

The Syllabus

The Machinist #25

March 18 - March 25, 2020

ACADEMIC

The Platform Economy: Restructuring the Space of Capitalist Accumulation

Martin Kenney, John Zysman | Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society

"...Platforms are simultaneously intermediaries, two-sided markets, data aggregators and leading users of artificial intelligence...[changing the] geography of value creation..."

The Mirage and Politics of Participation in China's Platform Economy

Julie Y. Chen | Javnost - The Public

"...governmental promotion of the platform economy [in China]...conceals an emerging digital infrastructure of distribution to the disadvantage of the workers, which may eventually undermine the development agenda."

Prospect Patents, Data Markets, and the Commons in Data-Driven Medicine: Openness and the Political Economy of Intellectual Property Rights

Katerina Sideri | Science and Public Policy

"...the legal interpretation of the private... legitimizes a model of data extraction from individuals, the raw material of information capitalism, that will fuel the next generation of...data-driven medicine."

Climate Extraction and Supply Chains of Data

Patrick Brodie | Media, Culture & Society

"...Public discourses around big tech 'greenwash' power and contribute to a material climate (both atmospheric and infrastructural) from which value can be extracted..."

Transnational Governance of Cybersecurity: Policy Challenges and Global Inequalities in Cyber Capacity Building

Andrea Calderaro, Anthony J. S. Craig | Third World Quarterly

"...a country's science and technical knowledge is the most robust explanation for that state's cyber capacity level..."

The Place Names of French Guiana in the Face of the Geoweb: Between Data Sovereignty, Indigenous Knowledge, and Cartographic Deregulation

Matthieu Noucher | Cartographica: The International Journal for Geographic Information and Geovisualization

"...national institutes...are caught between the digital empowerment of local communities now able to produce counter-cartographies and planetwide cartographic deregulation emanating from the Web giants..."

A Critical Review of 3D Printing in Construction: Benefits, Challenges, and Risks

S. El-Sayegh | Archives of Civil and Mechanical Engineering

"...scalability, structural integrity, and lack of codes and regulations are...major challenges [for 3D printing]..."

BOOKS

Facebook and the Online Self

William Merrin | Routledge

"Covering topics such as Facebook's acquisitions (Whatsapp, Instagram, Oculus Rift), Facebook games and challenges like Farmville, and privacy and ownership of Facebook profiles and posts, this book explores the history, business model, cultural impact, and future of the titular social network."

Snowden's Box: Trust in the Age of Surveillance

Jessica Bruder, Dale Maharidge | Verso Books

"Gripping behind-the-scenes story of Edward Snowden's massive leak of US secret surveillance"

The American Robot: a Cultural History

Dustin A. Abnet | University of Chicago Press

"This book investigates how the discourse around robots has reinforced social and economic inequalities, as well as chilling fantasies of mass domination."

JOURNALISM & ESSAYS

Smartphones Aren't the Problem – Capitalism Is

Nicole Aschoff | Jacobin

"All of the fretting about social media addiction and smartphones destroying our attention span misses the point. Capitalism and the profit-seeking of big tech is the real problem."

Machine Reveries and the Possibility of Thought Beyond the Human Body

Jack Booth | Strelka Mag

"Machine-machine vision—a parallel visual culture developed by machines, for machines—is testing the boundaries of what we consider thought."

How To Make AI Work for People and Planet

Anita Gurumurthy | openDemocracy

"Whether AI will be a weapon of social injustice or an agent of positive change depends on the stories we choose to weave."

REPORTS, DISSERTATIONS, & MISCELLANEOUS

The Solutionist Ethic and the Spirit of Digital Capitalism

Oliver Nachtwey, Timo Seidl | University of Basel

"...solutionist ideas are indeed central to the worldview of tech elites, and that they are also gaining ground in the broader tech milieu, although not yet in the normative discourse of capitalism at large."

To Believe in Siri: a Critical Analysis of AI Voice Assistants

Simone Natale | Communicative Figurations

"AI voice assistants and other AI-based technologies demonstrate that... technologies incorporate deception in more nuanced and oblique ways than is usually acknowledged."

Cash Is King: the Role of Financial Infrastructure in Digital Adoption

Bhavya Aggarwal | University of California-Berkeley

"This results suggests that financial infrastructure is an important determinant of whether interventions such as demonetization can successfully induce households to switch to formal financial transactions over the long run."

VIDEOS

The Human Search Engine: on Smashing the Googlearchy and Other Millennial Pursuits

Gabriel S. Moses, Tsila Hassine | transmediale

"What defines the contemporary online search experience? Does it help you in your pursuit of genuine and unique fulfillment or have you traded this for the closest, most accurate, rank-based result?"

Will Robots Take Our Jobs?

Jay W. Richards | Institute for Humane Studies

"While it's true that there is massive automation coming, and that it will be disruptive, the outcome will not be so dire because there are still fundamental differences between man and machines."

How Are Fintechs and Banks Navigating Disruption?

Pinar Ozcan | Saïd Business School, University of Oxford

"This talk outlines the different strategies and responses of fintech firms and banks in relation to disruptions in the banking sector, with emphases on the open banking project and the development of the sharing economy."

PODCASTS

Platform Cooperativism

Trebor Scholz | Another World is Podable

"This interview introduces the concept of 'platform cooperativism' as a way of joining the worker co-op model with the digital economy."

Fintech and Debt Inequality

Pamela Foohey | Ipse Dixit

"This episode explains how consumer credit products worsen the disparate economy. Focusing on home, student and short-term loans, the interviewee describes how a lack of choice and opportunity has facilitated a flow of wealth from low-income groups to high-income groups."

Is There a Winner in Huawei's Digital Cold War With the U.S.?

Bill Kirby | Cold Call

"Is a tech war, a war over technology and technological dominance, something that is winnable in a world that is as interconnected as ours?"

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