

## **TECHNOLOGY-BASED AND TECHNOLOGY-GENERATED DECISIONS. 49<sup>TH</sup> SYMPOSIUM OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR THE HISTORY OF TECHNOLOGY 2022 (ONLINE)**

The International Committee for the History of Technology's 49<sup>th</sup> Symposium is hosted by the University of Ostrava, Czech Republic. Since it will take place online it is scheduled in two slots: **24<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> September** and **15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> October 2022**.

The general theme is “**Technology-based and Technology-generated decisions**”. Whereas technology-based decisions have a long history, technology-generated decisions of so-called artificial intelligence, AI, are on the horizon since the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and might gain decisive influence within the next years. Which decisions we are willing to hand over to technology? How to define ethical guidelines for this development? The symposium aims to contribute to this discussion, based on a transnational perspective of the history of technology.

**\*\*\* The deadline for proposals is Sunday, 30 April 2022 \*\*\***

Technology has always involved the decision-making process of humankind in every field. From the Antiquity, people had to consider what they could do. Thus, people should involve both their physical and mental powers and the technological extension of those powers. In the last centuries, at least from the scientific revolution, the role of technology in the decision-making process has progressively increased: more technologies became available, many were involved in all kinds of decision-making processes. Beginning in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century, governments, companies, and individuals seeking to render decision-making more scientific and neutral increasingly turned to technology and its promise of “mechanical objectivity” (Daston and Galison). This understanding of an objectifying and mechanized decision-making has many new applications in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with digitization and artificial intelligence.

Three main trends could be distinguished in the decision-making processes: technologies to support decision-making (*i.e.*, maps, CT scans, satellite images Etc.); decisions delegated to technology (*i.e.*, AI took decisions to nurse a patient; a pilot transfers the steering of the plane to the computer); technologies that open new fields of endeavor, making new decisions possible (*i.e.*, the steam engines could help to make canals and polders that had been sheer fantasy earlier).

During the early modern era, cartography changed the way of conducting military operations deeply. The knowledge of enemy territory permitted generals to plan the military offensives choosing the targets accurately. In the contemporary World, high-resolution satellite images are the basis for the decision-making process in military operations or in identifying places where it could be possible to extract mineral and oil resources. In medicine, the inclusion of AI influences diagnosis and further decisions on treating patients. In banking, the trade in interests has become a field of automatization. AI tools are even used for translating. Nowadays, the increasing use of AI is affecting nearly all fields of culture.

Suggestions for more specific topics, derived from the main question:

- What are the social/historical/cultural conditions of technology-based decision-making and technology-generated decisions?
- What is the role of images (maps, photographs, etc.) in decision making?
- Does AI offer applications in new fields of inclusion and citizen participation?
- What are the ethical conditions of technology-generated decisions?
- Are there identifiable national trends and patterns of technological-based and -generated decision-making?
- How do technology-inherent decisions affect the critique of technology?
- Technocracy is a well-researched topic concerning industrial technology. What is the state of the art in case of robotics and AI? Any new approaches, theories, empirical findings?
- Data recording and processing is a core task now carried out with computers; some are based on AI. Which technologies were used – and where and how – before the advent of computing?
- What roles can technology based/generated decisions have for modern challenges: climate change, COVID-19 pandemic, individual health, and public health?
- How do technology-based and -generated decisions affect the body? Are there new chances and challenges for disabled persons?
- Inspired technology based/generated decisions artistic oeuvre?
- How were technology-generated decisions described in science fictions?

**The symposium covers all periods and all areas of the globe.** In keeping with a cherished tradition of the field, the meeting is open to scholars from all disciplines and backgrounds. Gender-related and worldwide topics are specifically welcome. Besides contributions to the main theme of the symposium, paper and session proposals on different topics of the history of technology are welcome.

