SIAH DATA SERIES 2022
LITERACIES/CIVICS/INEQUALITIES

The Southampton Institute for Arts and Humanities (SIAH) Data Series 2022 explores how different research projects have engaged with pressing issues relating to data through the themes of citizen data literacies, data civics, and inequalities. The events are for University of Southampton colleagues.

LITERACIES
Dr Elinor Carmi (City University)
Wednesday 27th April 4-5pm

CIVICS
Kath Bassett, Elif Buse Doyuran, Idil Galip, Liz McFall, Addie McGowan (University of Edinburgh)
Wednesday 4th May 4-5pm

INEQUALITIES
Professor Helen Kennedy (University of Sheffield)
Wednesday 11th May 4-5pm

The series is convened by Dr Dan Ashton (Fellow in Disparate Data and Unexpected Evidence with Southampton Institute for Arts and Humanities) with postgraduate and early career researchers taking on chairing/discussant roles. Please contact Dan with any queries (d.k.ashton@soton.ac.uk)
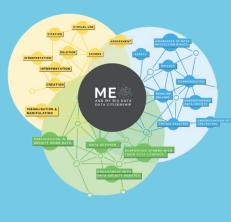
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LITERACIES

DR ELINOR CARMI
(CITY UNIVERSITY)

Following the European Digital Service Act Package (DSA), the UK draft Online Safety Bill and the current Covid-19 crisis it has become evident that misuse of data (in multiple ways such as spying and trading our data, mis/disinformation, conspiracy theories and others) have the potential to harm people's health, wellbeing, trust in institutions and more broadly our democracy. But while there is an attempt to keep platforms accountable and more firmly regulated (with the 'duty of care'), citizens need to have literacies to assist them against multiple types of online harms. In this presentation I'll talk about my previous and current projects that explored how people use and understand their data and what are the implications of that has on our personal, civic, and community agency and imagination.

Dr. Elinor Carmi is a feminist, scholar, journalist and activist, working on data literacies, data politics, feminist approaches to data and media and data policy. She is a Lecturer in Media and Communication at the Sociology Department at City University, London, UK. Currently she is working on the following projects: 1) CO- I on the Nuffield Foundation project "Developing a Minimum Digital Living Standard"; 2) POST Parliamentary Academic Fellowship working with the UK's Digital, Culture, Media & Sport Committee on the project I proposed: "Digital literacies for a healthy democracy"; 3) CO-I on the UKRI Trustworthy Autonomous Systems hub project "Trustworthy Autonomous Recommender Systems on Music Streaming Platforms". She recently finished working on the Nuffield Foundation project Me and My Big Data: Developing Citizens Data Literacies and The UKRI project "COVID-19: Being alone together: developing fake news immunity".

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CIVICS

KATH BASSETT, ELIF BUSE DOYURAN, IDIL GALIP, LIZ MCFALL, ADDIE MCGOWAN (UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH)

COVID ARCADIA – A DATA CIVICS PROJECT
Socio-material adaptations and the role of 'digital affective' premises in a pandemic city
This paper reflects on a digital ethnography project tracing the responses of independent service retailers in Edinburgh to the Covid pandemic conducted as part of the Data Civics programme at the Edinburgh Futures Institute. Data Civics draws on the civic sociology of Patrick Geddes to frame questions about the role the sociological observatory/laboratory can play in urban research in a datafied twenty-first century context. It addresses the challenges of placemaking, participation, representation and governance in a research, teaching and engagement programme built around participatory, co-designed, creative projects and experiments.

CovidArcadia was supported by the Scottish Funding Council as part of their Covid Recovery funding scheme. It tracked the material and technical adjustments independent retailers made to their premises to continue trading safely and comply with the rapidly changing restrictions and regulations during the pandemic. These changes include the installation of signs, bespoke hatches, plexiglass screens, lanes, traffic lights, sanitiser dispensers etc. For service outlets, like cafés, coffee-shops and hairdressers, who offer an experience or atmosphere, pandemic conditions present a particular challenge. Some responded by also adapting their 'digital premises' to create a 'digital affective' atmosphere, commissioning and sharing new forms of content, e.g. cartoons, crowdfunding schemes, films, jokes, diaries etc. especially on Instagram. We investigated these adaptations using digital ethnographic methods analysing the role, affordances and interplay of these changes across material and digital premises. Many of these adaptations are rapid improvisations, combining the use of semi-obsolete, forgotten or superseded technologies from A-frames to QR codes but they share the goal of re-fashioning space, movement and place in market encounters. The Covid pandemic thus adds new and unpredictable complications in the slow disease facing the arcade in digital economies.

