

Mini-Conference: Digital Sociology

Organizers:

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Call for Papers

Digital sociology has always been concerned with the role that mediated communications play in the circulation of ideas about inequality and difference. As sociologists across fields interrogate the changing dynamics of narrative diffusion in the public sphere, we challenge digital sociologists to consider how the field might contribute to or complicate discourses of dissimilarity.

We seek papers that address:

- **Critical Theories of Information:** How have we theorized fact and fiction, and how are these theories being challenged by digital transformations? What challenges does the digital pose to epistemologies underlying sociological theories of knowledge?
- **Digital Labor:** How are digitally mediated methods of knowledge production and sharing implicated in the changing labor market? How are they affected by it? What new forms of labor have arisen as a result of recent changes in digital technology? How are social hierarchies associated with labor types influenced by digital culture?
- **Digital Citizenship and Civics:** How are changing digital affordances helping to define the meaning of civic participation? Do the affordances of digital technologies change our responsibilities as citizens? To what extent might engaging in social media networks and other participatory platforms (i.e. YouTube) contribute to polarization, radicalization, and/or misinformation? How do constituents understand the role of government in an era of presidential tweets and misinformation? In what ways have digital environments contributed to partisan polarization/consensus-making and group coalescence/fracturing?
- **Digital Structures, Digital Institutions:** The datafication of everyday life is posing unique challenges to the composition of social institutions and giving rise to new instantiations of education, media, finance, labor, and governance. How do we theorize, study, and conceptualize the re-composition of these institutions? How are educators using digital tools to teach in innovative ways?
- **Digital Sociological Methods:** How do traditional, analog sociological methods become digital? Are there new, “born digital” sociological methods? Is knowledge production different now? Will big data replace survey methodology?
- **Digital Culture:** What is “the digital” as it is understood by individuals, communities, and societies? What role do institutions like broadcast journalism,

academia, and the military play in shaping digital culture? What cultural forms have emerged from changes to the way people interact brought on by technology and technology policy?

- **Identity, Community, and Networks:** How do sociological concepts of micro and macro, personal and public, “front stage” and “back stage,” evolve as digital and mobile technologies increasingly blur these boundaries? How do digital networks reinforce confirmation bias? How do our digital networks curate the information and perspectives we are exposed to? How do digital environments shape identities of race, gender, politics, religion, sexuality and queerness?
- **Social Movements, Digital Technologies:** Given the increasing attention to social media as a tool used by both political and social movements and campaigns in the U.S. and abroad, we invite papers that address the connections between movements and media. Topics may include but are not limited to comparisons of online and offline activism, risks and costs associated with online activism, comparisons of traditional and social media, online activist identity, and ways in which social media platforms transmit movement content such as frames.
- **Digital Inequality:** When we consider the “future” of technology (artificial intelligence, precision medicine, police surveillance, banking & credit scores driven by data-mining) - who gains and who loses? To what extent do these advancements improve the lives of historically marginalized populations and in what ways do they reinforce existing barriers to entry or hierarchical power dynamics?

We encourage submissions from scholars at all levels, and are particularly enthusiastic to support the work of graduate students, early career researchers, and independent scholars. We welcome submissions for individual papers and for entirely constituted sessions. The organizers share a commitment to creating a field that honors diverse voices, and as such are excited to see scholars from groups that are typically underrepresented in sociology. When proposing entirely constituted panels, please keep this commitment to diverse voices in mind.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

Those wishing to present papers in this mini-conference should submit an abstract of no longer than 250 words by October 30, 2018 through the ESS submission portal at <https://www.meetingsavvy.org/ess>. Proposals not accepted for the mini-conference will be submitted to the ESS general call for submissions.

To submit to this mini-conference, select "Mini Conference Presentation" in the "Submission type" drop-down menu. Supply your title and abstract. After hitting "Next", select the name of the mini-conference from the keyword drop-down menu.

If you have any questions please contact one of the organizers: Leslie Jones (lesjones@sas.upenn.edu), Rachel Durso (rdurso2@washcoll.edu), or Francesca Tripodi (tripodfb@jmu.edu).