

Call for Papers: Taming digital practices

CfP Issue 01/2023 of Digital Culture and Society: Taming digital practices – On the domestication of data-driven technologies

Incl. Author's Workshop at CRC "Media of Cooperation", University of Siegen, February 7-8, 2022

When countries across the globe suddenly announced that their citizens should stay at home, the Covid pandemic brought domestic life to the center of public attention. With educational institutions, workplaces, and leisure facilities closed, not only work-related communication but also social interactions with friends and loved ones has moved online faster than anyone ever imagined. A wide spectrum of new practices of working, learning, and gathering have since emerged, enabled by the accelerated development of digital media and data infrastructures. This has brought forth new publics as well as a redefinition of the home. The domestic realm as a concept appears increasingly diffuse and malleable as mobile and digital media become integral to 'home life'. At the same time, inequalities concerning access to and use of digitally-connected media become more starkly visible and consequential.

Against this background, the Special Issue *Taming digital practices – On the domestication of data-driven technologies* and the related author's workshop propose to revisit and reconsider the concept of domestication. In general, domestication refers to the taming and cultivation of wild animals and plants for use by humans. The term has been analogously used in media and technology studies to denote the adoption and inclusion of media technologies by "individual users and small user groups" (Karnowski, Pape & Wirth, 2006) into their everyday lives (Berker et al. 2006). We propose to regard domestic media practices involving digital media technologies as data practices; by producing and depending on data, these practices particularly tame data-driven technologies to fit into everyday life. We wish to explore how data practices are established by "communities of practice" (Wenger 1998), which shape media practices and are themselves shaped by those practices.

The production of (big) data, not least in the context of the Internet of Things (IoT) and smart homes, is taking on an ever more significant role in the already complex entanglement of media, publics, and infrastructures. With the integration of data flows and sensor media, networked devices such as *intelligent personal assistants, robot vacuum cleaners, home surveillance systems* and other *smart technologies* force us to reassess and reconfigure our understandings of the interrelations between public and private space.

Predominantly marketed as tools to enhance comfort and convenience in everyday life, such devices can be crucial for those living with disabilities, chronic diseases, or age-related impairments. However, such groups may be structurally disadvantaged when it comes to articulating their needs, and often also have limited opportunities to gain digital literacy. This may make such groups even more vulnerable in relation to the critical questions of surveillance, power, and control raised by networked digital media devices. At the very least, users of digitally-connected media require access to infrastructures such as an internet connection, and must be able to operate the devices concerned. Hence, the specific context of any individual person or target group has to be considered if we are to expand our understanding of how digital and non-digital media are accessed and used in practice.

Following Bakardjieva (2006) and Hartmann (2007), we propose that the concept of domestication as it was initially outlined by Silverstone and Hirsch in 1992 needs to be expanded upon in order to account for today's networked homes, which transcend their own walls.

Contributions should shed light on how everyday (digital) practices are integrated within users' individual lifeworlds. Against this background paper proposals may relate to, but are not limited to, the following questions:

- How are concepts like the home shaped by media and data practices?
- How are media and their data appropriated and/or contested in domestic spaces?
- How are voice-controlled devices integrated into everyday practices? How are they used to connect to other infrastructures? How do users deal with the data practices that their usage entails?
- How are media practices shaped and domesticated in contexts of migration?
- How are media and their data appropriated and/or contested in homes 'on the move'?
- How do media and data practices bring forth new forms of (virtual) domestic spaces that may transcend geographical borders and/or cut across socio-culturally diverse or stratified communities, and how do those communities in turn shape the practices and even infrastructures?
- How can opportunities be created to facilitate marginalized or vulnerable target groups' access to and use or appropriation of ICTs?

When submitting an abstract, please make explicit to which of the following categories you would like to submit your paper:

1. *Field Research and Case Studies (full paper: 6000-8000 words)*

We invite articles that discuss empirical findings. These may include practices of circulating or collecting empirical data as well processes of knowledge production and evaluations of discourses, practices and technological applications.

2. *Methodological Reflection (full paper: 6000-8000 words)*

We invite contributions that reflect on the methodologies employed when researching digital practices against the background of domestication. These may include, for example, the specificities of ethnographic fieldwork; challenges; approaches using mixed methods; discussions of mobile and circulative methods; and reflections of experimental forms of research.

3. *Conceptual/Theoretical Reflection (full paper: 6000-8000 words)*

We encourage contributions that reflect on the conceptual and/or theoretical dimension of domestication of data-driven technologies, and discuss or question how it can be defined, what it can describe, and how it can be differentiated.

4. *Entering the Field (2000-3000 words; experimental formats welcome)*

This experimental section presents initial and ongoing empirical work in digital media studies, socio-informatics/HCI and artistic research. The editors have created this section to provide a platform for researchers who would like to initiate a discussion concerning their emerging (yet perhaps incomplete) research material and plans as well as methodological insights.

The author's workshop (Feb 7-8, 2022) is intended to support the submitted contributions with further feedback during the writing process, supplementing the journal's double-blind peer review process by offering a multidisciplinary perspective beforehand.

The papers successfully admitted in the double-blind peer-review process are expected to be published in the issue 1/2023 of Digital Culture and Society (<http://digidults.org/>), edited by the organising team of the workshop (David Waldecker, Tim Hector, Niklas Strüver, Tanja Ertl).

Deadlines and contact information

- Initial abstracts (max. 300 words) and a short biographical note (max. 100 words) are due on: November 15, 2021
- Authors will be notified by November 29, 2021, whether they are invited to submit a full paper
- First draft papers (1500-2000 words) as starting point for the discussion are due: January 30, 2022
- Author's Workshop (online): February 7-8, 2022
- Full papers are due on: April 15, 2022
- Notification to authors of referee decision: July 15, 2022
- Final version due on: October 15, 2022
- Final notification: December 15, 2022

This issue is edited by David Waldecker, Tim Hector, Niklas Strüver and Tanja Ertl. Please send your abstract and short biographical note (1–2 sentences) directly to them (niklas.struever@uni-siegen.de).

References

- Bakardjieva, Maria. 2006. Domestication running wild. From the moral economy of the household to the mores of a culture. In: Berker, Thomas, Maren Hartmann, Yves Punie, and Katie J. Ward (eds.). 2006. Domestication of Media and Technology. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Berker, Thomas, Maren Hartmann, Yves Punie, and Katie J. Ward (eds.). 2006. Domestication of Media and Technology. Berkshire: Open University Press.
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- Karnowski, V., Pape, T. V., & Wirth, W. 2006. Zur Diffusion Neuer Medien. Kritische Bestandsaufnahme aktueller Ansätze und Überlegungen zu einer integrativen Diffusions- und Aneignungstheorie Neuer Medien. Medien- & Kommunikationswissenschaft, S. 56-74.
- Silverstone, Roger, Eric Hirsch, and David Morley. 1992. "Information and Communication Technologies and the Moral Economy of the Household." In *Consuming Technologies: Media and Information in Domestic Spaces*, edited by Roger Silverstone and Eric Hirsch. London: Routledge.
- Wenger, Etienne. 1998. Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.