23.10.2019, 12:00-14:00
Simone Natale
Loughborough University, UK

Machines of Deception: Social Life after the Turing Test
Since its inception in the 1950s, the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been nurtured by the dream – cherished by some scientists while dismissed as unrealistic by others – that it will lead to forms of consciousness similar or alternative to human life. Yet, AI might be more accurately described as a range of technologies providing a convincing illusion of intelligence – in other words, not much the creation of intelligent beings, but rather of technologies that are perceived by humans as such. Drawing from the history of AI from the Turing Test to contemporary AI assistants such as Amazon's Alexa, the talk will argue that AI resides also and as a new form of disruptive agency within mediascapes.

6.11.2019, 12:00-14:00
Samuel Van Ransbeek
University of Manchester, UK

Sonification as a Tool for Public Engagement: Sound as an Essential Component of Data-Driven Storytelling
The 21st century is the century of data. We are identified by our data stream: the data we consume and the data we share. This results in a plethora of datasets that have one thing in common: they are numbers stored on servers, with a large potential for further analysis and usage. To exploit that potential, and turn the data into knowledge, we need to find new ways of interpreting and understanding them. One way to interpret data is sonification: using non-speech audio to represent data. In this seminar I will argue why sonification can be an excellent tool for data-driven storytelling and how it can be used to create awareness, foster public engagement, and in the long run, instigate policy change.

12.11.2019, 12:00-14:00
Peter Lunt
University of Leicester, UK

The Performance of Power and Citizenship: David Cameron Meets the People
How do citizens respond to and engage the performance of political power in the context of mainstream media? Through an analysis of two television programmes aired during the UK Brexit referendum campaign of 2016 a picture emerges of citizenship as the performative disruption of the performance of power. In the programmes the then UK Prime Minister, David Cameron, met members of the public for a mediated discussion of key issues in the Brexit referendum. Their interactions are analysed here as a confrontation between the performance of citizenship and power reflecting activist modalities of disruptive citizenship played out in the television studio. The article ends with reflections on questions about political agency as individualistic forms of disruptive political autonomy.

20.11.2019, 12:00-14:00
Natalie Fenton
Goldsmiths College, UK

To Drop, To Shoot, To Scroll: Aerial Media Logics and the Colonization of the Sky
Drawing from case studies within the history of aerial media, this talk addresses the media logics of communicating from, onto and through the air. Indeed, many attempts in the past century have been made towards turning the sky into a medium of mass communication: searchlights have been experimented with to project onto clouds; planes have been used to drop propaganda leaflets and haul advertisement banners; and blimps and drones have sailed over cities to disseminate signs. Through such examples, I will explore the production of discourses and knowledge about the arts and science of operating media in the sky. In particular, I will develop the concepts of dropping, shooting and scrolling as the media logics of aerial communication while also addressing the transition of so-called “natural” spaces into mediascapes.

27.11.2019, 12:00-14:00
Jens Pohmann
German Historical Institute, Washington D.C., USA

Hate Speech, Free Speech, and the NetzDG – Analyzing the Discourse on IT-Blogs
Following the assumption that the IT-blogosphere represents an avant-garde of technologically and socially interested experts, Jens Pohmann presents (on the basis of his joint work with Adrien Barbaresi) a research platform to observe its input on the public discussion of matters situated at the intersection of technology and society. They examine digital text corpora compiled from German and US tech blogs to identify influential stakeholders in this subfield, their communication strategies, and the arguments they bring forth. What are the challenges these players detect with regards to the impact of digital technologies on democracy and to what extent do they differ from those recognized on the other side of the Atlantic? The first examination of these corpora focuses on the discussion of the German Network Enforcement Act (NetzDG), and illustrates the diverging cultures concerning freedom of expression in Germany and the USA.

3.12.2019, 12:00-14:00
Usha Raman
University of Hyderabad, India

Reclaiming Patient Narratives in the Age of Data: Subjectivity and Identity in the Datafied Clinics
How do we constitute and understand the self when conversations in the clinic are mediated by layers of data of various kinds? What is the manner in which subjective experience can gain meaning in the face of an “objective” stream of data that objectifies and distances the patient from the attending healthcare professional? What communicates and how, in such a context? What sorts of vocabularies and understandings do individuals need to garner in order to communicate a sense of self – the deeply felt and possibly data resistant experiences – that must be read in alignment with this data layer? The talk will examine these questions, informed by a set of in-depth interviews with participants who reflect on the process of abstraction-by-data and their clinical experiences.

18.12.2019, 12:00-14:00
Vraáth Öhner
Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Digital History (LBDH), Austria

Filmwissenschaft im verteilten Archiv