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CIVICS

DR KATH BASSETT, ELIF BUSE DOYURAN, IDIL GALIP, LÍZ MCFALL, ADDIE MCGOWAN (UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH)

Dr Kath Bassett is a Lecturer in the Centre for Women's Studies at the University of York in the UK. She received her doctorate in sociology from the University of Edinburgh, masters from the University of York, and bachelors from Pacific University. She convenes a module on feminist theory, as well as teaches digital ethnography and feminist and queer ethics. Her research is oriented in Cultural Studies and focuses on: platform governance and algorithms; locative media and mobile smart devices; cultural-economic development and tourism; emotions, affect, and the psy disciplines; masculinities and transgender issues/politics. She has published in Feminist Studies and New Media & Society.

Elif Buse Doyuran is a PhD candidate in Sociology at the University of Edinburgh. She is broadly interested in digital economies and currently researches the mobilisation of behavioural economics in digital marketing and product design practices. She previously reviewed How to Destroy Surveillance Capitalism by Cory Doctorow, for the Journal of Cultural Economy. She holds an MSc from the London School of Economics and a BA from Bogazici University, Istanbul.

İdil Galip is a writer, researcher, and maker from Turkey. Her work is informed by ethnographic methods and is focused on work, platforms, and digital culture. She is a PhD candidate in sociology at the University of Edinburgh where she is mapping the creative and digital labour that goes into the creation, dissemination, and monetisation of internet memes. She also runs the Meme Studies Research Network, an interdisciplinary and international network for people who study memes. İdil has published in various academic journals and holds degrees from London School of Economics and Bilkent University.
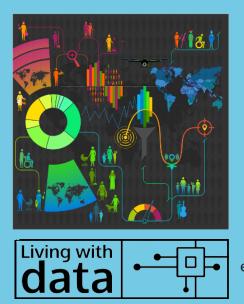
Liz McFall is Chancellor's Fellow based in Sociology and the Edinburgh Futures Institute at the University of Edinburgh. She writes about how people engage with markets particularly for technical and complicated propositions like insurance, credit and urban development projects. She co-edited Markets and the Arts of Attachment with Franck Cochoy and Joe Deville (Routledge 2017) and is author of Devising Consumption: cultural economies of insurance, credit and spending (Routledge 2014) and Advertising: a cultural economy (Sage 2004). She is Co-Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Cultural Economy.

Addie McGowan is a PhD candidate who holds the Share City joint studentship across the University of Edinburgh and the University of Glasgow, supervised in Architecture and Sociology. She studies the sharing economy in the city by way of exploring how home sharing platforms like Airbnb (co)produce urban place and knowledge via their digital and social infrastructures. Her research interests include platforms, tourism, advertising, and digital culture, and has contributed to funded research projects including Covid Arcadia, Forging the Future of Travel and Tourism, and most recently Supporting local acceleration in Granton through inclusive, data driven and participatory engagement. She has previously reviewed The Platform Society in Cultural Sociology in 2021. She holds an MSc in Digital Society from the University of Edinburgh and a BA in Sociology and Communication from Trinity University in San Antonio, TX USA.

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INEQUALITIES

PROFESSOR HELEN KENNEDY (UNIVERSITY OF SHEFFIELD)

Inequalities shape lives and lead to different data experiences, with already socially disadvantaged groups and people more likely to be discriminated against in data-driven systems. The relationship between inequality and datafication, therefore, requires our constant attention. A growing number of commentators are providing empirical detail about experiences of data-related inequality and discrimination (eg Eubanks 2018, Gangadharan 2020). On Living With Data, our research has highlighted how inequalities shape not only experiences of data uses, but also perceptions of them. For example, one of our surveys found that experiences of structural inequalities affect people's feelings about everyday data uses.

Our focus group research has surfaced inequalities that inform perceptions of datafication which are not widely discussed in data and inequalities literature, eg that relate to dis/ability. Our research has also highlighted how participants sometimes 'decentre data' to talk about things that matter to them, like fairness and in/equality. Or they imagine the experiences of structurally disadvantaged others in the face of data uses. In this paper, I present examples of the interesting and diverse ways in which inequalities surface across different Living With Data research, and I reflect on the kind of methodological orientation that is needed to centre inequalities in sociocultural research into datafication.

Helen Kennedy is Professor of Digital Society at the University of Sheffield where she directs the Living With Data programme of research. She is interested in how digital developments are experienced and how these experiences can inform the work of digital practitioners in ways that overcome inequalities. She researches perceptions of and feelings about datafication and the possibility of data-related agency. She is interested in things like trust, equity, justice, and what 'the digital good' might look like. Other current projects include Generic Visuals in the News and Patterns in Practice: cultures of data mining in science, education and the arts. Recent books include Data Visualization in Society (Amsterdam University Press, 2020) and Post, Mine, Repeat: social media data mining becomes ordinary (Palgrave MacMillan, 2016). A full list of publications can be found here.

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