14–15 October 2022

Television's Useful Images

**eikones Forum
Rheinsprung 11
4051 Basel**

The event will be held in person and online, for more information including Zoom link see www.eikones.philhist.unibas.ch

Workshop organised by Anne-Katrin Weber, NOMIS Fellow, and Markus Stauff, University of Amsterdam

Universität Basel

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SCHEDULE

Friday, October 14, 2022 (Forum eikones & online)
14:00–15:00: Markus Stauff, Television as Referee: Institutional and Vernacular Epistemologies in Media Sport, in person
15:15–16:15: Anne-Katrin Weber, Atomic TV: Towards a History of Television's Industrial-Military Complex, in person
16:45–17:45: Laura Niebling & Daniela Zetti, Medical Imaging Networks. Protocol, Model, Document, online

Saturday, October 15, 2022 (online)
14:00–15:00: Kit Hughes, Mediated Intimacies, Managed Workers: from Downsizing to COVID-19, online
15:15–16:15: Carlos d'Andréa, Márcio Telles and Eduardo Oliveira, A 1980's Video Assistant (not for the) Referee: an exploratory study of "Tira-Teima" technology in Brazil, online
16:45–17:45: Fernanda Bruno, Predictive images: gestures under surveillance, online
18:00–19:00: André Mintz, Seeing the image for the network: making use of images in digital methods, online

ABSTRACTS

Television as Referee: Institutional and Vernacular Epistemologies in Media Sport
Markus Stauff

In this presentation, I want to discuss media sports as an especially interesting case for "useful television". With its mega events, super stars, and the hyperbolic rhetoric, sports seems to embody television as spectacularized, commercialized entertainment. At the same time, however, sports also highlights the epistemological potentials of televisual images: Footage from increasingly more cameras, slow motion replays, and digital graphics disclose ever more details of a competition and get entangled in differently structured truth practices: On TV, such visuals are integrated into a narrative that gains coherence through the authoritative voice of commentators. This abundance of media material enables a global and emotionally invested audience to enact what – in different contexts – has been called "forensic fandom" (Jason Mittell): On social media, they offer their own evaluations of controversial situations by re-combining, augmenting and commenting on TV-images. Increasingly, the TV footage is also used by sport organizations to support the real-time decision taking of referees (e.g. the Video Assistant Referee in football). Here, the use of images is much more strictly regulated by protocols that determine which images can be accessed when and by whom.
As such, media sports can be considered an interesting trading zone for different but highly interdependent mobilizations of TV-images. To analyze the internal dynamics and wider cultural implications of this mix of institutional and vernacular epistemologies, I will first use the examples of motion analysis and finish line photography to outline why and how sport contributed to the development of epistemic images. Building on this but focusing on the contemporary example of the Video Assistant Referee, I will argue, that sports' public evaluation of performance creates a field in which the epistemic qualities of images are both, actively shaped and publicly contested.

Biographical note
Markus Stauff is Associate Professor at the Media Studies department of the University of Amsterdam, where he is affiliated with the Television and Cross-Media team and the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis. He received his PhD from the University of Bochum, Germany, with a thesis on Digital Television and Governmentality. His main research areas are Governmentality Studies; Theories of Media Change; Visual and Epistemic Cultures of Sports.

Atomic TV: Towards a History of Television's Industrial-Military Complex
Anne-Katrin Weber

Operation Crossroads, the first nuclear test after World War II staged in 1946 by the US military on the Bikini Atoll, was a media event filmed and photographed by hundreds of cameras. The images of the two A-bomb explosions and their mushroom clouds circulated through film, photography, and in the press, and would define the vocabulary of audiovisual nuclearism for decades to come. In comparison to the deployment of these mass media, television's role was minor: still a "new media" with many technical restrictions and a small audience, its effectiveness for publicizing American strength and nuclear dominance was limited.

However, while televisual broadcasts of Operation Crossroads remained anecdotical, other forms of televisuality were put on trial during the nuclear tests. As a "useful media" providing visual access to radioactive, and thus lethal zones, television served scientific and military goals. Enmeshed in a material network comprising radar, telemetering, nuclear measurements, radio communication, and multiple other machines, television was conceived as an electronic instrument. Part of the network of audio/visual technologies, it produced data, imagery, and new knowledge in the service of military-industrial epistemologies.

