

# Infrastructures of Publics Workshops

25 May & 8 June (online)

Aarhus University, Department of Media and Journalism Studies, Centre for Digital Transformation in Cities and Communities (DITCOM)

The **Infrastructures of Publics Workshops** are a series of encounters between disciplines, fields of expertise and practice to redefine and re-envision an urban public sphere for the networked society. Defining new understandings of **civic communication** as an interdisciplinary interest, the workshops bring together the worlds of journalism, media studies, civic systems design, interaction design, policy, architecture and urban planning.

The series starts with **two workshops in May and June 2022** and will **continue in Spring 2023**. All workshops are held on Zoom and registration is required. The workshops are part of the project "Infrastructures and Interfaces of Publics: Journalism for Civic Communication in Urban Spaces" (INFRAPUBLICS), funded by AUFF (Aarhus University Research Fund, 2021-2023), led by Christoph Raetzsch: <https://ditcom.au.dk/projects/infrapublics>

## Dates

- 25 May, 10-16 (CEST) Registration: <https://events.au.dk/publicsworkshop1/signup>
- 8 June, 10-16 (CEST) Registration: <https://events.au.dk/publicsworkshop2/signup>

## Contacts

- Christoph Raetzsch, Associate Professor Media and Journalism Studies ([craetzsch@cc.au.dk](mailto:craetzsch@cc.au.dk))
- Diogo Henriques, PostDoctoral Researcher Infrapublics Project ([dph@cc.au.dk](mailto:dph@cc.au.dk))
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Agenda, abstracts and speaker biographies below.

# Agenda 25 May 2022 (10-16 CEST)

Registration: <https://events.au.dk/publicsworkshop1/signup>

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|-------------|--|
| 10:00-11:00 | Welcome by <b>Christoph Raetzsch</b> and introduction of workshop and participants   |
| 11:00-11:15 | break  |
| 11:15-12:15 | <b>Journalism of Things</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Andrea Hamm</b> (Weizenbaum Institute/Freie Universität Berlin): "Increasing complexity of journalism in an increasingly networked world"</li><li>• <b>Jakob Vicari</b> (Lead Creative Technologist, Tactile News): "Sensors, Cows and Reporters"</li></ul>   |
| 12:15-13:00 | lunch break  |
| 13:00-14:30 | <b>Digital Twins and Interfaces of the Datafied City</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Yuya Shibuya</b> (University of Tokyo): "Towards Digital Twins of Japanese Cities"</li><li>• <b>Antje Kunze</b> (Unity Technologies): "Creating smart, sustainable, and safe cities with real-time 3D solutions"</li></ul>   |
| 14:30-14:45 | break  |
| 14:45-15:45 | <b>Transformative Research and Data Practice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Francesca Morini</b> (Södertörn University Stockholm, Urban Complexity Lab Potsdam): "The informant: action research and participatory auto-ethnography as strategies to study data journalism"</li></ul> <b>Mediated Encounters</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Zlatan Krajina</b> (University of Zagreb): "Encounters with screens and others as sources of mediated urban publics"</li></ul> |
| 15:45-16:00 | <b>Closing Discussion</b> and future research for Interfaces and Infrastructures of Publics - Journalism, Datafication and Civic Designs. Future Workshop editions inputs for Fall 2022/Spring 2023. Sharing of Opportunities  |

## Agenda 8 June 2022 (10-16:00 CEST)

Registration: <https://events.au.dk/publicworkshop2/signup>

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|-------------|--|
| 10:00-10:30 | Welcome by <b>Christoph Raetzsch</b> and Introduction of workshop and participants   |
| 10:30-11:00 | <b>Interface - Infrastructure Relationships: Towards a theoretical framing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Christoph Raetzsch</b>: On Interfaces and Infrastructures of Publics in Urban Spaces</li></ul>   |
| 11:00-11:15 | break  |
| 11:15-12:15 | <b>The Politics of Data Visualisations and Design of Interfaces</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Nicole Hengesbach</b> (University of Warwick, Department of Computer Science): "Towards the representation of limitations in/of data through seamless visualisation"</li><li>• <b>Burcu Baykurt</b> (University of Massachusetts Amherst, Department of Communication): "The Techno-Politics of Covid-19 Dashboards in U.S. Cities"</li></ul> |
| 12:15-13:00 | lunch break  |
| 13:00-14:00 | <b>Pathways of creating impact between practice, society and education.</b><br>Open discussion among participants and input by guest speaker<br>Adriënné Heijnen, Senior Scientific Advisor, Centre for Digital Transformation in Cities and Communities (DITCOM)  |
| 14:00-14:15 | <b>Closing Discussion:</b> Future Research for Interfaces and Infrastructures of Publics - Journalism, Datafication and Civic Designs. Future Workshop editions inputs for Fall 2022/Spring 2023.  |

## **Abstracts**

### **Burcu Baykurt: The Techno-Politics of Covid-19 Dashboards in U.S. Cities**

This talk examines the ways municipalities in the United States have collected, analyzed, and publicized Covid-19 data since April 2020. Drawing on content analysis of the top 30 U.S. municipalities' pandemic dashboards and in-depth interviews with public officials, I find three types of uses that render a dashboard an obligatory information tool in local governance. In addition to reporting on public health indicators, cities remediate Covid-19 data on dashboards to justify policy decisions and account for local welfare assistance programs. Rather than becoming sites of fact-making, intervention, or participation, municipal Covid-19 dashboards often aim to render local governments - and their governance of the pandemic - legible to the public.

