



Data & Everyday Life

CIM Postgraduate Conference 26th June 2024

Room: FAB 0.08

9:15 *Arrival and Coffee*

9:30 *Welcome and Introduction*

9:35 *Panel 1: Platforms, apps and algorithms*

11:00 *Coffee Break*

11:15 *Keynote by David Berry: Constitutional Alignment: Critical
Methods for Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence*

12:30 *Lunch*

1:15 *Panel 2: Data and visualization*

2:30 *Experimental Publishing with Neda Genova*

3:30 *Coffee Break*

3:45 *Panel 3: Mediation, experience and the personal*

5:00 *BBQ and Drinks*



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Panel 1: Platforms, apps & algorithms

9:45 - 11:00

Platforms on trial. Mapping the Facebook Files/Papers controversy

Matias Valderrama-Barragan

Vox Algorithmus, Vox Dei: Do Algorithmic Attention Models Threaten Democracy? A Case Study of the 2024 Indonesian Election

Raihan S Fuad

Unbundling super apps: a historiography of WeiXin

Fangzhou Zhang

The anti-feminist trend on Chinese Internet platforms - based on an analysis of Suicide among Chinese Game Male Internet Influencer

Linqi Ye

Analysis of ATS in Matching Graduate CVs to Data Science Entry-Level Job

Hurma Ehtesham

Chair:

Anton Gumenskiy



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Panel 2: Data & visualization

1:15 - 2:30

Mental Load and making the invisible visible: How can visualisation be used to contribute to social reproduction theory and function as mediation device for couples?

Theresa Eingartner

Thematic Maps and 2020 US Election Speaker

Ding Ding

The true death toll of COVID-19 in England

Yanglu Dai

Data Design Liberation – A Manifesto Advocating for Freedom and Equality

Sian Phillips

Chair:

Matias Valderrama-Barragan



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Panel 3: Mediation, experience & the personal

3:45 - 5:00

Intimacy in Podcasts: Host–Listener Parasocial Relationships in China

Gloria Luo

In the Limbo of Now: On the Temporal Experiences of Migrants

Anton Gumenskiy

Digital Cupids: Exploring Data Dynamics of Dating Platforms

Yang Ma

The Muses but not the Creators

Mariam Santiago-Cueto

Chair:

Fangzhou Zhang



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Experimental Publishing w/ Neda Genova

2:30 - 3:30

This presentation will show written and visual materials from Neda's ongoing editorial work on the publication 'Post-Communist Grounds. In Search of the Commons' that she started during her Leverhulme research fellowship at CIM. The book brings together 10 contributions by visual artists, writers, researchers and curators who work in different media and genres: from sound to experimental essay, from illustration to collage and experimental film. During the session, Neda will recount how collaborative work on the publication was organized, and how the project as a whole speaks to questions pertaining to experimentation and interdisciplinary methods.

Neda Genova work's at the intersection of cultural, media and post-communist studies, by focusing on spatial and temporal transformations in Bulgaria's post-1989 context. She is especially interested in thinking about surfaces as dynamic, material-semiotic sites, and how an engagement with specific surfaces can afford for construing complex accounts of their relationships to environments, ensembles of signification and spatio-temporal arrangements. She explores these questions in her forthcoming monograph titled 'Politics of Surfaces' (with Goldsmiths Press).

She is also member of the editorial collective of the Bulgarian-language magazine dVERSIA - an activist-academic publication launched in 2015, contributions to which attempt to reroute dominant narratives of post-communist transformation from a critical left perspective. As part of this work she has authored pieces and translated a number of academic and non-academic texts, hitherto not available in the Bulgarian language.



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Constitutional Alignment: Critical Methods for Machine Learning & Artificial Intelligence

11:15 - 12:30

“Alignment”, put simply is an attempt to align a computer model with norms and values and towards a defined end. The key question is how to install values into a computer system such that they reflect the norms of a society or “humanity.” Should they be prescribed into the system (creating a set value constellation) or should the system learn the best values (a value constellation that it can adapt)? One approach we might call Forward Alignment (alignment training) produces trained systems based on alignment requirements. The second case we might call Backward Alignment (alignment refinement) ensures the practical alignment of trained systems and revises alignment requirements. In this talk I want to explore these theorisations of alignment as a concept, but also how they are operationalised in practice. I argue that concept formation around the notion of alignment reveals interesting elements of AI system design and potentially provides a critical case study suggesting new methods for critiquing machine learning. Although we are still developing methods for working with these systems at a granular level, we are beginning to have some sense of what good approaches are. AI/ML offers a new challenge for research, not only in the complexity of the stack but also in the seeming absence of an identifiable research-object beyond the prompt interface in and of itself. By developing approaches through the notion of alignment, probes can be used to engender new methods for understanding how these LLM systems are developed, shaped and controlled.

David M. Berry is Professor of Digital Humanities at the University of Sussex. He publishes widely on knowledge formations, algorithms, code and software and his most recent book is *Digital Humanities: Knowledge and Critique in a Digital Age* (Polity). He is currently working on a book titled *Artificial Intelligence and Critical Theory* (MUP) and another co-written book on the history of Joseph Weizenbaum’s ELIZA software titled *Please Go On: The Invention of ELIZA* (MIT Press). His latest research project is a history of the Plate Glass universities.



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