call for papers

DIGITAL SUBJEC TIVITIES

international conference

21 ⟶ 22 MAY 2026

FREIE UNIVERSITÄT BERLIN

CfP: Digital Subjectivities: Culture, Experience, and Knowledge Production

Freie Universität Berlin, from 21st to 22nd May 2026

Digital technologies have become integral to our everyday lives – from work, play, and relationships to political engagement and scholarship – shaping our subjective experiences and the ways we relate to others and ourselves. Their proliferation not only offers new tools for communication and knowledge production but also fundamentally reconfigures how the self is conceptualised and lived. This conference will explore the impact of digital technologies on subjective experience, knowledge production within and beyond academia, culture and politics, and questions of individual and collective agency.

Digital subjectivities have been extensively theorised. In 1985, Donna Haraway published *A Cyborg Manifesto*, which paved the way for subsequent studies of embodied experiences of technologies. Drawing from science fiction, Haraway operationalised the term *cyborg* – "a hybrid of machine and organism" – to capture the increasing blurring of boundaries between the technological and the biological or corporeal. In his 1992 essay *Postscript on the Societies of Control*, Gilles Deleuze proposed the term *dividual* to describe the new kind of digital subject represented as data flows within the continuous information flux of control societies. Almost a decade later, at the height of the dot-com boom, Kevin Haggerty and Richard Ericson introduced the notion of *data doubles*, which they defined as pseudo-representations of individuals created and maintained within the utilitarian logic of what they termed *the surveillant assemblage*. Since then, an array of terms has been proposed to conceptualise the digital subject from various analytical viewpoints: from John Cheney-Lippold's *algorithmic identity* and Frank Pasquale's *algorithmic self* to Shanyang Zhao's *digital self*. In his recent work, media theorist Rob Gallagher defines digital subjectivity more broadly by considering how new modes of subjectivation are lived. Gallagher highlights how individual lives are influenced by data aggregation and analysis, the blurring of work–play boundaries, and embodied forms of networked communication.

Against this theoretical background, this conference will address how the proliferation of digital technologies and internet access plays out at the level of culture, research and everyday experiences. As well as investigating how the use of everyday platforms (such as dating apps, social media, streaming services, and interactive gaming) impacts individual and collective subjectification, we will also analyse how more analogue cultural forms (such as film, television, radio, and literature) represent and mediate the contemporary experience of being online. At the level of scholarship, as research moves from analogue to digital scholarly practices, tools, and sources, the rise of new academic fields such as the digital humanities has opened up new research avenues and generated debates about the interplay between digital methodologies and knowledge production, representation, visualisation, and organisation. Following the work of Roopika Risam, as well as Catherine D'Ignazio and Lauren Klein, some of the questions we aim to address in this respect are: How can we, as researchers, ensure our data models are properly situated? In what ways are complex cultural, political, and social categories like gender and race shaped and mediated through their representations within databases, platforms, and other sites of digital knowledge production?

We welcome contributions from early-career researchers – postgraduate students and postdoctoral scholars – from a wide range of disciplinary perspectives, including philosophy, sociology, digital humanities, history, literature, cultural studies, media studies, sound studies, and game studies. Submissions might address, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- Theorising the digital subject
- Collective solidarities, resistances, and political organisation on online platforms
- Academic knowledge production and the impact of digital technologies on research
- Immersive experiences of digital technologies
- Labour, lethargy, and ludic capitalism
- Digital temporalities – digital spaces
- Representations of digital technologies in contemporary culture (i.e. film, TV, literature, radio)
- