The Syllabus

Academic

The Uberisation of Work: the Challenge of Regulating Platform Capitalism. A Commentary

Webster Edward | International Review of Applied Economics

"Under platform capitalism...[a] new form of algorithmic control is introduced where "workers" are managed through on line platforms, monitored indirectly and expected to produce measurable outputs. However, the model is generating open resistance across the globe and new ways of regulating these companies is emerging...[that] require a coordinated challenge from above as well as below."

Laying the Foundation for a Commercialized Internet: International Internet Governance in the 1990s

Meghan Grosse | Internet Histories

"...where does oversight for internet structures come from...in terms of public versus private sectors?...the Clinton Administration...pursued a U.S.-centric approach to governance that prioritized commercial interests. Given the continued importance of national sovereignty in debates around internet governance, the decisions being made in the 1990s demand further consideration."

The Changing Patterns of China's International Standardization in ICT under Techno-Nationalism: a Reflection through 5G Standardization

Mi-jin Kim | International Journal of Information Management

"The U.S.-China dispute surrounding 5G motivates further examination on China's approach to international standardization...from the perspective of techno-nationalism...China's aspiration for growth orientation was much enhanced with the 5G standard initiative...[suggesting] that China's national S&T policy has been moving from the 'catch-up' to the 'first-mover' strategy..."

Great Power Contest in a New (Digitalized) Guise

Kaan Sahin | Zeitschrift für Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik

"The technology-driven great power contest between the U.S. and China is often titled as a Tech Cold War...dismissing this analogy, however,...[reveals] newly emerged parameters of the interrelation between international politics and technologies, which are shaped by a new setting of international politics, greater economic entanglement and...how technologies are innovated and utilized..."

Platform Capitalism's Hidden Abode: Producing Data Assets in the Gig Economy

Niels van Doorn, Adam Badger | Antipode

"...the governance of gig work under conditions of financialised platform capitalism is characterised by..."dual value production": the monetary value produced by the service provided is augmented by the use and speculative value of the data produced before, during, and after service provision. App# governed gig workers hence function as pivotal conduits...that produce digital data as a particular asset class."

Ingestible Sensors, Data, and Pharmaceuticals: Subjectivity in the Era of Digital Mental Health

Jacinthe Flore | New Media & Society

"...Abilify MyCite, approved by the United States' Food and Drug Administration in 2017...[is an] antipsychotic...equipped with an ingestible sensor which communicates with a wearable patch, smartphone app, and online portal...[highlighting] how subjectivity and knowledge of mental health and illness are transformed through the combination of technology and pharmaceuticals..."

Bipolar Rivalry in the Early Digital Age

Yan Xuetong | The Chinese Journal of International Politics

"The fundamental difference between the current [US-China] bipolar rivalry and that during the Cold War is that ideology is no longer the main engine driving international competition, but rather the new digital dimension of strategic competition...digital technology has created new ways of protecting national security, of accumulating national wealth, and of obtaining international support..."

Books

Pragmatism, Technology, and the Persistence of the Postmodern

Andrew W. Garnar | Lexington Books

"...technologies illustrate many important postmodern concepts, thus showing the continued significance of postmodern philosophy."

Promoting Monopoly: AT&T and the Politics of Public Relations, 1876-1941

Karen M. Russell | Peter Lang Inc.

"This book analyzes the development of public relations at AT&T, starting with a previously forgotten publicist, William A. Hovey, and then including James D. Ellsworth and Arthur W. Page, who worked with other Bell executives to create a company where public relations permeated almost every aspect of work, leveraging employee programs, stock sales, and technological research for PR."

The Coevolution: the Entwined Futures of Humans and Machines

Edward A. Lee | The MIT Press

"Are humans defining technology, or is technology defining humans? Richard Dawkins famously said that a chicken is an egg's way of making another egg. Is a human a computer's way of making another computer?"

Journalism & Essays

The Screens That Ate School

Anna Krien | The Monthly

"What do we really know about the growing presence of Google, Apple, Microsoft and more in the education system?"

Smart Cities, Surveilled Citizens

Tom Westgarth | Tribune

"Smart cities' technologies have grown in popularity during the coronavirus crisis, and are now being touted as tools of economic recovery – but they will also deepen the power of surveillance over our lives."

The Political Economy of the Future: AI, Big Tech and Humanity

Nick Johnson | The Political Economy of Development

"...the political economy of AI and Big Tech does not require new concepts or tools of analysis. We will be confronted with familiar problems over growth, technology and productivity, concentrations of power, the potential for conflict or cooperation, distribution and the winners and losers from disruptive change, regulation, and the role of the state."

Reports, Dissertations, & Miscellaneous

Digital Labour Platforms in the Global South: Filling Or Creating Institutional Voids?

Richard Heeks | Manchester Centre for Digital Development

"platforms maintain or create institutional voids, leading to power asymmetries, over-competition between workers, platform opportunism, and job insecurity and precarity."

Are Algorithms a Threat to Democracy? The Rise of Intermediaries: a Challenge for Public Discourse

Birgit Stark | Algorithm Watch

"Fears that algorithmic personalization leads to filter bubbles and echo chambers are likely to be overstated, but the risk of societal fragmentation and polarization remains."

Panopticon Reborn: Social Credit as Regulation for the Age of AI

Kevin Werbach | University of Pennsylvania

"In the West, it is widely viewed as a diabolical effort to crush any spark of resistance to the dictates of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and its corporate emissaries. This picture is, if not wholly incorrect, decidedly incomplete."

Videos

Surveillance Is Not a Social Good: Technocapital, Public Health, and the Pandemic

Veena Dubal | Centre for Ethics

"What are the potential implications and differential outcomes of the surge of recent collaborations between health authorities and technocapital?"

The Exclusionary Politics of Digital Financial Inclusion

Serena Natile | Institute of Development Studies

"Digital financial inclusion provides opportunities, but does not redistribute the resources and the power necessary to take advantage of these opportunities."

The Lockdown in the Data Colony: Tracking the Long-Term Costs of Connection

Nick Couldry | Stanford University Press

"This book presentation discusses the dynamics of data colonialism as a force for reordering social and economic life and deepening inequality."

Podcasts

Our Obsession with Less and its Co-Option by Silicon Valley

Kyle Chayka | Art Movements

"Examining the historical precedents of minimalist design, its incarnation as contemporary art, and how it was co-opted by architecture, design, fashion companies, and the Silicon Valley to represent a new, generic sense of luxury."

On Race and Technoculture

André Brock | Data & Society

"Where does Blackness manifest in the ideology of Western technoculture? This talk employs Black Twitter as an exemplar of Black cyberculture: digital practice and artifacts informed by a Black aesthetic."

Automation, Technological Unemployment and UBI

Aaron Benanav | Singularity FM