### **Andrea Hamm: Increasing complexity of journalism in an increasingly networked world**

Multiple developments in journalism resulted in an increasing complexity of journalistic practice, in particular regarding: participation, tools, and knowledge. In the past, journalism allowed only a few ways to participate and contribute to journalistic work. Since the emergence of social networking technologies, journalists have been confronted with many more reactions and comments. Social media allows ordinary people to gain high visibility and "break the news" by themselves. Participation via social media enabled direct interaction and expanded from a mere user reaction to a source of news. Digital networking paved the way for crowdsourcing. To conduct their work, journalists are steadily confronted with new tools: they exchanged the pencil for typesetters, personal computers, and now apps. Today, the Internet of Things allows journalists to collect data by themselves to generate new perspectives on stories. Journalistic knowledge was always a bit different. It has the principle of being dedicated to truthful public information and is collected via testimony and technology. Such principles similarly emerged in Citizen Science which describes the engagement of ordinary people for public information generation. These trends in participation, tools, and knowledge recently resulted in the "Journalism of Things", a new form of journalism with new opportunities and challenges.

### **Nicole Hengesbach: Towards the representation of limitations in/of data through seamless visualisation**

Data are often displayed in interfaces with seamless characteristics, features and appearances, reinforcing the idea of data as being complete, accurate, factual or objective. When critically interrogating such data, we find that they rarely meet these expectations and can start to understand how they may not be what we expect them to be, e.g., complete or accurate. Can we surface such limitations and represent them in visualisations? Could we reverse or complement the seamlessness and integrate seamfulness to help us make sense of data in a more sincere, holistic or realistic way? In this presentation I will share my work on developing a critically-informed methodological framework for surfacing and representing limitations of data within visualisation.

### **Zlatan Krajina: Encounters with screens and others as sources of mediated urban publics**

This paper argues that in negotiating public culture, the urban world has embraced the digital, the mobile and particularly the visual aspect of post-cinematic (ubiquitous) screen cultures. Diverse as the spectacular storefront or façade, the semi-visible surveillance monitor, and the networked, flickering mobile phone, the screen is now an assumed part of citizens' daily rounds in the city. Exploring three case studies, people's daily encounters with outdoor advertising, social media posts about street encounters with xenophobic assaults, and urban catastrophe relief campaigns in the absence of physical encounters, I show that mediated urban publics appreciate confrontation – its classic foundation – but through its radical displacement and postponement in the media environment. So arranged, emergent mediated urban publics articulate through the language of the visual: in encounters with advertising as display of select life styles and invisibility of certain social groups, in social media posts about assaults as networked disclosing of unacceptable behaviour and hence distancing from the troubled street, and in responses to catastrophe, such as earthquake, as both symbolically consoling but insufficient in delivering actual help. Mediated urban publics thus observed are diffused (often lacking clear political orientation) but also integrative of different modalities of action (embodied, material, and algorithmic): they are thus, optimistically viewed, possible where and when they are least expected.

### **Antje Kunze: Creating smart, sustainable, and safe cities with real-time 3D solutions**

The construction industry is responsible for just under 40% of CO2 emissions worldwide and for more than one-third of energy consumption. What can we as developers, scientists, planners, engineers and architects contribute to the goal of a climate-neutral building stock by 2050? In my presentation, I will show tangible activities that bring together the various stakeholders in the design and construction industry and enable consistency of data across all phases of the building processes in order to tackle the climate goals together. My main message endorses a technology that improves collaborative and multidisciplinary work in urban development, promotes transparent communication, and supports sustainable decisions based on analysis and simulation. The emphasis is on visualizing real-world data through interactive and immersive digital experiences in real-time, to make the most of physical assets, leverage advanced analytics, and facilitate collaboration across multiple platforms. For this purpose, the use of 3D real-time solutions and digital twins is shown as a forward-thinking approach that serves the management of urban resources and infrastructures and provides for the integration and interconnection of data.

