Conference

Infrastructures of Autonomy
An international conference in Berlin, Germany

23-25 November 2022

Autonomy has been a multifaceted term for centuries that was and remains a key concept in discussions about individuals and societies alike. More recently, autonomy has gained a renewed relevance and additional meanings in the context of technical innovation, where it is ubiquitously employed in variations of "autonomous systems". It is often associated with independently moving or self-controlling machines such as drones, vehicles or robots, or more generally with a wide range of automation processes. In this broad understanding, 'autonomous' becomes an attribute for (artificial) intelligence or (machine) learning and is used synonymously with self-determination or adaptability. At the same time, the term invokes (at least) one other meaning: a relational understanding of autonomy that denotes individual and collective processes that are embedded in infrastructures and conditioned by them. It is only in relation to and in the context of media, rules, norms, laws, practices, architectures, materialities or machines that the idea of autonomy acquires any meaning at all.

Against this backdrop the *Infrastructures of Autonomy* conference's main objective is to address said conditions, structures and relations that constitute both human and machine autonomy. This also entails the various interpretations of the concept of autonomy.

AGENDA

Wednesday, 23 November 2022 · HIIG · Französische Straße 9, 10117 Berlin (Room: Casino)

18:00	**Keynote address**
	Beate Rössler (University of Amsterdam): Autonomy and its political infrastructures – On being autonomous in the Uncanny Valley
	The question of the infrastructures of autonomy draws attention not only to the autonomous persons themselves, but also to the conditions under which they have to live: the conditions that enable individual as well as collective autonomy. In her lecture Beate Rössler will problematise the entanglement of individual and collective, technical and political infrastructures and show how sticking to and insisting on the relevance of (the concept of) autonomy enables decisive critical and emancipative perspectives.
	Chair: Theresa Züger (Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society, Berlin)
19:30	Reception

Thursday, 24 November 2022 · HIIG · Französische Straße 9, 10117 Berlin (Room: Capella)

08:15-08:45	Registration

08:45-09:00 **Welcome note & Introduction**
Thomas Christian Bächle (Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society, Berlin)

09:00-10:45 **Concepts, questions and structures of autonomy**
Chair: Thomas Christian Bächle (Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society, Berlin)

Jeanette Hofmann (Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society, Berlin): Autonomy as a (side) effect

Rahma Khazam (Institut ACTE + ENSADLab, Paris): Reenvisioning autonomy: An exploration of theories of autonomisation in technology, contemporary philosophy and contemporary art

John MacWillie (retired, California State University): The dichotomies of autonomy

10:45-11:15	Coffee Break

11:15-13:00 **Autonomy, infrastructures and computing**
Chair: Theresa Züger (Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society, Berlin)

Jan Distelmeyer (Brandenburg Center for Media Studies ZeM, Potsdam): Programmatic autonomy. New conditions of automation

Mihaela Popescu (California State University, San Bernardino), Lemi Baruh (Koç University, Istanbul): Towards an autonomy of becoming: Rethinking autonomy for the algorithmic age

Florian Sprenger (Ruhr University Bochum): Autonomy and interaction – Infrastructures of in-/dependence

13:00-14:15	Lunch

14:15-16:00 **Materialities and practices of autonomy**
Chair: Kim Albrecht (Harvard University & Free University Berlin)

Michael Friedman (Tel Aviv University): Dreams and nightmares of autonomous materials

Ana Pop Stefanija (Free University Brussels): Rage against the infrastructure — How to build infrastructures of autonomy

Tanja Knaus (University of Oslo): The automation of affective data — Infrastructure and database practices of speech recognition software systems

16:00-16:30	Coffee Break

16:30-18:15 **Automatisation and autonomy**
Chair: Hadi Asghari (Alexander von Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society, Berlin)

Bronwyn Miller (University of New South Wales, Sydney): What Google *should* recommend: An indigenous and queer approach to Google's AI/ML

Bernd Bösel (Brandenburg Center for Media Studies ZeM, Potsdam): Infrastructures of de-automatisation

Camille Roth, Jérémie Poiroux (Marc Bloch Centre, Berlin): Evolutionary construction of recommender systems

from 18:15	Summary

Friday, 25 November 2022 · HIIG · Französische Straße 9, 10117 Berlin (Room: Capella)

09:00-09:30	Registration & Welcome

09:30-10:45 **Autonomy and machine agency**
Chair: Jan Distelmeyer (Brandenburg Center for Media Studies ZeM, Potsdam)

Marcus Burkhardt, Susanne Förster (University of Siegen): Frameworks as infrastructures of conversational AI

Kate Tollenaar, Erika Ly (Australian National University, Canberra): Redefining value infrastructures for sustainable autonomy: A cybernetic approach

10:45-11:15	Coffee Break

11:15-13:00 **Cognition, perception and autonomy**
Chair: Bernd Bösel (Brandenburg Center for Media Studies ZeM, Potsdam)

Giacomo Figà Talamanca (Radboud University, Nijmegen): Dimensions of autonomy, dimensions of cognition. A conceptual tool for analysing how scaffolds affect decision-making

Tereza Stejskalová (Academy of Performing Arts in Prague): The in/visible labour of the eye

Marta Pérez-Verdugo, Xabier E. Barandiaran (University of the Basque Country, San Sebastián): Cognitive and sensorimotor foundations of personal autonomy for the current and upcoming technologically mediated world

13:00-14:15	Lunch

14:15-16:00 **Autonomy, care and labour**
Chair: Beate Rössler (University of Amsterdam)

Birte de Gruisbourne (Paderborn University): Autonomy as a mode of relating – On inclination, care, and its autonomising structure

Mathias Denecke (Ruhr University Bochum): Calculated autonomy. Data labour in ambient

assisted living

Abdallah Zouhairi (University Hassan II, Casablanca, Morocco): Enhancing care autonomy among elderly in Morocco

16:00-16:30	Coffee Break
16:30-17:45	**Sovereignty, law and autonomy** Chair: Birte de Gruisbourne (Paderborn University) Joel Anderson (Utrecht University): Questions of social justice regarding scaffolding for volitional autonomy Gijs van Maanen, Nadya Purtova (Utrecht University): Data commons: Commonswashing, digital sovereignty, and data ownership
17:45-18:45	Closing Discussion
18:45-19:00	Conference Closing