

Call for Papers
Embedded Digitalities

5-7 April 2018 in Basel, Switzerland

Conference on digital anthropology organized by the section “Digitization in everyday life” of the German Association of Cultural Anthropology and Folklore Studies together with the Swiss Association of Volkskunde (SGV), Archiv für Volkskunde and Tsantsa, the Journal of the Swiss anthropological association.

Venue: Institute of Cultural Anthropology and European Ethnology, Basel University
Organisation: PD Dr Ina Dietzsch, Dr. David Bozzini, Dr. Sabine Eggmann

The working group “Digitization in Everyday Life” was founded in 2011 and since then has held debates and organized several conferences on questions of digitization and digitality. To name but a few, “Concepts and Theories of Digitization” in Hamburg 2014, “Digital Practices” in Frankfurt/M. 2015 and “(H)ackitivism and Participation? On the Political Dimension of the Digital” in Marburg 2016.

Up until now discussions have been dominated by the exploration of a wide range of digital phenomena, emphasizing their specific dimensions and logics. However, given the fact that digital phenomena, processes and infrastructures play an important role in almost every aspect of everyday life, digitization is on its way to becoming a core issue in social and cultural anthropology. The conference “Embedded Digitalities” aims to consider this shift and therefore to focus on “the digital” as a relational construct. It will draw its attention to a variety of ways in which digital media, technologies, ideologies and infrastructures are embedded in everyday life. We encourage contributions that anthropologically reflect on the embeddedness of the digital in social life in various ways. Focusing on the following questions, contributors are invited to discuss the social, economic, political, and cultural embeddedness of digital technologies and infrastructures based on different theoretical and methodological approaches. What is the relevance of the digital when entangled with specific situations during the research process? What kind of power structures are at play in specific research situations? What agency is provided or prevented? How is agency distributed or complicity generated?

Embeddedness can be understood in several ways:

1. How are different notions of digitization embedded in distinct language (English, German, French) and disciplinary discourses? What are the differences and where do or where should the different discourses converge in productive ways?
2. The omnipresence of digital technologies in everyday life leads to the pervasiveness of digitality into every anthropological research topic in a variety of ways. How can the relevance of digital mechanisms be grasped and defined in specific research situations as well as for the social dynamics of the field? In what ways does digitality interfere with diverse sensory, atmospheric and material elements? How does the digital logic of bits and databases, or the language of digitization, penetrate non-digital languages by the transmission of metaphors, idioms and expressions? To what

extent can a “non-digital-centric approach” (Pink 2016) to digital media be appropriate to the omnipresence of the digital? What are the consequences for potential research results?

3. Technological transformations have altered research practices and knowledge work in many ways. How do different mediated communications with research participants impact the research process? How are computer-based methods of documentation, organization and analysis of research data and research practices performed when using digital technologies? How are conventional and digital means of publication in academia interconnected within different research designs? Furthermore, we encourage participants to share their experiences in using and developing research software as well as their experiences with electronic interactions (online or offline) in empirical research. What kind of results can be expected from these new ways of conducting research?

Please send abstracts of 1500 characters max. in English or German with a short academic bio as well as a short explanation of the focus of your research by October 15, 2017 to:

moritz.dolinga@stud.unibas.ch.

Further inquiries about the conference can be directed to the “Seminar für Kulturwissenschaft und Europäische Ethnologie” of Basel University to either:

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