digital health and connectivity. Promises of 24/7 health tracking, increased physical activity, and the convenience of smart notifications initially created a sense of excitement. However, this "honeymoon period" often gave way to discomfort, irritation, and disillusionment. Several users described their experiences as emotionally draining—highlighting inaccurate metrics, unwanted notifications, and a constant sense of surveillance. For some, tracking bodily parameters led to anxiety rather than empowerment. One respondent described the device as "a headache," while others expressed regret over the cost or referred to the notifications as "annoying."

Yet, disbandment did not always mean to follow the hype cycle. Some users tried to sell their devices online; others continued to keep them charged or stored away, particularly if the item was gifted. These lingering attachments reveal how hype does not simply end—it stretches into affective residues, quiet refusals, and unresolved negotiations.

This paper situates these empirical insights within discussions on hype, temporality, and the sociology of expectations. It argues that hype, once embedded in everyday life, reshapes emotional and technological relationships—both during and after the moment of disillusionment. Through these narratives, the paper reflects on how hype is not only consumed but also quietly resisted.

Roselinde Bon

The Urban (After)Life of the Social Media Hype

The effects of overtourism in popular European cities like Barcelona, Venice, and Amsterdam have become visible through congested streets, public protests, and municipal restrictions. While this is not a new phenomenon, it has evolved with the rise of social media. Platforms like TikTok and Instagram generate

online waves of uneven visibility that not only reflect the city, but increasingly choreograph how the city is navigated. I investigate how social media trends become a spatial force: circulating as online imaginaries while also materializing as hyped locations in the city. I propose the concept of the urban feedback loop to describe the cyclical process by which digital trends shape spatial practices, and how those practices by social media users reinforce the production of content and media narratives. Through this lens, I map urban hype ecologies: dynamic systems of visibility and movement in which algorithmicallycurated imaginaries determine how specific spaces in the city are amplified and aestheticized. My analysis draws from an ongoing PhD project based in Amsterdam, combining online trend analysis with on-site observations and interviews. This mixed-methods approach traces how social media trends translate into an urban geography of hype; a geography shaped less by traditional urban planning than by platform logic and aesthetic replicability. By situating Amsterdam within a broader European context, the project examines how online trends do not only reflect the cityscape, but actively reshape it. In doing so, it offers a framework for understanding social media-driven hypes as an emerging urban logic.

Mallika Dharmaraj

"AI Hanuman" - The Saffronization of "AI Hype"

"The AI Hanuman of Shree Ram!" – or, so was called the JARVIS software for facial recognition sold by Gurgaon startup Staqu to the Uttar Pradesh police. In January 2024, amidst the death-making violence of India's famed Ram Mandir inauguration, the Internet Freedom Foundation reported that Staqu had installed 10,000 CCTV cameras in Ayodhya, powered by JARVIS. Headlines lauded this technological "Hanuman" (a revered monkey-god in the brahminical pantheon1) that would swoop in to protect Lord Ram, with its algorithmic policing database of 8.5 million criminal records. In fact, from MIT Media Lab's 2016 "Khumbathon" algorithm to Sparsh CCTV's contract with the Jagannath Puri temple, brahminical lore has long lent a fanatically religious cover to normalize biometric surveillance in India.

In the words of journalist Sigal Samuel: "Silicon Valley's vision for AI? It's religion, repackaged." Experts have long noted the religious dimensions of (Western) "AI Hype" and its transhumanist devotion to a post-racial techno-imaginary (i.e. what Timnit Gebru dubs "TESCREAL" ideology). How does this "AI Hype" then become saffronized – warping shape, but retaining structure – as it travels across the world to a millenia-old climate of brahminical terror?

Through critical discourse analysis, I record the strange Hindu imaginaries, gods, and mythologies that come to animate and justify biometric intrusion in India. India's uniquely brahminical "AI Hype" claims to "[blend] ancient Sanatan traditions with advanced digital tools" (Ujjain) and foster "a harmonious blend of tradition and modernity" (Tirumala) – with "AI" as a purifying presence that can divinely realize the ancient project of ethnic cleansing. As an owning-class brahmin-savarna trans woman from Silicon Valley, I see my own familiarity with these religious-political-economies as a useful vantage point from which I can do the ongoing work of accountability, documenting the violent convergence of religion, technology, and nationalism from Palo Alto to Gurgaon.

Matin Yusun Cheng

More Than a Buzzword: Situating Hype in Contexts

Hype is a concept interpreted across diverse academic disciplines and ontological perspectives, leading to a range of definitions and analytical frameworks. This paper proposes a novel approach by treating hype not as a fixed or formalised construct but as a folk concept, a culturally embedded and context-dependent term shaped through lived experience and social practice. While previous studies have examined the hype cycle as a folk theory, I shift the focus to hype itself, exploring how it evolves through situated practices and serves various functions for the different actors that engage with it.

I argue that understanding hype requires interpretive attention to the meanings, associations, and behaviours that emerge from specific contexts. Rather than stabilising hype through rigid definitions, I emphasise its performative and behavioural dimensions, how it guides individual and collective actions, often coexisting with or even challenging formal frameworks. Hype, I contend, should be recognised for its flexibility, ambiguity, and embeddedness in institutional settings and cultural narratives.

By contrasting this folk concept approach with externally imposed academic constructs like imaginaries, I highlight the importance of emic perspectives, the situated understandings actors bring to hype. Through mixed qualitative empirical research, I aim to examine how different actors interpret and experience hype in practice, how their views are shaped by cultural environments and positionalities, and how these dynamics contribute to the reproduction of hype within the digital economy. My analysis ultimately aims to reveal the underlying beliefs and ongoing practices that sustain and circulate hype as a powerful force in contemporary innovation systems.

Panel 17. Hype, Education, and Public Communication

Chair: Quentin Gervasoni

Amelia Moore

Automation Fever and the Hype of Child Online Safety

The safety of young people on social media continues to receive heightened attention, driven by growing moral concern and intensified political discussion. This research critically examines the discourses underlying online safety, drawing on policy interventions, stakeholder interviews, and media representations. In particular, I reflect on the cultural influence of the Netflix series 'Adolescence' and the enactment of the UK's Online Safety Act. As a snapshot of this rapidly evolving field, the study explores how dominant narratives of risk and protection construct young people as uniquely vulnerable digital subjects. This framing has fuelled demands for urgent intervention and contributed to a broader climate of automation anxiety, where fears about the societal impacts of technology escalate without clear direction. My findings suggest that the responsibility to protect is being shifted between policymakers, technology companies, and parents. This dynamic creates an ideal environment for accountability to be avoided and has the potential to legitimise approaches to care that blur the line between safety and surveillance. As a result, I question whether sufficient scrutiny is given to online safety policies, as they have significant implications for the agency of young people in digital spaces. I suggest that effective safeguarding of young people on social media requires cutting through the hype and fostering collaboration among stakeholders at the personal, political, and corporate levels. This is important to ensure that digital autonomy is not lost in the noise of moral panic and techno-solutionism.

Jacob Pleasants; Dan Krutka; Marie Heath

Challenging Tech Hype in Education – The Civics of Technology Project

Educational spaces have long been sites of intense technology hype. Purveyors of education technology create hype by promising to disrupt, transform, and revolutionise "outmoded" educational approaches. These hype narratives have been extremely successful and lucrative for industry actors, even while their promises of transformative change have failed to materialize. Recent developments in "artificial intelligence" technologies have only amplified this historical trend. Hype around the "potential" of these new technologies has led to high-profile procurements at institutions of higher education as well as public schools. How do we push back against these hype narratives about technology and schools?

The Civics of Technology Project is a grassroots organisation of educators who have come together to advance alternative visions of technology in education, from public schools to colleges and universities. Many of us are part of an emerging field of critical education technologies studies has begun to investigate the political and economic systems and social actors that perpetuate the hype cycles of education technology. We seek to both understand and disrupt hype narratives, replacing them instead with a "technoskeptical" stance.

In this session, we will share work that our community has done and is doing to advance our technoskep2cal perspec2ve. We will highlight instructional resources that we have developed that promote a measured rather than hype-laden view of technology. These include an investigation of provocative quotes about technology and an approach to conducting a technoethical audit. We will also share some of the ongoing collaborative work of our community, with invitations for getting involved. Our overarching aim with this

session is to identify and build connections between the work of the Civics of Technology network and the world of hype studies.

Ariadna Angulo-Brunet; Maria Teresa Soto-Sanfiel; Chin-Wen Chong

Too much hype? How hyped artificial intelligence news affects perceptions of scientific and journalists credibility

Hype in science communication refers to the exaggeration or sensationalism of scientific information, often lacking robust evidence. At present, both practitioners and researchers warn that hype can undermine the credibility of scientists, journalists and the sources through which scientific information is disseminated. At the same time, some scholars view it as positive as it can also be beneficial to boost public interest in science. This study specifically examines how exposure to hype in news about Artificial Intelligence influences perceptions of credibility for scientists, journalists, and information sources. Using an experimental design, 622 participants (48.9% female) were randomly assigned to watch one of 10 video news segments about AI applications, varying in topic (self-driving cars or finance), hype intensity (low, neutral, high), and outcome valence (positive or negative). Pre- and post-exposure measures assessed attitudes toward AI, anxiety, aOect, and credibility perceptions (scientists, journalists and source).

Multiple regression analyses revealed that hype intensity and outcome valence did not significantly impact scientists' credibility. However, higher message evaluation scores were associated with lower scientist credibility, while greater source competence, trustworthiness and reputation were linked to higher scientist credibility. For journalist credibility, higher message evaluation scores predicted lower credibility, while greater source trustworthiness and reputation were associated with higher credibility. Regarding source credibility, exposure to high-intensity negative hype increased perceptions of goodwill and trustworthiness compared to neutral conditions. Anxiety negatively predicted all source credibility dimensions, while positive affect, message credibility, and source reputation positively predicted them.

The findings suggest hype may have nuanced effects on credibility perceptions that vary by target. While not directly impacting scientist credibility, hype appears to influence journalist and source credibility evaluations. Overall, the results indicate a complex relationship between hype exposure and credibility judgments in science communication that warrants further investigation.

