

MEDIA PLACES 2012

PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS PRACTICAL INFO CONTACT



Program

[December 5](#)

[December 6](#)

[December 7](#)

December 5

HUMLab, Main Campus

09.00	Registration
10.30	Vice Chancellor Lena Gustafsson opens the conference. Craig Heller, Sven Strömqvist and Patrik Svensson welcome the participants.
10.45	<p>Session I: Knowledge production</p> <p>KEYNOTE</p> <p>Tara McPherson, USC "Scholarly Publishing Across Scales: Research in a Networked World"</p> <p>OTHER PARTICIPANTS</p> <p>Zephyr Frank, Stanford University "Big Data & Small Questions? Bridging Scales in Digital Humanities Research"</p> <p>Cecilia Lindhé, Umeå University "Medieval Interfaces and Digital Environments"</p> <p>Shannon Mattern, Eugene Lang College The New School for Liberal Arts "Inhabiting Knowledge: Physical and Intellectual Infrastructures for Knowledge-Production"</p>
12.30	Lunch in HUMLab
13.30	<p>Session II: Making</p> <p>KEYNOTE</p> <p>Johanna Drucker, UC Los Angeles "Making Space into Place: Probabilistic Materiality and Experiential Metadata"</p> <p>OTHER PARTICIPANTS</p> <p>Garnet Hertz, University of California, Irvine "Critical Making"</p> <p>Chris Speed, University of Edinburgh "Comob'ing and Other Post-Cartesian Tactics"</p>
15.00	Session III: Coffee, showcase, ignite talks, student presentations

HUMLab, Main Campus

16.00-17.00	<p>Session IV: Moving the field forward/shaping</p> <p>CONVENERS</p> <p>Marianne Ping Huang, University of Copenhagen</p> <p>Christer Nordlund, Umeå University</p> <p>OTHER PARTICIPANTS</p> <p>Kim Knight, University of Texas at Dallas</p> <p>Jenna Ng, University of Cambridge</p> <p>Thomas Nygren, Umeå University</p>
18.30 - 20.30	<p>Reception at Restaurant Viktoria</p> <p><i>For registered participants only</i></p>

December 6
HUMLab, Main Campus (morning)
HUMLab-X, Arts Campus (afternoon)

08.30	Coffee
09.00	<p>Session V: Neural connections</p> <p>KEYNOTE</p> <p>Katherine Hayles, Duke University</p> <p>"Economic Infrastructure and Artificial Intelligences: The Case of Automated Trading Programs"</p> <p>OTHER PARTICIPANTS</p> <p>Natalie Phillips, Michigan State University</p> <p>"An Interdisciplinary fMRI of Attention and Jane Austen: New Spaces for Mapping Connections in Literature, Neuroscience, and Digital Humanities"</p> <p>Molly Steenson, Princeton University</p> <p>""To the first machine that can appreciate the gesture:" Nicholas Negro Ponte & The Architecture Machine Group, 1967–85"</p>
10.30	Coffee
11.00	<p>Session VI: Pre/postdigital architectures</p> <p>KEYNOTE</p> <p>Timothy Lenoir</p> <p>OTHER PARTICIPANTS</p> <p>Finn Arne Jørgensen, Umeå University</p> <p>Sampsa Hyysalo, Aalto University</p> <p>Erica Robles-Anderson, New York University</p>
12.00	<p>Lunch</p> <p>Transportation to the Arts Campus</p>

HUMLab, Main Campus (morning)
HUMLab-X, Arts Campus (afternoon)

13.15	<p>Session VII: Infrastructures</p> <p>KEYNOTE</p> <p>Patrik Svensson, Umeå University "Situating Humanities Infrastructure"</p> <p>OTHER PARTICIPANTS</p> <p>Jo Guldi, Brown University "Infrastructure for a revolution"</p> <p>Nicole Starosielski, New York University "Where Networks Work: Undersea Cables and the Geography of Media Infrastructure"</p>
14.45	Coffee + Demo session, HUMLab-X
15.15	<p>Session VIII: Space/environment</p> <p>KEYNOTE</p> <p>Sheila Kennedy, MIT "Ambient Architecture: Predicaments of Materiality and Digital Infrastructure"</p> <p>OTHER PARTICIPANTS</p> <p>Jennifer Gabrys, Goldsmiths, University of London "Digital Materiality in the Smart City"</p> <p>Jennie Olofsson, Umeå University "Dis-assembling the social. A re-reading of Latour's Reassembling the social: On the objecthood of screens"</p>
16.45-17.15	<p>Session IX: Contingent architectures</p> <p>Ava Fatah, University College London "Digital media, Urban Public Space and Participation: Embodied, Mediated and Networked"</p>
17.15-18.15	Reception Bildmuseet and presentation of the Arts Campus
19.00	<p>Dinner at Restaurant Rex</p> <p><i>For registered participants only</i></p>