In my talk, I wish to address the production and productivity of televisual knowledge in the context of nuclear research. Outlining the contours of a television history at the crossroads of the military-industrial complex and scientific research, I discuss in particular the ephemerality of television's useful images and their frail status as archival objects, which point to the challenges of doing history with / of useful TV.

Biographical note
Anne-Katrin Weber is a television historian interested in non-broadcasting uses of TV. In 2021/22, she was a NOMIS Fellow at eikones. Center for the Theory and History of the Image at the University of Basel. She is now starting a PRIMA project granted by the Swiss National Science Foundation on the long history of closed-circuit television at the University of Basel (Seminar für Medienwissenschaft & eikones). She is the author of *Television before TV* (AUP, 2022) and the co-editor of several journal issues and volumes, including *La télévision du téléphonoscope à Youtube* (Antipodes 2009, with M. Berton) and *Towards an Expanded History of Television* (infoclio 2022, with F. Vallotton).

Medical Image Networks. Protocol, Model, Document
Laura Niebling & Daniela Zetti

Medical images "changed the face of clinical medicine", the *New England Journal of Medicine* stated to broad appeal from the sciences in 2011. Imaging technologies such as x-ray, CT, MRT and data-based image interpretation are tools to better understand processes of and within the body and as such have been in increasingly fast-paced development since the late 19th century. They are a fundamental part of many medical specialties such as radiology or oncology and are offered in clinics as well as many modern practices and sometimes by smartphone app. To make them useful, however, they cannot stand for themselves. We argue that medical images, as many if not all useful images, need an infrastructure to "work", that is to be produced, circulated, stored, altered and interpreted. This means apparatuses and computer networks and particularly the underlying, internal logics of both combined, which we would like to focus on in this workshop report. What opportunities and what challenges do medical actors face when approaching the digitization of networks and visualization?

We would like to focus on three functions of networks – protocols (data transfer), models (data production and conception) and document (data storage and extended tools for interpretation). Our aim is to ask, why and how they turn a single data file into a "useful" image and what procedures, structures and historical dependencies are themselves "at work" in this process. Our talk combines media studies and technology history approaches with perspectives from a sociotechnically motivated ethics of technology in medicine.

Biographical notes
Dr. Laura Niebling is a media scholar working in the fields of digital medicine, audiovisual and digital (net) media and popular culture. She is a staff member in the Department for Media Studies at the University of Regensburg, where she teaches media history, theory and production. Publications inter alia: Curare 45 1+2: Computer & Medizin (Special Edition, with Tobias Kussel/David Freis).

Daniela Zetti is guest professor of the history of technology at the Technical University of Munich, Germany. As an historian with expertise in the history of media and computing she investigates and reflects on the social conditions, technical options, economic situations, and political contexts in which technology emerges and in which it is discussed, implemented, modified, maintained, or discarded. She applies and explores qualitative methods in interdisciplinary contexts, both in teaching and in research.

Mediated Intimacies, Managed Workers: from Downsizing to COVID-19
Kit Hughes

This presentation examines the development of private business television satellite networks (BTV) to manage distributed workforces in the context of globalization and a "cultural turn" in popular management theories in the mid-1980s and 1990s. Positing BTV as a genealogical antecedent to institutions' internal COVID-era crisis communications, I explore how U.S. American companies took up satellite television networks amid the violent restructuring of employment relations under neoliberalism to develop managerial identities built on transparency, trustworthiness, and empathy. Then, like today, companies hoped to cultivate an intimate appeal to their employees that emphasized affective and community bonds as a replacement for more material rewards and better working conditions.

Biographical note

Kit Hughes is associate professor of film and media studies at Colorado State University researching useful and workplace media, histories of technology, and questions surrounding how the economy is made meaningful in both institutional and popular media. She is author of *Television at Work* (Oxford UP, 2020) and contributor to several media history digital humanities projects, including Unlocking the Airwaves, Project Arclight, Media History Digital Library, and Lantern.