Giulia Villanucci

'The Covid-19 Pandemic did not take place': The role of hype and an autoethnographic reflection on Covid-19 communication strategies

This paper examines the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic through the lens of media hype, attention economy, and the dynamics of public communication, drawing on a digital autoethnographic approach. Reflecting on my own experience of navigating the infodemic, I interrogate how background knowledge in media studies enabled me to critically assess pandemic-related content circulating online, a capacity not equally accessible to (nor to be expected from) all social media users. The analysis situates personal experience within broader theoretical frameworks informed by Baudrillard's notion of hyperreality and Bourdieu's theory of capital.

I argue that the affective intensity of social media during the pandemic, particularly the repeated circulation of graphic and emotionally charged imagery, such as Italian military convoys transporting coffins in northern Italy in March 2020, functioned as a mechanism of hype. These spectacles sustained social media content attention, but the information overload in conjunction with traumatic lived experiences of the pandemic helped undermine trust in more complex and rapidly-changing official communication and directives for months to come. I explore how science communicators, government bodies, and health organisations

struggled to compete with the emotional immediacy and algorithmic velocity of platformed discourse, leading to a collapse in trust and increased vulnerability to dis/misinformation.

The paper presents illustrative examples of Covid-19 communication strategies across institutional and informal settings, critically analysing their effectiveness within the context of an attention-driven media environment. I argue that the pandemic's mediatisation facilitated the production of conditions in which the most emotionally resonant (rather than the most accurate) messages prevailed. In doing so, the paper aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the limitations of public communication in crises shaped by hype and digital saturation.

Panel 18. Intervening with the AI Hype

Chair: Eugenia Stamboliev

Charles Pidgeon

Criti-hype; four years on and in the age of consumer AI

In 2021, technology historian Lee Vinsel warned against what he termed "criti-hype": the phenomenon of critics inadvertently reinforcing the tech industry's power by overhyping and sensationalising technological doomsday scenarios. 'It's as if they take press releases from startups and cover them with hellscapes', writes Vinsel. The most obvious recent example of this is conversations around genAI: frequently, far-off apocalypses of hyper-intelligent robot overlords distort and distract from the actual material consequences of current AI practices.

Skynet-like prophesies about AI extinction events swallow up funding, public attention, and academic research, meanwhile, current harms are under-emphasised (such as the uncompensated ransacking of our informational commons, floods of AI scams, deskilling and loss of verifiable knowledge, and environmental degradation). Talk about future robot overlords distracts from talk about current labour laws. As Jathan Sadowski comments, 'These companies would love for everybody to believe they have such lucrative powers!'.

The job of the technology critic, therefore, seems clear: to identify and denounce hype at all times, never giving it air time, lest one accidentally perform criti-hype. The difficulty, of course, is that identifying hype as hype (unverified, over-inflated, sensational claims) requires giving hype air time. To debunk, fact-check, and verify overhyped claims requires us to detail those claims and find where they become untethered from reality.

In my paper, I assess and build on Vinsel's characterisation, which was written before the public release of ChatGPT (2022) and other consumer AI products. In doing so, I offer up provocations about how STS scholars should engage in technological criticism without inadvertently giving extra oxygen to hype.

Jimi DePriest

Don't believe the hA.I.pe

This presentation seeks to explore the role of hype in promoting psycho-social currents of both approval and fear in public attitudes towards A.I. and its development as an extension of state sovereignty and military power. I aim to address politicised A.I. hype in terms seeking to analyse the presence of hyperstition in cases where dangerous and untested automation technologies are being ushered into the public sphere by neoliberal regimes. Remaining critical of the discriminatory track record and inherent biases found in A.I. technologies engineered as tools for enforcing oppressive politico-economic measures, the exploitation of marginalized people is condemned as a pervasive feature of their manufacture and implementation. Taking a dialectical approach, the material and ideological conditions surrounding the burgeoning upsurge in A.I. investment practised by contemporary neoliberal states sliding towards fascism will be compared to the technofetishism found in the commercial appeal of early automation technology to the German Nazi regime. The hypnotic data lust which fueled the German Nazi regimes obsession with data extraction is proposed to be comparable to the insatiable demand for data which undergirds contemporary A.I. production. Social-historical and political-economic concerns will be tempered with cultural analyses to tease out the role of myth making which underlies the propagandized narratives used to generate public beliefs about the

potential value, ethics and capabilities of employing machinic systems to automate the bureaucratic, infrastructural and martial programs of state forces. I endeavor to unpack how mainstream dystopian narratives which overhype the capacity for social control displayed by A.I. contributes to public capitulation to its institutional weaponization, as the technology is perceived as a dominating and immutable force which cannot be resisted. Proposing the importance of emphasizing the weaknesses and vulnerabilities of neoliberal A.I. systems acts as a starting point for exploring potentials for resistance.

Eugenia Stamboliev

Un-hyping Trustworthy AI

AI trustworthiness matters, but its scope is unclear; most of it is a hyped buzzword. The content, reliability, output, or data accuracy of a technology can determine its trustworthiness. As we see that GenAI applications such as ChatGPT are highly untrustworthy due to their inconsistent and inaccurate results, we mostly focus on content issues like Chatbots (LLMs) fabricates non-existent facts, offers unreliable but smashed-up summaries, or invents sources.

Following, I will argue that we wrongly hype the trustworthiness of ChatGPT. For once, we only focus on the content side in debating trustworthiness. Regardless of whether the content output of chatbots or GenAI applications is correct, these tools are inherently untrustworthy due to unfairly obtained online resources, infringement on the copyrights of various book authors, and concealment of exploitative working conditions. I show that ChatGPT–as an example for so-called "AI"– can be only understood fully by examining its epistemic distrust or looking at its untrustworthiness, considering the sociotechnical, political, and ethical criteria. Overall, I illustrate three points: Firstly, our trust concerns in chatbots or AI are one-sided and output-driven, overlooking their production and materiality. Second, this neglect can unintentionally promote unethical or limited norms of what makes a holistically trustworthy technology (assuming we can have one). Third, I argue that distrust is a neglected concept and method of exploring the refusal of unethical or undemocratic AI.

Emre Altindag

Visualizing Otherwise: A Wordless Artistic Inquiry into Surveillance and Dispossession

This presentation explores my graphic art book The Cost of Being Homeless in the Age of Smart Cities, a visual narrative that challenges dominant discourses around technological "smartness" in urban development. As a visual artist and researcher, I use silent sequential art to unpack how hype-driven imaginaries of "smart cities" often exclude or erase the lived experiences of unhoused individuals, reducing complex social issues to datafied abstractions.

Grounded in practice-based research and a methodology of visual storytelling, the work resists alarmist or utopian narratives by centering poetic visual metaphors that embody fragility, displacement, and resistance. The process of crafting this graphic novel becomes a form of artistic inquiry, where drawing is not illustrative but investigative, an aesthetic tool to engage with surveillance, precarity, and invisibility.

Although not an installation or workshop, the graphic novel itself is a completed creative work that embodies a form of critical, practice-based research. My presentation will reflect on how artists can approach complex socio-technological topics through artistic research, and how a graphic novel can function as a site of knowledge production, challenging the hype from within. This contribution fits the Making and Doing track because it does not merely talk about hype but shows how artistic practice becomes a form of action-research, visually questioning dominant futures and offering new ways of seeing and feeling.

Panel 19. Hype and Resistance: Alternative Futures

Chair: Luiga Tircase

Wenzel Mehnert

Preparing for the hype to come: Fictional Technofutures to prime expectations of the future

Science fiction (SF) serves as both a mirror and a guide to society's relationship with technological innovation, simultaneously reflecting cultural anxieties and aspirations while shaping the discourse around new and emerging technologies (NEST). From Isaac Asimov's benevolent robots to dystopian visions like HAL 9000 or the Terminator, SF constructs technoimaginaries—visions of possible futures that attribute meaning to technology and influence public expectations.

This presentation investigates the interplay between SF and technology development through the lens of technofutures—speculative depictions that extend beyond prediction to actively shape the socio-technical discourse. By tracing SF's role in fostering cultural imaginaries, this work highlights how these narratives impact societal acceptance, inspire technological innovation, and reinforce unfounded hype beyond the entertainment industry.

Building on frameworks from science and technology studies (STS), this research offers a critical, hermeneutic perspective to evaluate SF's influence on technology. It explores the dialectic between utopian and dystopian narratives, emphasizing the risks of reductive readings that commodify SF into mere product roadmaps, neglecting its nuanced critique of sociocultural dynamics and highlights the interplay between hype, pop culture and the commodification of expectations of the future.

Ultimately, this analysis calls for integrating SF into a systematic approach to technology assessment and hype reflection, recognizing its dual role as a repository of sociotechnical imaginaries and a driver of global technology hype. The approach enriches our understanding of how speculative storytelling shapes not just perceptions but the material development of technological futures on a global scale.

Giuseppina Debbi

Beyond the Hype: Hybrid Practices and Silent Resistance in the Adoption of AI in Italian Journalism

In global debates on artificial intelligence in journalism, hype often acts as an uncritical driver of technological transformation. The Italian context is characterised by a peculiar coexistence: on the one hand, institutional journalism resists the hype through editorial silence, union caution, and a notable absence of specific policies and guidelines. On the other hand, journalists are informally and individually using AI tools in their routines, revealing an underground, unregulated, and everyday engagement with AI in newsrooms. A unique and illustrative case is that of Il Foglio, a conservative daily newspaper, which launched Il Foglio AI, a four-page insert generated entirely by AI from human prompts. The month-long initiative, deliberately provocative and explicitly non-substitutive, exemplifies a hybrid model of AI adoption. It highlights the layered complexity and ambivalence of the Italian media landscape, where innovation emerges not through top-down strategies but through experimental and editorially driven provocations. Il Foglio's editor-in-chief has confirmed his intention to continue publishing AI-generated content selectively. This contribution presents an in-depth study based on the analysis of journalistic practices and public discourse related to the Il Foglio initiative. It argues that the gap between the global hype surrounding AI and the Italian reality reflects not only strategic or cultural differences, but also a structural lack of systematic training. The issue is not merely one of technical competence, but of cultivating a critical, ethical, and design-oriented

professional culture around AI in journalism. Italy thus emerges not as a laggard, but as a revealing laboratory for rethinking AI adoption beyond deterministic narratives, where resistance and experimentation actively coexist. This case invites reflection on the need for training mechanisms capable of accompanying, rather than passively enduring, innovation.