December 7

HUMLab-X, Arts Campus

08.15	Coffee
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HUMLab-X, Arts Campus

08.45	<p>Session X: Framing</p> <p>KEYNOTES</p> <p>Sylvia Lavin, Princeton and University of California, Los Angeles "Architecture and the surreal"</p> <p>Fred Turner, Stanford University "The Democratic Surround"</p> <p>OTHER PARTICIPANTS</p> <p>Erica Robles-Anderson, New York University "Congregational Framing"</p>
10.30	Coffee and artistic performance
11.00	<p>Session XI: Tackling infrastructure, space and media</p> <p>A discussion convened by David Theo Goldberg</p>
12.00-12.15	Closing of the conference and pointing forward

Abstracts

Making Space into Place: Probabilistic Materiality and Experiential Metadata

Johanna Drucker

Cultural geographers and philosophers of the built environment put the concept of "place" into play as a complement to the literal notion of "space" in order to suggest that experiential factors are as important to spatial knowledge as formal and structural features. What can information architecture and our approach to materiality of digital environments learn from these concepts? This paper looks at changes in approaches to materiality (literal, forensic, distributed, contingent, performative, and probabilistic) while also considering some project-based experiments with making "experiential" metadata. Specifically, the project involved creating a system for describing urban spaces as a product of signage by considering ways literal spatial dimensions are inflected by experience. Shifting between descriptive systems that are constructive and constitutive (rather than representational) allows literal spaces and virtual architectures to engage with similar epistemological problems: how do we produce and represent knowledge about experiential and probabilistic aspects of literal and virtual structures and geographies?

Economic Infrastructure and Artificial Intelligences: Automated Trading Programs

Katherine Hayles

Starting in about 1995, the global economic system underwent a dramatic transformation with the introduction of automated trading programs. In this case, the infrastructure that enabled automated trading algorithms, powered by self-evolving and self-learning artificial intelligences, did not merely support an existing system but created a rupture that, within a decade, completely changed how financial capital works. By 2090, high-frequency trading accounted for about 75% of all trades. Once created and set in motion, automated trading algorithms operate without human intervention, evolving in unpredictable and to some extent unknowable ways and operating at microtemporalities inaccessible to humans. As a result, the global economic system has gone from a mixed human-machine ecology to a machine-machine ecology, as trading algorithms compete with one another in what has been called the "algo wars." The effects include altered senses of time, as the programs access microtemporalities inaccessible to humans, and space, which becomes parsed in terms of these microtemporalities.

Although high frequency traders claim that their activities have beneficial effects, they have also greatly increased systemic risk and contributed to the instability of the global financial systems. Moreover, they fulfill none of the traditional purposes of the stock market such as providing investment capital and enabling individuals to invest their excess income in a variety of investment vehicles. They are a form of hyper-capitalism or vampiric capitalism (a form of capitalism that feeds on capitalism itself). While capitalism may be argued to have positive benefits (e.g., job creation, innovation, rising standards of living, etc. along with the profit motive), in vampiric capitalism, these broader social goods are largely

stripped away so that all that remains is the profit motive. It is crucial for the humanities to engage with these issues and not leave it to professional economists or computer specialists or physicists, because the humanities (including the Digital Humanities) have a rich tradition of critical interrogation that provides valuable resources. Indeed, such interrogation can be seen as a form of the Digital Humanities, because it is intrinsically concerned with digital objects (the trading programs) and their effects on the global economic system. "Infrastructure" is thus not just a technical concern but involves political, economic, and social issues as well.

Ambient Architecture: Predicaments of Materiality and Digital Infrastructure

Sheila Kennedy

Virtual and physical worlds are inextricably inter-related and mutually re-defining. In this talk, practicing architect and MIT professor Sheila Kennedy will provide a personal and highly idiosyncratic whirlwind 'tour' of the recent history of electrification in architecture and its material predicaments, in the shift from the modern centralized electrification paradigm to emergent new forms of distributed energy and wireless networks. With recent projects of KVA MATX, Kennedy will argue for energy as a material and conceptual medium for an ambient architecture and will speculate on ways that the condition of being material in a mediated world may produce productive paradoxical relationships between media and its physical infrastructure and digital materials and the spatial choreography of their effects.

Scholarly Publishing Across Scales: Research in a Networked World

Tara McPherson

How did a feminist film scholar trained in post-structuralist theory end up running a software lab? In answering that question, this talk engages various histories in the development of computational systems in order to argue that we need more humanities scholars to take seriously issues in the design and implementation of software systems. Humanities scholars are particularly well suited to help us think through such topics as the status of the archive as it mutates into the database, the possibilities for less hierarchical computing, and the cultural contexts of code. In short, this talk argues that neither theorizing media nor building new technologies is sufficient onto itself; we must necessarily do both.

As a concrete example of the relationship of theory to practice, I will look at the work our USC team has undertaken over the last decade, including the digital journal, *Vectors*, and the new multimodal authoring platform, *Scalar*. Our research has always been in direct dialogue with key issues in the interpretative humanities, including discussions of race, gender, sexuality, social justice and power. Can such a dialogue come to shape the practice of software design?