# Participation and the Postdigital. Contemporary technologies and practices in education and urban life

We invite abstracts for the "Participation and the Postdigital" conference from 4-5 May 2023 in Braunschweig (Germany), organised by members of the Leibniz Institute for Educational Media | Georg Eckert Institute, Technische Universität Braunschweig, Ostfalia University of Applied Sciences, German Maritime Museum – Leibniz Institute for Maritime History and Haus der Wissenschaft Braunschweig GmbH. The conference will be held in-person, with selected sessions streamed online.

Participation has long been seen as central to the internet and digitalisation, e.g. in terms of the "Web 2.0", social media, media communication, information flows, eDemocracy, eEducation. Utopian hopes have been dashed, however, with the realisation that participation is always unequally distributed and that technological innovation does not automatically lead to social improvements. With the notion of the postdigital, this conference opens a space for critical reflection on how technologies, cultural practices and participation are entangled. With the postdigital, we assume that digital technologies are already woven into most everyday practices, that their use is messy, that injustice is coded into them, but that exciting sociotechnical projects are opening new vistas for collective life in the postdigital. When research and development focuses on context and the way in which technology is implemented and connected to social practices, we gain nuanced views on the entanglements between participation and (digital) technologies that does not assume an utopian improvement but critically analyses and reflects how participation unfolds in the postdigital condition.

Organised by the Leibniz-ScienceCampus - Postdigital Participation - Braunschweig, the conference invites participants to think together about education and urban life. In both cases, participating in postdigital practices holds great potential for taking part, for instance in strategic communication, political debate and decision-making processes but can also lead to datafication and monetisation of behavioural data, to 'unpersonal' kinds of involvement or to exclusion. As the relations between participation and the postdigital condition are complex and ambiguous, their comprehensive analysis, reflection and design demands perspectives and expertise from multiple disciplines.

**Plenary speakers are:**
*   *Dr Torange Khonsari*, London Metropolitan University
*   *Prof Hella von Unger*, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München
*   *Prof Petar Jandrić*, Zagreb University of Applied Sciences

We invite contributors from all fields who are interested in critically reflecting on digital technologies and the practices surrounding them beyond ideas of technological fixes or easy progress. We invite contributors to give lightning talks, fame lab inputs, panels or workshops, and to join in a scholarly salon, brain cruise and critical data walk. The conference aims to create spaces for exchange, communication and generous shared thinking. Topics and questions include but are not limited to:

- What are the (new) socio-theoretical foundations, concepts, approximations for the postdigital? Do established concepts need to be rethought, reframed, refurbished? How does the/a postdigital society frame itself in its daily routines of exchange, communication, education, and – more generally – action?
- What do concepts like "community", "connectedness", "common sense", mean in the postdigital condition? Does the willingness or readiness to participate change? Is there a need for new approaches or a reformulation of established participation concepts?
- What are important aspects of the postdigital condition and how do they apply in education and/or urban life? Which digital technologies are implemented in which contexts and in connection to what kind of practices? Where are digital technologies intentionally not in use?
- What kind of agency is constituted in postdigital socio-technical assemblages and what implications does this have for (i) participating in cultural practices, (ii) shaping the postdigital condition in decision-making processes, and/or (iii) researching postdigitality in participatory research designs?
- What does the postdigital mean for participation? What role can reflecting on the postdigital condition play for participation in cultural practices, decision-making and/ or research?
- What questions have to be raised in educational practice and urban life in order to shape the postdigital condition in a reflexive way? What kind of questions should be raised in the processes of developing digital technologies?
- How does participation (in cultural practices, decision-making and research) unfold in education and urban life and what role do digital technologies play in those cases?
- How can society regulate or legislate around the tension between economic profit, technological feasibility and social benefit/harm?
- How can unintended and unwanted 'side effects' of technology be minimised on a societal level?
- What effects can we observe when Big Tech is implemented in educational contexts or urban life? What do the alternatives look like?
- How can we reflect on 'digitalisation' or the postdigital condition in schools or other educational contexts?
- How does the postdigital condition relate to persistent common-sense assumptions or hegemonies, e.g. growth, solutionism, technological fixes, whiteness, class biases, neoliberalism, individual autonomy?

We invite the submission of abstracts by 30 January 2023. Conference contributors are invited to share their work in the following formats:

- The main format of the conference will be **lightning talks** with a maximum of 7 minutes to give insights and provocations. We plan plenty of time in the sessions to react, reflect, share, talk.
- For participatory formats adapted to you and your ideas, we have blocked time for **open panels** (60 minutes or 120 minutes). These can be longer presentations, roundtables, methods workshops or tool presentations. Other creative formats are very welcome. If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to the **organising team** before submitting.

## Submission guidelines, key dates & informations:

- 300-word abstracts for **lightning talks**
- 1000-word abstracts for **open panels** (1 or 2 hours), including short abstracts for individual papers in panels; Abstracts should mention the proposed format
- Please include a title, your name(s), email address and affiliation(s)
- Deadline for abstract submission: 30 January  2023
- Notification of acceptance: 15 February 2023
- Conference Website and Registration information are forthcoming
- Further information about the Leibniz ScienceCampus - Postdigital Participation here: www.postdigitalparticipation.org
- The event language is English
- Childcare will be available upon request