Clemens Ackerl; Jascha Bareis; Reinhard Heil

Hyping Up AI Beyond Human Controllability?

As artificial intelligence (AI) and its capabilities continue to advance, a once-niche debate confined to expert circles and science fiction novels is moving to the forefront of public discourse: the risk of AI surpassing human controllability and triggering catastrophic consequences. Scenarios of sudden takeovers, societal collapse, or apocalyptic destruction may appear drawn from dystopian fiction, but they are increasingly shaping real-world policy debates.

AI existential risks (X-risks) are a particularly emotionally evocative frame. After all, such doomsday scenarios imply drastic opportunity costs and closing windows of action to mitigate absolute worstcase effects for humanity. Consequently, they are highly performative and resemble the characteristics of (criti-)hypes.

This paper presents an integrative narrative review of the assumptions and rhetorical underpinnings of X-risk discourse in the academic literature, focusing specifically on scenarios involving AI beyond human controllability. Drawing on 81 peer-reviewed publications indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, we examine how these narratives shape debates at the crossroads of the tech world, NGOs, politics and (social) media – despite ongoing contestation over their plausibility.

Our analysis reveals a fragmented discourse marked by bold yet often unsubstantiated claims, including accelerationist growth models and speculative calculations of catastrophic tipping points. Functionalist, anthropomorphic, and metaphysical conceptualizations of AI dominate, while interdisciplinary perspectives considering issues of infrastructure, social agency, and Big Tech oligopolies remain marginal. Rather than acting as a counterweight, the academic discourse frequently reproduces the logic of hype – failing to distinguish clearly between speculative claims and empirically grounded concerns.

We argue that such hype dynamics distort and risk undermining meaningful engagement. To counter this, we propose a plausibility checklist for AI (X-risk) hype and argue for an attention shift from the maximum possible negative consequences to the speaking position and authority of those making claims, and the AI characteristics presumed as prerequisites for these consequences.

Luigia Tricase; Alice Mattoni

Contesting AI Futures: Social Movements and Solarpunk AI

Governments around the world are devising national AI strategies that regulate how, in the next few years, Artificial Intelligence and its technological derivatives will be implemented in different fields of public life, such as healthcare, justice, border surveillance and education. These strategies, as well as the dominant narratives about AI that they upheld, often come with promises of AI's potential for improving democracies, one that depicts these emerging technologies as a revolution, a discontinuity from the past. National strategies promising an AI revolution are, however, often uncritically reproducing the industry utopias, discursive closure and technological sublime of narratives elaborated by the tech firms behind AI development, a mostly proprietary, venture capital-backed, black-box field of innovation.

If promises of democratic improvement are prominent among dominant narratives, they are problematized in the contentious political arena. Here, civil society actors are often developing critical accounts of the way emerging AI technologies are already employed- or plan to be- by institutions, as well as of their overall revolutionary value for societies. Among them, social movement organizations and their networks are primary developers of alternative, contentious and re-politicized visions of AI. Through their practices, these actors 1. delineate AI as an object of contention, 2. Develop alternative uses of AI as a tool for contention. Nonetheless, despite research agrees on their productive, future-making capacity, grassroots practices are currently understudied in the field of AI.

This empirical paper emerges from this literature gap, addressing it through an ethnographic approach. Starting from the case study of a social movement network active in two Italian cities throughout 2023 and 2024, we conducted participant observation and interviewed eight key actors of the network. By observing and inquiring about AI practices, our aim was to discover how- and if- AI permeates activist spaces, how it does so, and what alternative meanings about AI are being constructed by activists through their AI practices. Conclusively, we evaluated the potential of these practices to contest dominant promises and visions of AI.

While individual AI practices have been discussed with interviewees, with most of them employing Generative AI to code, write and generate images but with careful evaluation of downsides, the focus of participant observation has been on collective AI practices. Two types of collective AI practices are identified: a) present-oriented practices, and b) future-oriented practices. Through a) present- oriented practices, activists in the network elaborate alternative meanings of existing AI and its current value in societies: they discuss existing AI Errors in fields of labor, information, human rights and environmental impact; addressing these errors, they ground in present fact and re-politicize AI, rejecting dominant revolutionary narratives. Through b) future-oriented practices, activists foster imagination moments through which alternative AI futures are discussed: they experiment, through workshops and labs, desirable AIs, first by imagining and then by building and platforming prefigurative AI projects inspired by Solarpunk principles. While they remain situational and are far from implementing long-term alternative AI futures, we highlight the political potential of these practices to question dominant AI promises and utopias.

Felix De Backer

The "hype" in "hyperstition": towards a nonlinear temporality of cultural phenomena

This paper takes the notion of hyperstition as a starting point to reflect upon the concept of hype. This neologism, which was coined by the CCRU in the late twenties, combines hype(r) and superstition and is defined as a "fiction that makes itself real". The notion of hyperstition has far-reaching implications on the notion of belief. If a fiction can make itself real then the gap between the reality and fiction, the real and the not-real, becomes obsolete. Furthermore, belief is then no longer defined as believing-in-something, but much rather becomes a productive force. Belief is no longer passive (believing in x or y) but becomes active and can produce changes in the world. It is this productive force of belief that constitutes 'hype'. After having crystallized this notion of hype, I will investigate what implications this productive force has on temporality. I will show that in a framework of hype as a productive force of belief, a linear temporality becomes hard to defend. If fictions can make themselves real, through hype, then they can warp the timeline. Hyperstitions make themselves real, and hence enrichen the reality with new elements which were not yet present before this hyperstitional dynamic of self-realization. However, since a hyperstition makes itself real, it does not come into being as the actualization of something which was already – albeit latently – present in the reality but only now has shown itself. Much on the contrary, hyperstition brings about – or: conjures – a new element in/of the reality. Hyperstition thus harbors the potential to retroactively alter reality, to endow reality with new layers of meaning it did not yet possess beforehand. I will argue that it is in this sense that we can conceive of (the hype in) hyperstition as a certain form of time-travel.

Panel 20. Towards New Theorizations of Hype

Chair: Andreu Belsunces Gonçalves

Aaron Pagel

The 300 Million Mile View: Asteroid Mining and a Synthesized Theory of Hype

Management literature has seen a recent surge in hype scholarship, marking the beginning of a rich and fruitful discussion of a multi-level phenomenon through an interdisciplinary lens. While management's entry into this research stream is promising, theorizing around this phenomenon has occurred across a diverse range of domains, from consulting practitioners to media studies, and even includes accounting. Leveraging the extended case method, I examine hype research to reconstruct extant theorizing into a synthesized lens with which I then examine the asteroid mining industry between 2012 to 2019. In an abductive analytical process within a reflexive model of science, I find that hype theorizing can be framed within two dimensions: Resource versus Process and Agentic versus Structural. These dimensions highlight underscore hype as a cultural phenomenon where expectations of the future are derived through visions of potential outcomes or simply through the exchange of information. Additionally, I find two subcomponents of hype: Temporal Relationships and Technology Influences. The former describes how time horizons are an important consideration in expectation development. The latter situates technology as an input to hype, rather than the subject as in previous hype literature. My extreme and novel empirical context is used to present a cohesive interpretation of how the asteroid mining industry was influenced by a complex phenomenon such as hype. The goal of this paper is to reconstruct theory from disparate domains to assist future researchers with building or testing hype theory within positive models of science. This research contributes to hype, futures, and innovation literatures.

Andreu Belsunces Goncalves

Deep Hype: Understanding Hype Dynamics in Moonshot Projects

Deep hype is a distinct form of technological overpromising that differs from conventional hype in a crucial way: it is rooted in a multi-dimensional network of uncertainties projected into an open-ended future, making its promises difficult—if not impossible—to verify in the present. Unlike regular hype, which generates excitement around near-term breakthroughs (such as a new medical treatment or a more powerful AI model), deep hype constructs grand, long-term futures and allegedly civilisational transformations.

This presentation introduces the concept of deep hype and explores it through the large-scale, long-term nature of moonshot projects. These initiatives are driven by bold visions aimed at tackling massive global challenges such as solving climate change through geoengineering, curing all illnesses through CRISPR therapy, providing limitless energy through nuclear fusion, exponentially increasing computational power through quantum technologies, or solving everything through Artificial General Intelligence. Such projects involve high-risk, high-reward stakes, demand long-term commitment, and rely on cross-disciplinary and global collaboration, often through public-private partnerships.

Through a comparative analysis of several moonshot projects, the presentation will show how deep hype expands the window of opportunity by sustaining excitement and ambiguity long enough to attract ongoing investment and attention. Its deepness, I argue, lies in its ability to maintain momentum over time by mobilising sociotechnical fictions, interpretative flexibility, and the strategic management of uncertainty. From this perspective, deep hype constructs a structure of shared technological belief—not unlike faith—

that orients investment, policy, and public discourse, often without delivering tangible results. Positioned perpetually just beyond reach, the objects animated by deep hype are framed as both inevitable and unpredictable. This ambiguous temporal framing generates a self-reinforcing narrative that legitimises continued investment and speculative policymaking.

