Making time, making space

This panel is concerned with social media temporalities and geographies as a means of engaging with the overall conference theme of how social media are transforming concepts of "publicness." It is argued that publicness is tightly intertwined with notions of time and space, and that we need to be attentive not just of the ways in which societal actors claim a position in public space, but also to the ways in which specific positions for appearing and disappearing are created in the first place. As John Rajchman building on Foucault argues, 'spaces are designed to make things seeable, and seeable in a specific way' (Rajchman, 1988). This is also the case with social media, where information is meticulously and carefully arranged into specific forms of meaningfulness. Social media make their own claims for publicness through their particular designs and ways of working.

Rather than merely providing a particular space and time for users to connect and express themselves, social media help *make* that time and space. Drawing on a medium-specific and device-oriented perspective, this panel addresses the various ways in which social media can be said to make and do time and space. Approaching the theme of social media temporalities and geographies from different angles and scholarly approaches, this panel explores such questions as: What is the time and space of social media? What kind of time regimes do social media platforms embody? How to the temporalities of social media relate to the various temporalities embodied in different social practices?

There are of course as many different answers to these questions as there are time regimes. Depending on whom you ask, there is repetitious time, recursive time, everydayness, boredom, waiting, disruptions, flows of time, real time and much more besides. Exploring the question of how devices shape and create specific times and spaces, the papers: 1) argue that realtime is never simply about realtime, but about multiple realtimes inhabiting their own pace; 2) unpick the technocultural significance of right time in a real time world; 3) show how a year's worth climate change-related tweets maps out particular publics in conflict.

1) Esther Weltevrede, Anne Helmond, Carolin Gerlitz

Pace Online: A Device Perspective on the Making of Realtime
This paper inquires in the making of realtime in online media. It suggests that realtime cannot be accounted for as universal temporal frame in which events happen, but explores the fabrication of realtime as mode of information organization from a device perspective. Based on an empirical study focused on the pace of an issue across online media devices, we show how the interplay of devices, user practices and issues create different rhythms, patterns or tempos which are specific to device cultures. What emerges are specific forms of 'realtimeness' which are not external but immanent to devices cultures, in which realtime engagement with information is organized through socio-technical arrangements and distinct practices of use. Realtimeness not only unflattens general accounts of the realtime web and research, it draws attention to the agencies build into specific online temporalities and the political economies of time online.

2) *Esther Hammelburg*

Re-conceptualising liveness in the era of social media

Aiming to re-conceptualise liveness in the social media era, this paper explores various factors influencing our current construction of it. Liveness is here regarded as a historical construct that mainly drives on the potential connection, through media, to events that matter to us as they unfold. Three central claims are made to direct this exploration:

1. The two key aspects of liveness are immediacy and meaningful connection.
2. There is no privileged 'liveness medium' as liveness is not a quality of a medium, but rather a construction around media.
3. For understanding this construction of liveness, we should examine it from three constituting positions: media user, media content, and media technology.

By taking the 'stemfie' (selfie when voting) as an example of a contemporary media text in which liveness is enacted the position of user, content and technology are explored to discover changes in the construction of liveness within the current media-ecology.

3) Taina Bucher

Theorizing "right time": Kairos and algorithmic culture

Departing from Facebook's stated mission to "deliver the right content to the right people at the right time", the aim of this paper is to unpack the meaning of right time in a real time world. In a mediated environment obsessed with real time - of near instantaneous content production and delivery - the question of what constitutes right time has curiously been overlooked. Building on the idea that devices have a performative role in structuring temporality, this paper looks at the ways in which timeliness is constituted in and through the algorithmic logics governing the news feed, trending topic list and content recommendations. The paper ultimately argues that it is not real time, but right time that is characteristic of the algorithmic time regime of social media.

4) Sabine Niederer, Sophie Waterloo, Gabriele Colombo

Climate Change Vulnerability and Conflict: Climate Debate Mapping with Twitter.
Climate vulnerability, the degree in which a system is able to cope with the adverse effects of climate change, is contested within the climate debate. Countries categorized as 'particularly vulnerable' are eligible for funding, whilst a common method to assess this has not yet been established. Vulnerability indices employ a variety of variables and metrics to output lists of countries ranked from most to least vulnerable. In addition, vulnerability has been connected to conflict, giving rise to its prominent coverage in the news and scholarly publications. This paper sets out to critically analyze the assessment of vulnerability by triangulating three vulnerability indices on the level of their variables, methods and ranked country lists, followed by a timely view on vulnerability with Twitter. A set of climate change tweets on which we perform co-hashtag analysis, provides an alternative perspective on the possible victims of environmental change. Here, an ecology of sub-issues illustrates the current state of climate action and adaptation, and possible future climate victims.

Bios:

Taina Bucher is Assistant Professor at the Center for Communication and Computing, University of Copenhagen. Her research focuses on the intersection between social media, media aesthetics and software studies. Currently her research interests include: Twitter bots, computational journalism, and the power of algorithms in social media.

Gabriele Colombo is data visualization researcher at MediaLAB Amsterdam, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences School of Design and Communication. He works regularly with the Digital Methods Initiative at the University of Amsterdam as data analyst and visual designer, and is currently involved in the European research project 'Electronic Maps to Assist Public Science' (EMAPS). Gabriele holds a Master's degree in Communication Design from Politecnico di Milano in Italy. His focus is on data visualization, infographics and visual storytelling. Previously, Gabriele worked at The Visual Agency, an Italian design agency focused on infographics.

Carolin Gerlitz is Assistant Professor in New Media and Digital Culture at the University of Amsterdam. Her research is concerned with the various intersections between new media and economic sociology, including social media, brands, topology, platform activities, issue mapping, numbers and digital sociology.

Esther Hammelburg is a PhD-candidate at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis, University of Amsterdam, and lecturer at the School of Design and Communication, Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. Her PhD research is focussed on liveness within the mediatised experience of cultural events. Esther enjoys combining research, teaching and practice, as she did in the design and coordination of the honours program for the School of Design and Communication. Esther's research and teaching areas include liveness, media and citizenship, media representations, media literacy, visual culture, media and art philosophy.

Anne Helmond is PhD candidate and lecturer at the New Media and Digital Culture program, University of Amsterdam. In her research she focuses on cross-syndication politics in social media and data flows between web platforms. Her research interests include software studies and platform studies and focuses on data flows and web glues.

Sabine Niederer is Director of CREATE-IT, the applied research center of the School for Design and Communication at the Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences. She is also coordinator of the Digital Methods Initiative, the new media PhD program at the Department of Media Studies, University of Amsterdam. In her PhD project Sabine studies the technicity of online content, such as the non-human content agents that co-author online content (e.g. Twitter bots, Wikipedia bots), in an analysis of climate change skepticism on the Web. From 2004 until 2012, Sabine worked at the Institute of Network Cultures, with director Geert Lovink.

Esther Weltevrede is PhD candidate and lecturer at the New Media and Digital Culture program, University of Amsterdam. Esther is coordinating the Digital Methods Initiative and is a member of Govcom.org. Her research interests include device studies, national Web studies, digital methods, controversy mapping and the dynamics of online data.

Contact details

Taina Bucher
wfg568@hum.ku.dk
@tainab

Gabriele Colombo
gcolombo101@gmail.com

Carolin Gerlitz
C.Gerlitz@uva.nl
@cgrltz

Anne Helmond
anne.helmond@gmail.com
@silvertje

Esther Hammelburg
e.e.hammelburg@hva.nl
@eehammelburg

Sabine Niederer
s.m.c.niederer@hva.nl

Esther Weltevrede
E.J.T.Weltevrede@uva.nl