### **Francesca Morini: The informant: action research and participatory auto-ethnography as strategies to study data journalism**

Academia and journalism are two distant yet kindred fields. Both of them strive at producing truthful claims about the empirical world, although their methods, speed of production, and intended audience differ greatly. In recent years, researchers and journalists have started to work together in interdisciplinary teams, sparking various forms of innovations in journalism (Gynnild, 2014). Especially for computer-enhanced practices such as data journalism, interdisciplinary work has benefited greatly the development of new methodologies and practices. In this talk I explore the intersection between data journalism and academia, how do

researchers work together with data journalism practitioners? What can we learn from actively participating in newsroom work? Which research approaches can be leveraged? To this extent, I will contribute some observations and findings resulting from a one year data journalism project carried out in a newly formed data journalism team at die tageszeitung, a German cooperative-owned newspaper.

### **Yuya Shibuya: Towards Digital Twins of Japanese Cities**

Digital Twins have been gradually expanded into cities worldwide as a new form of interface to understand and design cities in sustainable transition. However, despite its promising possibilities, most implementations of digital twins have been limited to individual cities and developed independently. In my talk, I will discuss how we can make digital twins in diverse types of cities, from metropolitan areas to remote rural areas. Then, I introduce the case of a Japanese platform that consists of the storage of digital twin-related data in a bottom-up way and a digital twin-creating system. This digital twin platform is designed to allow various cities to develop their own digital twins intuitively at a low cost.

### **Jakob Vicari: Sensors, Cows and Reporters**

My bicycle measures distances, the fitness tracker collects my data and what does a dairy cow actually experience? Things (and animals) around us are waking up. Journalism of Things occurs when sensors that collect data, and the modern technology that helps evaluate it, come together with a journalistic flair for contemporary themes. And can give us a new perspective on the world. Jakob Vicari explains how a traditional reporter has become a pioneer in the journalism of things.

## Speaker Biographies

**Burcu Baykurt** is an assistant professor of urban futures and communication at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and a faculty associate at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University. In April-July 2022, she is a visiting research fellow at the Center for Advanced Internet Studies (CAIS) in Germany.

**Andrea Hamm** is a Ph.D. candidate at the Weizenbaum Institute for the Networked Society and the Department of Media and Communication Studies of Freie Universität Berlin (Germany). She is a Research Associate at the Department of Telecommunication Systems at Technical University Berlin. Her work focuses on the socio-political dimensions of digitalization, sustainability transitions, and the role of digital technologies among civic actor groups in city governance and urban innovation.

**Nicole Hengesbach** is a PhD student with the CDT Urban Science at the University of Warwick, UK. Her research explores the integration of concepts and methods from critical data studies with visualisation design and focuses on how data relating to the urban space are represented in visualisations in public and civic contexts.

**Zlatan Krajina** is Associate Professor of Media Studies at the Department of Media and Communication, Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Zagreb, Croatia. He specialises in urban communication and European identities. He is the co-editor of *The Routledge Companion to Urban Media and Communication* (2020) and *EU: Europe Unfinished* (2016) and author of *Negotiating the Mediated City* (2014).

**Antje Kunze** is a Senior Client Partner at Unity Technologies. She started in the scientific field as a research scientist at the Chair of Information Architecture at the ETH Zurich, and founded the ETH spin-off CloudCities in Switzerland and the US. For the past 7 years, she has been working for software companies that are leading the digital twin and spatial industry today, such as Esri, Dassault Systèmes, Virtual Cities Systems, and Unity Technologies. She collaborates with many leaders to work on their digital twin and smart cities strategy and its implementation.

**Francesca Morini** is a PhD student in Media and Communication Studies at the School of Culture and Education at Södertörn University in Sweden and a research associate at the Urban Futures Institute of the University of Applied Sciences Potsdam. Her research interests lie at exploring the intersection of information visualization and data journalism.

**Christoph Raetzsch** is Associate Professor at the Department of Media and Journalism Studies of Aarhus University (Denmark) since 2019. His recent research deals with interpretations of smartness to animate civic innovation in cities, the interfaces and infrastructures of publics besides journalism, and the emergent potential of quotidian media practices to shape public discourses. He is currently the Principal Investigator of the project "Interfaces and Infrastructures of Publics" (funded by AUFF).

**Yuya Shibuya** is an associate professor at the Center for Spatial Information Science, the University of Tokyo, Japan. My interests lie in how the virtual and real worlds interact with one another. In particular, my research has investigated how democratic participatory structures have changed in the digital era and how digital tools impact people's behavior changes. Mainly based on but not limited to quantitative and mixed methods, I've researched people's socio-economic activities, people's behavioral changes, and social media activities.

**Jakob Vicari** is founder and Lead Creative Technologist at tactile.news. tactile.news is an innovation lab for new journalism based in Lüneburg. Vicari has produced the sensor stories Superkühe (Super Cows) and #bienenlive (bees live) for WDR. He is co-founder of the Journalism of Things Conference (jotcon.com). He is author of the book Journalism of Things. Strategies for Journalism 4.0 (in German).