Santtu Räisänen; Zhuo Chen; Tuukka Lehtiniemi

What can "bullshit" teach us about hype

Hype can refer to emic judgements of certain kinds of technological talk, and efforts to clarify it into an analytical framework have drawn from many related theoretical concepts like expectations and imaginaries. In this paper, we draw from another: bullshit. Bullshit functions both as an emic judgment and as an analytical tool. Philosopher Harry Frankfurt has theorised bullshit as speech that is "unconnected with a concern for truth". At the same time, scholars in organisational studies like Spicer and Alvesson see it as a complicit and performative social practice proliferating within specific communicative communities. Bullshit shifts our focus away from notions that implicate processes 'in the head' towards more social processes of meaning making. Building on this lineage and a set of empirical case studies, we explore "bullshit technology" as a type of discursive gimmick that enables certain effective, communicative acts divorced from technological realities: professions of faith, demonstrations of innovation, and performances of projects, for example. We argue that examining hype from the perspective of bullshit reveals some of the more cynical and opportunistic aspects of the phenomenon. Undermining the comfort of edicts like "don't believe the hype", bullshit demonstrates that it's not necessarily belief that makes hype work; it might just be a cynical complicity.

WORKSHOPS

Workshop (and Panel) session A

10th of September, 14:00–15:30

Sophia Bazile – Hype, Human Flourishing™ and its Discontents" (online workshop)

Welcome to Hype City™ , a speculative zone where a growing community of high-agency humans are always months away from another few months away from solving for Human Flourishing ™. Where everything about being human has been optimized, productized, and gamified for thriving. In this interactive session, you're not just a participant—you're a stakeholder, an influencer, an innovator, a disruptor—a God/dess amongst mortals.

Or perhaps you're just a witness to the spectacular contradictions (and dangers) of techno-utopian fantasies.

Because behind the neon glow and glimmering promises of Hype City™ lies the deeper interrogation: Who decides what constitutes flourishing? In whose name? Whose bodies, values, knowledge, and wisdom are appropriated, distorted, absenced, or erased? What pasts, presents, and possible futures are rendered insignificant or disposable? What happens when "thriving" becomes a metric, a brand, or a mandate? Is Human Flourishing™ antithetical to Collective Liberation?

In Hype City™, participants will engage with interactive provocations, speculative play, and critical dialogue exploring how hype is crafted, circulated, and sustained. Who are the actors? How does hype move across demographic and institutional boundaries, shapeshifting as it targets different publics while often masking uneven risks and consequences? We'll unpack how hype is not just noise, but a powerful and pervasive force with myriad implications for how we desire, design, and dream.

Let's explore the narratives and behaviors that dominate AI and tech discourse and particular communities, to surface the discontents that never make it into glossy whitepapers, incubators, and press releases masked as journalism.

Arrive curious, skeptical, and brushed up on the latest buzzwords. Come for the memes and stay with the trouble to engage in a bit of decolonial critique. Whether you're a critic, a believer, ambivalent, or just hype-curious, Hype City™ is open for play.

Let's game the system. Flourish responsibly.

This workshop will be fully online. In person attendees of the conference can join the stream in the corresponding room in the program. There is no limit to amount of participants.

Ezequiel Soriano – Shitpublishing Workshop (in person workshop)

This workshop invites participants to rethink the attention economy, accelerated digital production, and the logic of hype through the lens of shitposting. Drawing from the aesthetics and tactics of shitposting—fast, ironic, low-effort content designed to disrupt online communication and exploit platform dynamics—we propose to engage in shitpublishing: the application of these practices to the creation of books.

In this hands-on session, participants will produce literary works that prioritize quantity over quality, copy over originality, play over innovation, and speed over coherence. Using uncreative writing techniques (Goldsmith, 2011), generative AI tools and online self-publishing platforms, we will pursue the deliberately absurd goal of creating and publishing as many books as possible in two hours.

Rather than rejecting hyperproduction, this workshop embraces and exaggerates it to expose and subvert its mechanisms. Here, form overrides content, resulting in a literature of emptiness that challenges dominant narratives around creativity, authorship, and cultural value. This playful intervention reflects on what it means to make something public in the age of platforms, blurring the boundaries between posting and publishing, signal and spam.

This workshop emerges from the adaptation of early hyperpublishing experiments, developed as an artistic research method within an ethnography of memes and digital vernacular creativity (Soriano, 2023), and is part of an ongoing artistic research on expanded publishing and shitposting (Soriano, 2024; 2025).

This workshop will be fully in person and unfortunately not available for online attendees of the conference. Participants are expected to bring a laptop (or tablet with keyboard). The maximum amount of participants is 30, first come, first served.

Shawn Skelton; Anna Brandenberger; Anna Knörr; Jaime Redondo-Yuste; Manu Srivastava – A Quantum of Hope (in person workshop)

Second-wave quantum technologies are in a superposition: they have transitioned from bold ideas to functioning prototypes yet remain far from mature technologies. While quantum technologies hold legitimate potential, there is also a great deal of hype.

While the science is not easy to explain, this does not make it less important for the public to understand the plausibility, potential risks, and aspired benefits of the quantum technologies currently taking shape. This project aims to give the interested public insight into the current research world of quantum science & technology through the medium of theatre. Through our play "A Quantum of Hope", we hope to engage the public in discussing the still-uncertain future trajectory of quantum science & technology:

In a Douglas Adams-inspired setting, planet Earth must prove its scientific value to the Galactic Federation of Science & Technology (GAFSAT) within five years. A council of five quantum scientists and entrepreneurs is summoned to discuss which quantum research directions might live up to this formidable task. Through satire and plot twists, the audience is led through the characters' unabashed discussions on the promise and peril of quantum computers, simulations, sensors, and quantum foundations research. But, ultimately, who gets to decide?

In this workshop, I will briefly outline my experiences with creating quantum technologies fiction and then invite audience participation to read a section of the play. I will then guide a group discussion, focusing on how humor can be a powerful tool in science communication; the tensions between accurate representations of quantum science and narrative accessibility; and how to discuss values in science within a narrative.

This workshop will be mostly in person. Online spectation is possible, but online participation not. Maximum participants is 20, first come, first served.

Robin Williams and Neil Pollock – After Hype (book pre-launch hybrid event)

This session will discuss findings in our forthcoming book After Hype: The Business of Taming the Digital Economy (Cambridge University Press). The book builds on long-term explorations of Gartner and other promissory organisations in the digital economy to understand how the character and significance of hype is changing in our innovation-oriented economy. Hype - traditionally characterised as noise or non-knowledge - is changing through the circulation of tools like the Gartner Hype Cycle designed to help adopters choose when and whether to invest attention in emerging innovations; through new forms of expertise (industry analysts and more recently Analyst Relations specialists who help vendors pitch to analysts). In this way, hype is becoming 'tamed' – a reflexive resource for strategic orientation in the digital economy. Tamed hype is circulating alongside traditional 'hype in the wild' in the digital economy. Our work offers a conceptual framework and methodology for addressing hype ethnographically through actor-centred enquiry:

(1) To avoid the risk of speculating about the significance of particular visions, we focus on the circulation of hype: how promises are generated, amplified, assessed and consumed over time.

(2) We examine longer term changes in these arrangements – the creation of new arenas, tools, forms of expertise over extended timeframes.

(3) We consider the changing role of hype in the dynamics of 21st century capitalism as the focus of competition shifts towards emergent innovation.

We conclude by advancing several propositions for the establishment of Hype Studies as a programmatic research agenda focused on the phenomenon of hype. We revisit foundational work in the Sociology of Expectations which, lacking a framework for examining mechanisms of expectation in practice, misreads dynamics (for example, by portraying expectations becoming performative as a self-fulfilling prophecy). We see this as extending STS insights beyond innovation contexts and towards the wider domains of capitalism.

This session will be a hybrid session. There is no maximum amount of participants.

Tania Duarte (We and AI) – Exploring metaphors of AI: Visualisations, narratives and perception (online panel)

 Misleading yet visceral metaphors of AI are evident in a proliferation of visual tropes and iconography, such as metaphors that leverage existing tendencies to attribute human characteristics to AI systems and tools – developing it into a visual language of extended anthropomorphism. Elsewhere, mystical and godlike associations are signalled through ubiquitous visual symbols such as magic wands and sparkles (representing generative AI).

This online session draws on explorations by the Better Images of AI community of how AI hype narratives derive power from metaphors, and invites insights from researchers and creatives working on the emergence and evolution of visual and narrative metaphors related to AI. They will present their research and artworks, and discuss what role they play in shaping our perceptions of AI.

Presenting recent papers or artworks which address metaphors from the perspectives of public perception research, narratives, and critical generative AI literacy are:

- Myra Cheng on "From tools to thieves: Measuring and understanding public perceptions of AI through crowdsourced metaphors"

- Leo Lau from Mixed Initiative, sharing new visual metaphors of AI which counter existing ones

- Rainer Rehak on "AI Narrative Breakdown. A Critical Assessment of Power and Promise. ACM FAccT '25"

- Anuj Gupta and Yasser Atef on "Assistant, Parrot, or Colonizing Loudspeaker? ChatGPT Metaphors for Developing Critical AI Literacies"

Tania Duarte, Founder of We and AI will then be in discussion with Yasser Atef and Leo Lau and invite audience Q and A on topics including:

- the use of visualisations and sensory objects to represent alternative, more appropriate metaphors as a way to debunk and replace misleading ones

- the implications and cultural sensitivities of challenging metaphor with metaphor

- The impact on public discourse about AI

The audience will be invited to suggest their own metaphors and share their ideas.

This panel will be fully online. In person attendees of the conference can join the stream in the corresponding room in the programme. There is no limit to amount of participants.

Workshop session B

11th of September, 15:00–16:30

Elizabeth Resor; Courtney Wittekind – Locating Hype: Digital qualitative methods across sites and forms (an in person open discussion)

Hype has performative power, but it's power is fleeting. Hype can accumulate in media objects, sites, and practices. It condenses around viral videos, social media trends, and online movements that reach a point of saturation before rapidly disappearing. How might scholars, practitioners, and users identify the accumulation of energy that gives hype its power, capture its ascent and peak, and record its aftermath? We argue that digital ethnographic methods, including online participant observation and the collection of digital artefacts and media discourse, are ideally suited to establishing an empirical account of hype's ebbs and flows. We draw from our two separate ethnographic projects in which we encountered hype's multiple forms. In one case, a viral TikTok video critiquing a tech company's motivations demonstrated hype's growth and contraction as an event (Resor). In a second, hype emerged through a sustained practice, in the form of brokers selling rural land via Facebook (Wittekind). These cases span diverse media and platforms, but prompted shared reflection about the theory and approaches we relied upon to capture hype as it was building at particular times and within defined online communities.