A 1980's Video Assistant (not for the) Referee: an exploratory study of "Tira-Teima" technology in Brazil

Carlos d'Andréa, Márcio Telles and Eduardo Oliveira

The study is an exploratory investigation about "Tira-Teima", a technology based on computer graphics first adopted by TV Globo, in Brazil, during the broadcasting of the 1986 FIFA World Cup. For incorporating graphics resources from computational rendering to the "instant replay", Tira-Teima was presented as a technology that could precisely identify the occurrence or not of an event in the field (an offside, for instance). Unlike the decision-aid technologies introduced by FIFA in the past men's World Cups (Goal-Line Technology, 2014; Video Assistant Referee, 2018) and the innovation planned for the next tournament (Semi-Automatic Offside Technology, 2022), "Tira-Teima" was planned by the Italian TV RAI and used in Brazil for more than two decades "only" as a television broadcasting recourse. Focused on the implementation and on the first use of the technology by TV Globo (1986), our study case is based on the repercussions and debates published in four Brazilian journalistic media: the daily newspapers "Folha de S.Paulo" and "O Globo" and the weekly magazines "Placar" and "Veja". In the analysis, we are interested in observing the different types of "public engagements with technology" (d'Andréa and Stauff, 2022) triggered by this 'new' useful TV resource. Looking for a diversity of engagements means we have turned our attention not only the debates on "fairness", "transparency" etc. that, in a way, anticipate issues that are increasingly been discussed by football supporters and journalists in the past years, but also to the creative and/or political appropriations that associated the "video-based fact checker" resource with other topics of Brazilian culture, as nationalism, corruption or public security.

Biographical notes
Carlos d'Andréa is a professor at Graduate Programme in Communication Studies at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), in Brazil, and coordinator of the research group R-EST (estudos redes sociotécnicas). Researcher of CNPq ('Bolsa Produtividade' grant). In 2017/2018, worked as a visiting scholar at the Media Studies department at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). Platforms, social media, algorithms, science, sports and controversies are some of his research topics. Email: carlosdandrea@ufmg.br.

Marcio Telles is a professor and researcher at the Postgraduate Program in Communication and Languages at Universidade Tuiuti do Paraná. He obtained his Doctor and Master's in Communication and Information Studies at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). In 2017, he was a visiting scholar at the Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton, UK.

Predictive images: gestures under surveillance

Fernanda Bruno

The talk traces a brief history of automatic vision of gestuality, from the technical reproducibility of images to contemporary predictive machines. This history highlights two vectors of transformation. The first is a gradual abstraction and expropriation of gestures through technical imaging. The second is a relative erasure of identity and subjectivity when the predictive bias of technical imaging is reinforced. Moving away from the identification paradigm that prevails in modernity, particularly in the field of security and surveillance, strengthens the predictive dimension.

Biographical note

Fernanda Bruno is an Associate Professor at the Post-Graduation Program of Communication and Culture, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She is the Director of the MediaLab.UFRJ and a Senior Researcher at National Scientific Council (CNPq), Brazil. Fernanda is a Founding member of the Latin American Network of Surveillance, Technology and Society Studies - JAVITS and currently she is a Research Fellow at the Surveillance Studies Centre at Queen's University.

Seeing the image for the network: making use of images in digital methods
André Mintz

Contemporary visual culture stands at the intersection of several interrelated media transformations. Most notably, due to the so-called *visual turn* in social media platforms and mobile media, there has been a steep increase in the quantity of images we produce and view each day. This increase, however, is deeply intertwined with the development of computational approaches for dealing with this *visual data*, most notably through techniques of machine learning. This other technological shift responds to this quantitative transformation of images and to the demands of a platformed media economy, but it is also very much dependent on that same amassed visual landscape for its own development. In this talk, I will discuss the relevance of considering the mutual constitution of these factors within empirical efforts in repurposing computer vision technologies for studying images. As I would like to argue, it is important that such inquiries take critically what is being called *an image* at each point of the investigation and, also, what is being considered *seeing* while engaging with such complex epistemological mediations. The point being that the issue of quantity cannot be dealt with without fundamentally transforming the instantiation of that which is being studied in the first place. Two notions will thus be conceptualized in the tentative development of theoretical and methodological approaches for this research context, based on previous analytical efforts: *computational visualities* and the *image-network*.

Biographical note
André Mintz is an assistant professor of art and technology of the Department of Photography and Cinema and a researcher at R-EST, at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), Brazil. He received his PhD in Communication Studies from that same university and he also holds an MA degree in Media Arts Cultures from the Erasmus Mundus joint program formed by Aalborg University, Lodz University and Danube University Krems. His main research interests are in the fields of computational art, image studies, digital methods, and science and technology studies.