Reassembling Relationships: People, Systems, Things

12. Annual Conference | German Society for Design Theory and Research (DGTF)
Venue | University of Applied Sciences Potsdam (Fachhochschule Potsdam, FHP)
Date | 16th - 17th October 2015

In a growing state of omnipresent connectivity, it seems that anything can be potentially connected – anytime, anywhere. We are embedded in a myriad of mundane socio-technical alliances, as humans and non-humans ceaselessly correspond and perform. Therefore, the urgency arises to raise the question: What relationships do we enter in to with our fellow agents, what new positions do we find ourselves in?

In an age of the internet-of-things, the technical-material objects that are embedded in our everyday lives are acting, enacting and performing for, with, and through us. They are suddenly knowing, learning, evaluating, predicting - and constantly at work. In this sphere of hyperconnectivity, wireless sensor networks, RFID chips, cloud services and machine-to-machine interfaces are already at play. Technologies with lengthly names such as 'sensor-driven decision analytics' and 'instantaneous control and response complex autonomous systems' are being envisioned, developed and implemented. Governments, academia and industry discuss the potential production of zettabytes, yottabytes, and geopbytes of data, as sensors and chips find their homes in our coffee machines, knitted sweaters, pets, buildings and cities.

This new dimension of connecting the physical and the digital world promises to solve some of the most daunting problems that we have. From the personal to the public, these developments allegedly provide possibilities to optimise and enhance most things at most levels. However, from smart phones to smart drones, this interweaving of technologies into the fabric of our lives provides us with a pressing call to reformulate our relationship with objects themselves. It raises questions such as do these objects just help us to organise ourselves, or do they help us judge and feel? Are we still at the centre of the social algorithm, or do we become the batteries of the gadgets? In a society where we begin to speak about open-source governance and feminist servers, will we find new solidarities –- build new communities? Perhaps we must soon begin to raise discussions about "technocommunism", "moral algorithms" and "object-mediated democracy" –- about human-nonhuman socially and politically co-mediated worlds.

We invite practical, empirical and theoretical perspectives from all design disciplines, as well as from Computer Sciences (HCI), Science and Technology Studies, Humanities and related fields. From utopian to dystopian visions and realities: We invite perspectives on the role of design in all of this, on new forms of negotiation with and through things, and on what new analytical frameworks this calls for as we further embark in to these technically mediated futures.

Topics of interest include:

- New positions: Hyperobjects, Boundary Objects, Hybrids, Cyborgs and more
- New relationships: In/dependence, un/regulated, in/discipline, un/certainty etc.
- New dialogues: Things-to-things, things-to-people, things-to-systems, systems-to-systems

Abstracts of max. 1500 words (for 15 minute presentations) and a professional/scientific biography can be submitted until July 13th 2015 to mail@dgtf.de.

http://www.dgtf.de/tagungen/english