In this session, we will lead an open discussion about identifying and documenting hype with digital ethnographic methods. Rather than building one definitive method, the format of this discussion will emphasize the experimental and bespoke approaches required when tailoring digital methods to specific sites and forms of hype. The room will be organized as a "fishbowl" 1 with the chairs facing the center of the room, where 3-4 chairs will be open for speakers. We will open the floor with some framing questions and vignettes from our research. Then, we will encourage audience members to share their experience, questions, concerns, and provocations by coming up to the center of the room. In this way, the discussion develops organically, following the interest of the audience. This format is ideal for creating space for students, practitioners, and early career academics to participate.

This workshop will be a hybrid session. There is no maximum amount of participants.

Tyler West – Humbling Tech Hype: Assessing Change and Continuity (in person workshop)

Though 'hype' invariably conjures a negative connotation, why it is bad and should be challenged is often unclear. Indeed, common arguments that hype amounts to 'poor predictions' or 'disingenuous marketing pitches' are a weak bases for critique. A more compelling justification for countering hype, and especially technological hype, is that it radically cleaves contemporary humans from those who lived before them. In this sense, technological hype often espouses the technological determinist belief that technologies alone define historical epochs (also known as historical materialism) and the corollary view that technology fundamentally alters what it means to be human.

Examples of hype-induced determinism include concerns that social media is 'dumbing down' public discourse and that AI will unleash human flourishing. The en-vogue phrase, "I can't believe this [insert dreadful current event] is happening in 2025," is another example, the subtext of which is often that 21st-century humans should behave differently than their pre-modern ancestors by virtue of their technological prowess. While technology is undoubtedly a powerful force, the unmooring of the present society from the past leads to uncritically accepted dystopian and utopian predictions of technology's effects on humanity and obscures past human experiences that remain relevant today.

This workshop aims to help scholars more realistically assess technology's impact on humanity by employing the historical analytical concept of change and continuity over time (CCOT). After a short introductory presentation, participants will be presented with a case study of a 'revolutionary' technology and will work in groups to analyse its impact or lack thereof from the human (i.e., non-material) perspective. It is hoped that encouraging scholars, practitioners, and others to systematically reflect on continuities instead of changes may 'humble' the hype prevalent in today's technological discourse.

This workshop will be a hybrid workshop. There will be no maximum amount of participants.

Anne-Laure Oberson – A collective critical cartography of hype (in person workshop)

Inspired by the original work on critical cartographies and collective mapping of argentinian *Iconoclasistas* Pablo Ares and Julia Risler, as well as their german offspring *kollektiv orangotango*, who have been developing the practice of maping applied to questions regarding space, power and resistance, this workshop proposes to explore the phenomenon of 'hype' from as various points of views as there will be participants, crossing personal expertise in the fields represented, in order to reveal its multifaceted aspect, complex workings and ramifications across disciplines. This collective critical cartography aims to interconnect an historical perspective with political, social, cultural and other applications with its current impact.

Maps have a long history as instruments of power, yet collective mapping can be a tool for extending awareness, emancipation and empowerment. The activity of mapping collectivelly as a critical practice, involves the collaborative task of constructing a network of information that fosters new understanding and meanings. It can also serve as a functional depository in a dynamic archiving process.

During the workshop we will explore how hype phenomena have and currently circulate in various disciplines by sharing and linking vocabularies, visuals, and stories brought forth by participants, who are encouraged to contribute prior knowledge and their own material to the content that will be collected during the conference by the workshop moderator.

This collective practice helps learn how to read concepts and how to initiate emancipatory processes, by connecting theoretical reflections and concrete actions. Questions such as – Is there a territory of hype? What are the power relations at play in the mediatisation of hype? Is there an ecology of hype and does hype have an impact on climate issues? Can a critical cartography of hype account for disparities, invisibilities, discrimination? – or any that participants will care to raise will drive our discussions and outline our designs.

This workshop will be of the hands-on, body gesture, pen and paper type. Yet given the ambition to create an object that should last and evolve in time in order to provide an open database continually completed and a working tool for the nascent field of hype studies, it would be interesting to also think of the map's affordance from the onset and aim to conceive it as accessible, interoperable, inclusive, editable, etc. Thus the work done during the workshop will be translated and further expanded to an online platform, as the aim of the workshop is to produce a dynamic and useful cartography for everyone who contributes during the workshop as well as afterwards.

This proposition is based on the principles of critical thinking, collective intelligence and creative commons.

This workshop will be fully in person and unfortunately not available for online attendees of the conference. The maximum amount of participants is 15. First come, first served.

Christo Buschek – Investigating Datasets – The underbelly of the AI hype (in person workshop)

We have internalized the phrase "AI is a black box." But, when we examine the datasets used to train these incredibly complex machines more closely, we recognize the models they power and learn about the emerging effects of algorithmic systems. While models are featured prominently in press releases, the datasets that fuel the algorithms mostly fly under the radar. However, datasets show that AI is not a black box but rather an assemblage of various technical artifacts and processes. They are the result of choices and values, a product of the people and culture in which they originate. And, like all algorithmic systems, unexpected behavior emerges.

This workshop will be hybrid. There is no maximum amount of participants.

Danae Lois; Julieta Groshaus and Valentina Marún – Hype Was Here: Tracing the ghosts of collective excitement (in person workshop)

In a world where attention is traded like currency, hype often gets mistaken for value. But what if it's more than just noise? What if hype is a mechanism that doesn't just mirror the zeitgeist but it makes it?

This session unpacks the full arc of hype: from its spark to its peak, and haunting quiet that follows. We'll dig into case studies from tech, branding, and culture to understand how hype speeds up time, fuels belief, and shifts resources. We're not here to dismiss it, we're here to decode it.

Because hype doesn't just ride on hope. It helps shape speculative futures. Some come to life. Others crash fast. Either way, hype reveals what we're ready to believe, what systems we build to support it, and what happens when the buzz fades but the impact lingers.

We'll mix sharp analysis with a live, collaborative mapping inviting participants to trace their own hype encounters, the rush, the fallout, and what stayed behind. This is a conversation about more than trends. It's about how hype moves markets, minds, and meaning; and how we might repurpose its residue into something real.

This workshop will be hybrid. There is a maximum of 25 participants. First come, first served.

Workshop session C

Grace Turlte – Queering Hype: A Playable Workshop for Trans/forming Predictive AI (in person workshop)

'Queering Hype' is a proposal for a playable workshop geared toward subverting and trans/forming predictive AI systems by simulating queer orientations and transfeminist tactics in experimental modes. This workshop responds to trends in interdisciplinary critical AI that prioritize themes such as fairness and trust, while inadvertently preserving AI's impetus toward the ultimate prediction and stabilization of futures. More attention is required to radically unsettle or trans/figure the ontological dualisms upon which typical predictive AI systems depend.

At stake here is the question of how AI—as if by design—abstracts and transforms agency, affect, and individual and collective senses of futurity and capacity to become futural. Building on queer and transfeminist theories, ethics, and politics entangled in AI, this workshop poses the question: Who gets to imagine futures implicated by AI? How do AI's underlying logics privilege or marginalise certain futures? And ultimately, how can the hype surrounding and produced by AI be subverted?

In response, queering hype offers fluid and relational engagements with AI systems, moving beyond the constraints of predictability and conventional applications. Specifically, this playable workshop foregrounds queer futurities where participants perform and embody theory's challenge to normative, binary classification, identification, and stabilization. It becomes a sandbox environment that activates improvisational movements aligned with Hartman's (2019) "wayward lives," inviting participants to live through alternative ways of relating to and becoming-with algorithms. By situating the workshop within the broader context of 'hype studies,' this approach demonstrates a wayward path that traverses theory and experimentation, challenging predictive AI's "fixing" impulse while opening horizons for emergent, relational, and more-than-human modes of becoming that trans/form AI's hype.

Ron Bronson – When Hype Breaks the City (online workshop)

We'll invite participants into a critical conversation about the overlooked externalities of hype. Especially how its speed, scale, and virality destabilize urban life. From viral products that overwhelm city infrastructure, to speculative real estate trends driven by platform visibility, to AI rollouts that local governments are unprepared to absorb, hype doesn't just shape perception, it's creating fallouts that cannot be kept up with in real time.

Across three rounds of small-group discussion, participants will engage with prompt cards that explore questions like:

- What happens when lies move faster than infrastructure?
- How do cities absorb the fallout of hype-driven markets, trends, and platforms?
- Can we imagine civic tools that slow down or redirect speculative momentum?
- How does hype interfere with local planning, budgeting, and public trust?
- What happens when lies or vaporware produce real-world displacement or systems strain? Can we   build a taxonomy of "hype literacy" or infrastructural resilience against speculative culture?

Each group will work through a rotating set of prompts designed to surface lived examples, draw connections, and reflect on the municipal and geopolitical consequences of unchecked hype. These cards will touch on themes like platform overreach, financial velocity, simulation governance, and local policy paralysis.

 I've spent my career looking at systems, working on design at scale and interrogating the ways that consequences are shrouded into interfaces that leave lasting harm on communities.

This workshop will be fully online. In person attendees of the conference can join the stream in the corresponding room in the programme. There is no limit to amount of participants.

Lourdes Rodriguez – Detectives of the Hype: Surfacing Bias and Worldviews in Our Sensemaking Processes (in person workshop)

Hype is more than a fleeting buzz; as this conference highlights, it is a pervasive force that significantly influences markets, politics, and societal narratives. "Detectives of the Hype" is based on a foresight methodology I have developed over the past decade, known as "Detectives of the Future." This approach has been applied in a range of settings, from senior executives to middle school students, offering a practical, hands-on framework for understanding how signals of change emerge and helping participants differentiate between genuine transformations and transient, overhyped phenomena.