## **PROPOSAL GUIDELINES**

ICOHTEC welcomes proposals for individual papers and posters, but preference will be given to organised sessions of three or more papers. The Programme Committee will also consider submissions not directly related to the symposium theme provided that they relate to the history of technology broadly definitions. All proposals must be in English and should be submitted electronically by **30 April 2022** via our website <http://www.icohtec.org/w-annual-meeting/> . For suggestions about preparing your submission and the conference presentation, please consult the guidelines on [www.icohtec.org/proposal-guidelines.html](http://www.icohtec.org/proposal-guidelines.html) In addition to the scientific programme, the symposium will include plenary sessions, special sessions for the prize-winning book and article, the general assembly of ICOHTEC. If you have any questions related to the scientific programme, paper, poster or session proposals, please, do not hesitate to contact **Jacopo Pessina, the chair of the programme committee**, at [j.pessina87@gmail.com](mailto:j.pessina87@gmail.com).

We especially encourage graduate students to submit proposals and to participate in the symposium. Members of ICOHTEC and low-income people pay a reduced fee.



INDIVIDUAL PAPER proposals must include: (1) a 300-word (maximum) abstract; and (2) a one-page (maximum) CV. Abstracts should include the author's name and email address, a short descriptive title, three to five keywords, a concise statement of the thesis, a brief discussion of the sources, and a summary of the major conclusions. If you are submitting a paper proposal dealing with a particular subtheme in this CfP, please indicate this in your proposal. In preparing your paper, remember that presentations are not full-length articles. You will have no more than 20 minutes to speak, which is roughly equivalent to 8 double-spaced typed pages. For more suggestions about preparing your conference presentation, please consult the guidelines at the conference website. Contributors are encouraged to submit full-length versions of their papers after the conference for consideration by ICOHTEC's peer-reviewed journal ICON.

PANEL proposals must include (1) an abstract of the panel (300 words maximum), listing the proposed papers and a session chairperson; (2) abstracts for each paper (300 words maximum); (3) a one-page CV (maximum) for each contributor and chairperson. Panels should consist of three or four speakers. Several panels may be organized on one topic.

We encourage the creation of panels that examine technology-based and technology-generated decisions in different parts of the world, enabling international comparisons, and contributing to an emerging transnational historiography. We welcome especially contributions from beyond Europe and the United States, which so far have been less fully covered by historians of technology.

The programme committee reserves the right to relocate papers to different themes and add papers to panels.

POSTER proposals must include (1) a 300-word (maximum) abstract; and (2) a one-page CV. Abstracts should include the author's name and email address, a short descriptive title, a concise statement of the thesis, a brief discussion of the sources, and a summary of the major conclusions.

#### PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

Pessina Jacopo IT (Chair), [j.pessina87@gmail.com](mailto:j.pessina87@gmail.com)

Florian Bettel AT, [florian.bettel@uni-ak.ac.at](mailto:florian.bettel@uni-ak.ac.at)

Ercolani Sara IT – [supers.ercolani@gmail.com](mailto:supers.ercolani@gmail.com)

Fari Simone IT/ES \_ [fari@ugr.es](mailto:fari@ugr.es)

Hadlaw Jan CA, [jhadlaw@yorku.ca](mailto:jhadlaw@yorku.ca)

Limina Valentina IT – [valentinalimina@gmail.com](mailto:valentinalimina@gmail.com)

Min Fanxiang CHI – [fanxiangmin@nju.edu.cn](mailto:fanxiangmin@nju.edu.cn)

Mürsepp Peeter EST, [peeter.muursepp@taltech.ee](mailto:peeter.muursepp@taltech.ee)

Schuetz Thomas GE , [thomas.schuetz@hi.uni-stuttgart.de](mailto:thomas.schuetz@hi.uni-stuttgart.de)

Yagou Artemis (only for the evaluation of papers) GE/GR , [artemis@yagou.gr](mailto:artemis@yagou.gr)

Zdrowska Magdalena PL , [magda.zdrowska@uj.edu.pl](mailto:magda.zdrowska@uj.edu.pl)