In this workshop, participants will engage in an exercise designed to reflect on how individual, cultural, and societal biases influence our perception of change and trends, challenging assumptions that often guide our sensemaking. Furthermore, the exercise will address the critical role of attention spans in navigating hype. In an era of information overload and ever-decreasing attention spans, we are often distracted or overwhelmed by the sheer volume of signals, making it harder to discern valuable insights from fleeting trends.

By the end of the workshop, attendees will be equipped with tools to critically evaluate change, identify the underlying forces at play, and understand the broader impact of hype on shaping future possibilities. Aligned with the "Engaging" thematic track, this session offers an immersive, action-oriented exploration of how hype can be spotted, understood, and navigated despite our biases and assumptions. Overall, this workshop aims to build metacognitive skills, enabling participants to be more critical in the way they interpret and understand ambiguous or complex information, especially in a world where attention itself is a scarce resource.

This workshop will be fully in person and unfortunately not available for online attendees of the conference. The maximum amount of participants is 15. First come, first served.

Patricia von Papstein – I want to be a Caring Trickster! – An Emo Hype with Potential? (online workshop)

Imagine the whole world being gripped by an intense urge to be obedient and cheeky, smart and directed, wild and gentle all at once. This is the behavioral repertoire of the Caring Trickster within us. Never lived before, but now in high demand. A brief era of emotional reordering is dawning. The contradictions in our personal behavior become a blissful source of power. Business and society are being flooded by bold actions fueled by the energy of the new behavior idol.

We're done with emotional exaggerations – we've had the heroes, the gangsters, the renegades, the wretched, the perpetually lovestruck. So how does the Caring Trickster become attractive as a desirable behavioral model?

In my open floor space, I will guide participants through the possibilities of staging such improbable ? hype. We will closely examine how the fantasies we project onto a Caring Trickster figure can lead to behaviors that transcend megalomania or apocalyptic dramas. I show which resistances speak up against such unfamiliar emotional energy and how these voices can be put out of balance.

The films Perfume and Perfect Sense served as inspiration, along with my years of research on the topic of "What is unruly mental health?"

This workshop will be fully online. In person attendees of the conference are encouraged to join the stream in the corresponding room in the programme. Maximum of 20 participants.

Caitlin Keely; Keely Adler (RADAR community) – Digging into Hype: Multiplayer Mining for Meaning (online workshop)

In an age of accelerating trends and competing futures narratives, how might we collectively unpack the phenomenon of hype to reveal deeper cultural shifts? This interactive workshop invites participants to explore beneath the surface of emerging signals using the "5 Whys" methodology – a multiplayer approach to finding root causes and patterns behind cultural phenomena – which was published in RADAR's book "The Curious Human's Field Guide to the Future."

Together, we'll move beyond superficial trend-spotting to discover what yearnings, needs, and shifting paradigms might be hiding below the surface noise. Drawing from RADAR's experience in cultivating collective intelligence across its global community, this session transforms individual signal-spotting into shared sensemaking.

Participants will practice applying this framework to current examples of technological, cultural, and social hype narratives, developing muscles for distinguishing between fleeting trends and emerging futures worth nurturing. We'll explore how digging deeper in our own reflections – beneath hype and together in multiplayer mode – can feed richer understanding through collective digestion.

This workshop offers practical tools for identifying what's beneath the hype while demonstrating how collaborative sensemaking creates thicker, more nuanced understanding than any single perspective could achieve alone. Participants will leave with both a tangible framework they can apply immediately and an experience of the "multiplayer maximalism" that makes RADAR's approach to futures work distinctive.

RADAR is a global futures collective dedicated to accelerating better futures through multiplayer collaboration. Founded on the principle that "the future belongs to those who think about it," RADAR brings together diverse perspectives to collectively imagine and build alternatives to the status quo, bridging the gap between yearning and action through community-driven foresight and experimentation.

This workshop will be fully online. In person attendees of the conference are encouraged to join the stream in the corresponding room in the programme. There is no limit to amount of participants.

ARTWORKS

Displayed in the Art hall (open throughout the conference)

Lucas Kuster – Saliva Collection Container

How and with what legitimation are design interventions in social issues actually appropriate; and do they make sense at all?

The work Saliva Collection Container (orig.: Speichelauffangbehälter) deals with (non-)action in the context of social challenges from a transformative design perspective. The title of the work is borrowed from Ivan Pavlov's study on the conditioning of dogs. In Pavlov's specific experiment a dog's saliva collected in a container was the indicator for a successful conditioning of the animal. In a less animalistic way, however, my work is about human, especially designerly, reflex-like reactions to crisis- and hype-like situations: spectacle. My submission consists of a speculative object as a fictitious measuring instrument for collecting "designer's saliva"—in situations of designerly urges of "making things better" or even "good" or "improving things for others" or just being quick enough to jump on a current "hype train". Besides the object, the work goes with a fictitious explanatory graphic and a hand-sketched 4-field matrix that attempts to weigh up actions/non-actions with communication/non-communication.

This work will be presented in the art exhibition room during the entirety of the conference and is available to buy.

Citlali Hernandez; Roger Pibernat; Andreus Costa – Smoke Vending Machine (SVM)

"Vender humo" (selling smoke) is a Spanish and Catalan expression that means to sell something worthless, usually by the means of quackery, charlatanism, and, in more recent years, hype. The expression is also commonly applied in the art world to criticize superficial or effortless art projects that are only based on some spectacular effect (most common in technology-based art projects) or on very simple and banal actions or devices with big or pretentious statements (particularly in the so-called conceptual art or idea-based art forms).

As a collective working at the cutting edge of art, technology and science, we often deal with this feeling. Contrary to what it may seem, selling smoke, or helping to do so, is not easy and can be very annoying. Not to mention how difficult it is to explain this to the tax authorities.

We have decided to take this issue seriously and to materialise it in an outstanding, compelling and innovative way. Taking advantage of the new AI technologies, we propose to build the most advanced Smoke Vending Machine (SVM). Our R&D team has been working hard to design a totally new experience. From hardware to software, we obsess over every detail to create a seamless experience for our customers who seek the most exquisite bubbles, infused with smoky ideas and bold statements at the intersection of art and technology. All this combined with the ease of use of a few buttons and no hassle with bureaucracy and the like. We will have our legal and accounting departments research the most legitimate way to do this.

FYI, we only accept cash as a payment method.

This work will be presented in the art exhibition room during the entirety of the conference.

DiSect – (Don't) believe the hype

I'd like to bring the collage work commissioned for our group and transform it into participatory art. I'm a big believer in playing with media other than text and with curating interactions that might lead to surprising and earnest conversations.

Here's why I like this work in particular: If everyone knows that a picture is worth a thousand words, then does that mean that collage made out of over 70 elements could essentially be a full-length novel? The finished artwork is full of Easter eggs which point to almost nostalgic cases of ridiculous hypes of the past. From Oasis' brothers ticket scandal to the lofty London Garden bridge project which costed £53 million without ever leaving the planning stage, DiSect's artwork creates a parallel universe made of space dust and collective delirium. In the age of endless debates over the nature of mis/dis/mal/information, the medium of collage allows playful manoeuvring between those categories. On the one hand, every single element was sourced from archival magazines and newspapers, serving as a testimony to particular times and events. On the other, images were clearly taken out of context and juxtaposed against each other to spin new narratives which may or may not bear resemblance to the true accounts evidenced by the historians of tomorrow. As a researcher working on hype in the context of digital innovations, I was drawn to the quietly subversive approach of the artist, in his own words, 'No Google. No Photoshop. No resizing. No colour adjustment. No computers or printers were used or harmed in the making of'. To that end, if you're reluctant to harm AI bots but aren't too squeamish about the prospect of cutting through piles of many, many old National Geographic issues, we recommend rummaging through the book section of charity shops for unique finds at affordable prices.

This work will be presented in the art exhibition room during the entirety of the conference.

Jonny Heath – "New Colour: visions of digital twins" Short stories and poems by Jonny, illustrated by Eve Pyra and Wen Li

Why would anyone write a story about fine-grained models that exchange two-way data flows between the real thing and its representations? The notions of 'actuation', 'feedback' and 'predictive maintenance' don't exactly lend themselves to the medium of fiction. Though given the hype concerning the so-called digital twins, one could–or perhaps should–see them as precisely that–works of vivid imagination of start-up founders, scientists and politicians. With no definitive tie to the particular material 'tech stack', digital twins are not quite technologies, but metaphors telling us something helpful about our contemporary technoscientific culture. The promise of accurate representation of complex biological and social phenomena gently pushes us into the obvious conclusion that a twin is all we need to predict, understand and control our future. (…)

In 'New Colours', Jonny ran with the platonic ideal of digital twins, speculating what could happen if our societies would mass-adopt those perfectly accurate, detailed and allknowing representations of cities, ecosystems and people. Stories and poems in 'New Colours' are more than classic sci-fi cautionary tales about the (un)intended consequences of innovations. In leveraging the metaphor of a twin, Jonny encourages us to reflect on the seductive and persuasive promise of resemblance, completeness and a special bond between the real and the digital twin. Perhaps once you stare into the eyes of your virtual counterpart long enough, you'd notice how uncanny it is?

This work will be presented in the art exhibition room during the entirety of the conference.

Carla de la Torre – Oblique manoeuvres (for innovators)

Over 2023-2024, I spent several months talking to innovators and R&D funders about the evolving ecosystem for the so-called digital twins in the UK. Hearing stories of collective mobilisation, enthusiasm, then disappointment, pivoting and future uncertainty made me reflect about the need to surface the perspectives on hype beyond academic critiques and curate safer spaces for discussing innovators' own expectations and vulnerabilities. How to challenge the faux-optimistic, hasty and culture of software start ups?

This presentation will report on an ongoing project aiming to translate research findings into a card-based game for practitioners involved in the development of digital twins and adjacent technologies. I was initially inspired by the game called "Oblique strategies" developed by Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt. The original Oblique Strategies were a series of somehow esoteric card prompts, aiming to help artists with overcoming creative blocks. There is no particular mechanics attached to the original game, i.e., players can draw a single card and reflect on it or decide to discuss several of them as a team.

My second point of inspiration is a recent turn to intervention, found in fields like STS but also HCI and Design. Recently, there has been a proliferation of games, roleplays and scenarios for including ethics in data science projects e.g., "Data Hazard Labels", "Data Ethics Emergency Drill". Though I fully support researchers explicitly targeting their engagement eWorts at practitioners, I found myself questioning the sole promise of 'ethics' tools. While many of the current ethics tools focus on raising awareness among software developers, I wanted to focus on creating space for talking candidly about successes and failures.

Consequently, I have embarked on a collaboration with a graphic designer (Carla de la Torre), to develop a set of cards which aims to act as prompts for more honest and humble conversations which acknowledge hype in innovation development. Each card presents an innovator's dilemma followed by a quick reflexive prompt. Although the card content itself is brief and fairly abstract, further project documentation links individual cards to relevant data (e.g. quotations from research interviewees, policy documents) as well as foundational theoretical concepts from STS and beyond supporting the observations.

While a set of cards cannot ensure the appropriate inclusion of ethics in innovation projects (nor it shouldn't aim for that in the first place as we're not after individualising responsibility), my hope for this experiment is that it will help to illuminate the collective and political issues with digital twins that are currently obscured by hype. Would it be too idealistic to think an alliance between STS hype scholars and progressive innovators is possible?

This work will be presented in the art exhibition room during the entirety of the conference.

Berk Alkoç – Nothing But the Truth *(And a Lot of Hype):* An Archive of Imaginary AI Startups That Say the Quiet Part Out Loud

This installation presents a visual archive of 10 entirely fictional AI startups—each designed in the hyper-aspirational and innovation-saturated aesthetic of contemporary tech marketing. But with one critical twist: **they tell the truth.**

Instead of claiming to revolutionize consciousness, cure aging, or solve all your mental health problems, these parody startups confess. They admit to scraping personal data without consent, hallucinating outputs with confidence, and rebranding as "AI-driven" weeks before launch to attract investment. Rooted in critical design, adversarial aesthetics, and memetic culture, this speculative archive reframes hype not as an exaggeration but as a genre. These artifacts parody the vocabulary and visual codes of VC pitch decks and LinkedIn futurism to interrogate how hype operates as both signal and shield: a performative distortion that produces trust, money, and myth.

The project invites viewers to reflect on techno-hype's affective and ethical dimensions. How does it obscure structural extraction? How does it shelter poor design and inflated claims? And how does it produce belief—even when suspicion is warranted?

The installation will feature a looping video or poster wall showcasing the archive, accompanied by a writable surface where attendees can contribute their own startup names, slogans, or AI "truth bombs." These collective additions will expand the archive over the course of the event, turning the installation into a participatory space for satire, critique, and counter-imaginaries.

By encouraging laughter, recognition, and possibly some well-placed indignation, the project aims to demystify hype—and offer a space to rewrite its script.

This work will be presented in the art exhibition room during the entirety of the conference.

Emre Altindag – Visualizing Otherwise: A Wordless Artistic Inquiry into Surveillance and Dispossession

This presentation explores my graphic art book The Cost of Being Homeless in the Age of Smart Cities, a visual narrative that challenges dominant discourses around technological "smartness" in urban development. As a visual artist and researcher, I use silent sequential art to unpack how hype-driven imaginaries of "smart cities" often exclude or erase the lived experiences of unhoused individuals, reducing complex social issues to datafied abstractions.

Grounded in practice-based research and a methodology of visual storytelling, the work resists alarmist or utopian narratives by centering poetic visual metaphors that embody fragility, displacement, and resistance. The process of crafting this graphic novel becomes a form of artistic inquiry, where drawing is not illustrative but investigative, an aesthetic tool to engage with surveillance, precarity, and invisibility.

I propose this work for the Making and Doing format. Although not an installation or workshop, the graphic novel itself is a completed creative work that embodies a form of critical, practice-based research. My presentation will reflect on how artists can approach complex socio-technological topics through artistic research, and how a graphic novel can function as a site of knowledge production, challenging the hype from within. This contribution fits the Making and Doing track because it does not merely talk about hype but shows how artistic practice becomes a form of action-research, visually questioning dominant futures and offering new ways of seeing and feeling.

The link to the published graphic novel I will be discussing is: www.edgelands.institute/outcomes/the-cost-of-being-homeless-in-the-age-of-smart-cities

This work will be presented in the art exhibition room during the entirety of the conference.

Donato Ricci; Tommaso Prinetti; Gabriel Alcaras; Zoé de Vries – *Tedium*: effects and consequences of LLMs boredom

What does a workday with a large language model (LLM) look like? What unfolds during hours spent with chatbots meant to streamline work, reduce effort, expand opportunity, and remove obstacles?

Tedium, a video installation developed within the *Ecologies of LLMs Practices (EL2MP)* at SciencesPo's médialab, offers grounded responses to these questions. It counters the hype and magic surrounding the latest AI generation by documenting mundane, situated interactions between professionals and LLMs across diverse fields. Rather than isolating LLM capabilities, we examine how they reshape work within broader professional ecologies. Based on a participatory, experimental research protocol —co-produced by

sociologists, STS scholars, and design researchers— our project creates deliberate interruptions in daily routines, allowing participants to slow down and reflect on their evolving practices with AI. Implemented over several 6–8 month cycles, the protocol involved 40 professionals as co-inquirers. They generated a multimodal archive through regular individual and collective sessions: audio recordings, photos, video, sketches, and chat logs, capturing the texture of LLMs-in-use. This evolving archive became both method and material.

Tedium revisits and reorganises this archive into scenes, each depicting a distinct relational mode between generative AI and professional practice. Instead of testing efficiency or outcomes, it traces subtle transformations: the emergence of new tasks such as prompt crafting, error evaluation, or the discretisation of formerly continuous workflows. It describes how LLMs discretise actions, demand domestication to integrate with existing routines, or sometimes resist integration altogether. It explores how these systems amplify or compress different tasks' time, space, and cognitive efforts. *Tedium* puts the narratives of AI hype to the test, simultaneously tracing their performative effects within everyday work contexts. It offers not a theory of LLMs, but a grounded chronicle of working with and along it: messy, recursive, deceptive, tedious.

This work will be presented in the art exhibition room during the entirety of the conference.

Hailey Hannigan; Sofia Mari Surkau; Katarina Vrablova – Arenas of Artificial General Intelligence Hype: A visual database of AGI hype discourse

Arenas of Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) Hype is a visual database on AGI hype discourse. The interactive web experience is based on statements by key AGI actors, tech leaders, journalists and academia on the socio-technical fiction of an artificial general intelligence. Using qualitative research methodologies the statements were categorized into six key dimensions of uncertainty. They are visually ordered within arenas, symbolic for the race towards AGI. Conceptual, temporal and existential arenas cluster definitions, collect predictions of AGI's deployment and assess its risks and promises of prosperity revealing similar statements, contradictions and promises. The project challenges the validity and truthfulness of hype narratives in tech governance, such as uncertainty and inevitability, based on theory of 'deep hype' by Andreu Belsunces.

This work will be presented in the art exhibition room during the entirety of the conference.

Video screenings (12th of September, 12:15-13:00)

Prayas Abhinav ; Satya – A Workshop Engaging Indian Design Students to Design a Tool to Examine the Epistemic Role of Hype in the Design Process

We are fundamentally interested in identifying triggers of behaviour-change towards being either influenced by hype or seeing through hype. As artists and educators within a design studies context, we are concerned with Engaging students on delinking the attention a work receives, from the quality of the work. This is vital in a compromised media-driven environment (termed "godi media" in India) of perverted attention, where hype is considered a validating criterion for value and authority. Of interest also are hierarchies of voices within the context of Indian social structures and cultural values, as behavioural conditioners that aid propensity for falling for hype. We seek to incite discussion in a group of Indian design students on perceptions of status, comparison, tribalism, readiness in accepting or rejecting marginal/critical voices, the state of contemporary media, eager affiliation with tech-hype, and a strongly anti-critical society where progressive positions are under threat.

We will hold a workshop with upto 25 design students, entitled "Designing a Tool to Identify Hype in Design". Through designing the tool, students are confronted with questions critically approaching their own design practices, perceptions of hype, and conceptions of value.

We start with the proposition of an inverse relation between depth of content and number of followers. Sample questions we pose: What is design with care but not spectacle? How do influential figures establish themselves as credible sources of knowledge? What techniques do influencers use to promote certain narratives or interpretations that affect design processes? Are creaks defects? Is gloss desirable? How does information flow from influential sources to the broader public? What factors determine which voices gain traction on issues? How do platforms, media or social contexts affect influential actors' epistemic impact? What will make you let yourself be inconvenienced?

Our submission to the Conference will be a Video document of the Workshop.

Kate Colley – Unwind, a short film

What if nature was just one click away? And to unwind you simply had to log on? In 'Unwind', filmmaker Kate Colley anticipates a future where we can access the most remote wonders of nature from the comfort of our homes – all we need is a headset and a monthly subscription to the landscape of our choice. Relatively inclusive and accessible by design, VR has the potential to replace unsustainable tourism practices and improve the wellbeing of those in isolation. But whose vision of 'reality' is this? Carefully manoeuvring between nostalgia and hope, 'Unwind' is a meditation on the contradictory promises of immersive technologies. If your VR experience allows you to engage all of your senses – hear the tropical birds, feel the water droplets on your face, smell the blossom – does it matter that none of it is real?

Part of the project "Against digital fatalism"

In recent years, mainstream media has helped to amplify hyperbolic narratives about new technologies. Technology hype has inundated the public sphere with grossly inflated expectations, promises as well as fears about artificial intelligence, the metaverse and other technological 'frontiers'. Hype, be it utopian or dystopian, has always been an eWective marketing tool. But rather than being just innocent storytelling and sometimes minimised as science fiction, such narratives can play a key role in influencing investment and policy, and ultimately helping to shape our imagination and feelings about the future. Our project 'Against Digital Fatalism' seeks to challenge the mainstream technological discourse driven largely by powerful tech companies to instead envision bottom-up and more grounded ways to engage with the future. Our goal is to empower diverse audiences to engage in critical thinking about the social, political and ethical aspects of emerging technologies. We wish to invite everyone to engage actively in future making practices as a means to resist foregone conclusions and so-called 'inevitable' futures.

You can watch the film here: https://youtu.be/Y1HPg2KURj8?si=ipQwjDLyuS3IJNYB (4 mins)

Rut Guardia, Maria Antunes, Tara Monheim – The AGI Hype Break down Nobody Asked For

Learning about AGI hype feels like falling down a conspiracy rabbit hole. But every link, every quote, every absurd twist is disturbingly real.

This video essay is based on a lesson plan by Andreu Belsunces and explores how Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) is not just a technological ambition: it's a narrative machine. One that drives a very specific worldview: cyberlibertarianism.

In other words: AGI hype isn't just about making our life easier. It's about selling a future where tech giants escape regulation, data is privatized, and utopian promises mask political agendas.

What happens when you compress all of this into a 5 minute video? You start connecting the dots between AI, venture capitalists, startup bro lingo, posthuman fantasies, and the techno-ideological dreams of a world run by a few. It feels like a conspiracy theory, but it's the infrastructure of power.

Our goal:
To investigate how the AGI hype functions as a vehicle for cyberlibertarianism.

The Format:
This is part crash course, part fever dream. A fast-paced, sarcastic, visually chaotic deep-dive that takes cues from conspiracy video culture, but flips the script. It's funny, yes. But it's also scientifically robust, grounded in media theory, political critique, and qualitative research.

Why?
Because understanding how AGI is being fostered means understanding the future that's being engineered: for us, without us.

Max Sabitzer – Copper Promises of Immediate Realities

An exploration of long-distance love in the age of digital communication, combined with a growing frustration toward the technological landscape that was once full of promises.

Copper Promises of Immediate Realities is an animated short film exploring the emotional landscape of long-distance relationships in the digital age. The story unfolds without dialogue, told entirely through surreal virtual environments, empty recreations of real places and computer generated mountain ranges. These vast and isolating landscapes mirror the emotional distance between two people, who can only connect through technology. The film reflects on the paradox of digital connection and how the promise of instant communication can still leave us feeling profoundly isolated.

The short film uses a mixed media approach to create a purposefully glitchy experience of what this digital distance can look like. It does so through self-generated landscapes, google earth imagery and video feedback on screens. 3D map animations show both important personal spaces, but also the real-life places, where communication technology is produced. For example, it features salt lakes close to Silicon Valley, production facilities, train tracks, unfinished bridges, copper and mines.

KEYNOTE

Gemma Milne – Hype and the Age of Badness (10th of September, 17.00–18.30)

The *keynote* at the Hype Studies Conference will be delivered by Gemma Milne, journalist and author of *Smoke & Mirrors: How Hype Obscures the Future and How to See Past It* (2020). Specializing in technology, science, and innovation, Milne is known for her critical view of the exaggerated narratives that dominate the digital and financial age. She regularly contributes to international media, advises institutions and organizations, and advocates for a more honest and transparent analysis of *hype*'s role in shaping the future.

In her talk, Hype and the Age of Badness, Milne will explore how *hype* has become a defining force of our time: capable of shaping collective imaginaries and legitimizing political and economic agendas, but also of producing distortions, crises, and mistrust.

PLENARY PANEL DISCUSSION

Christo Buschek, Oksana Dorofeeva, Dr. Ola Michalec, Gemma Milne and Prof. Jack Stilgoe (11th of September, 17.00–18.30)

Come join our plenary panel with contributions from five specialists in the field of hype studies, bringing diverse viewpoints from multiple disciplines and sectors. In the first part (45 minutes), contributors will share brief introductions to their work and its relationship to hype studies, and will engage in conversation about the field's current status and future directions. In the second part (45 minutes), there will be open Q&A with the audience. Moderated by **Vassilis Galanos**. Participants will then have enough time to prepare for our party!

Christo Buschek is an award-winning programmer and investigative journalist based in Vienna. Christo's expertise lies in developing tools and methods for data-driven investigations. primarily focusing on documentation of human rights violations, AI and the datafied society, disinformation, and the construction of datasets.

Oksana Dorofeeva is a PhD researcher at the Danish Centre for Studies in Research and Research Policy, Aarhus University. Her PhD research focuses on the cultures of machine learning work operating under the mixed normative valence of an ongoing AI 'summer' and rising ethical concerns.

Dr Ola Michalec is a Lecturer at the Bristol Digital Futures Institute (joint appointment with UOB Business School), also affiliated with Bristol Cyber Security Group sits on the Advisory Board of the Research Institute for Sociotechnical Cyber Security. Ola is interested in the politics and policies of digital innovations, the pitching of novel ideas, and the safety of critical infrastructures. Ola's research informs key policy developments across the NCSC, Cabinet Office and Ofgem. Her collaborations with designers and artists were exhibited at the V&A Museum.

Gemma Milne Gemma Milne is a Lecturer in Innovation and Technology Management at the University of Glasgow, and a writer and broadcaster focused on cultural, economic and social concerns of science and technology. Gemma is author of 'Smoke & Mirrors: How Hype Obscures the Future and How to See Past It'; has written for outlets such as The Guardian, WIRED, Forbes, the BBC and others; and is co-host of the Radical Science podcast.

Prof Jack Stilgoe is a professor in science and technology studies at University College London, where he researches the governance of emerging technologies. He is part of the UKRI Responsible AI leadership team and worked with EPSRC and ESRC to develop a framework for responsible innovation that is now being used by the Research Councils. Among other publications, he is the author of 'Who's Driving Innovation?' and 'Experiment Earth: Responsible innovation in geoengineering.' He is a fellow of the Turing Institute and a trustee of the Royal Institution.

CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRS AND SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Andreu Belsunces Gonçalves is a sociologist of design, technology, and imagination. His research practices engage empirical, speculative, design-led and artistic methods to explore how material futures emerge through the interplay of technology, industry, policy and finance, particularly in relation to uncertainty, hype and fiction. He is a lecturer in Science and Technology Studies, as well as critical and speculative design, across several BA and MA at Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC), ELISAVA and ESCAC among others. He is co-founder of the design futures studio Becoming and member of the ecosocial transition design cooperative Holon. He is currently a PhD candidate at the research group Tecnopolítica/CNSC at UOC, where he develops the notion of sociotechnical fiction and explores its agencies in relation to cyberlibertarianism. His artistic research is presented at engineering-fiction.org.

Jascha Bareis is a Political scientist, STS and Media scholar. His passion lies at the crossroads of questions of normativity, political communication and futures. Currently, he analyzes and comments on the politics of AI, tech oligarchy, and the field of autonomous weapons. Other fields of expertise include technology assessment, trust in technology, and democratic theory. He is senior researcher at the University of Fribourg, joining the HUMAN-IST institute to research the performativity of AI. Further, he is scientific staff at the Institute of Technology Assessment and Systems Anlaysis (ITAS), research group Digital Technologies and Societal Change.

Pierre Depaz is a researcher and programmer with backgrounds in political science, game design and comparative literature. His work gravitates around software—how it represents the world and how it redistributes agency to its environment, with a specific focus on source code, programming languages and protocols as mediating forces in human discursive interactions. He is a researcher in media philosophy at the HfG Karlsruhe after defending a PhD thesis at Paris-3 Sorbonne Nouvelle on the aesthetics of source code. He also wrote the website where you're reading this!

Vassilis Galanos, SFHEA is Lecturer in Digital Work at the University of Stirling, investigating historico-sociological underpinnings of AI and internet technologies, and how expertise and expectations are negotiated in these domains to generate profit out of hype. Recent projects explore risks of Generative AI in journalism and its role in Higher Education, artist-data scientist interactions, and community-led digital innovation. Vassilis co-founded the AI Ethics & Society research group and the HaPoC's Working Group on Data Sharing and acts as Associate Editor of Technology Analysis and Strategic Management. Abstains from meat and has jammed with the Sun Ra Arkestra. More info

Isa Luiten is a research assistant at the Institute for Technology Assessment and Systems Analysis (ITAS) at the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT). She is currently pursuing a master's in Science and Technology Studies at the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main, building on her background in Cultural Anthropology. Her research explores the intersection of infrastructure studies and policy, with a focus on how

governmental organizations structure emerging technologies. In her thesis, she examines policy as infrastructure in the European space sector, analyzing the ways in which conferences, funding schemes, and institutional networks shape the development of the 'hyped up' NewSpace imaginary.

Wenzel Mehnert is a futurologist focusing on the imaginaries of new and emerging technologies. He researches, writes and teaches experimental methods of futurology. In his work, Wenzel Mehnert focuses on the intersection between speculative fictions and the evaluation of new and emerging sciences and technologies (e.g. A.I., SynBio, Internet of Things, etc.). He worked as a researcher at the Berlin University of the Arts, co-founded the Berlin Ethics Lab at the Technical University of Berlin and currently lives in Vienna, where he works at the Austrian Institute of Technology and the ethics of new and emerging technologies.

Ola Michalec is a Lecturer in Digital Futures at the Bristol University Business School and Bristol Digital Futures Institute. Ola's research interests revolve around understanding how experts from diverse fields resolve tensions between maintaining and innovating critical infrastructures, with a particular focus on energy systems. Her current project explores the ebbs and flows of hype in the context of developing digital twins in the UK. Ola plays an active role in several communities such as the Research Institute for Sociotechnical Cyber Security or the Advisory Board for the Alan Turing Institute Digital Twin Network+.

Dani Shanley is an Assistant Professor in the Philosophy Department at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Maastricht University in the Netherlands. Dani's expertise is mainly within science and technology studies (STS) and the philosophy of technology, with a particular focus on reflexive, participatory design methodologies (or, responsible innovation), such as social labs and value sensitive design (VSD). Dani currently works on AI and robotics, thinking with and through the lenses of responsibility, hype, and bullshit.

Illustrations by Alex Wifi – alexwifi.com

Graphic Design by Maria Antunes – mariaantunes.com, @maria.v.antunes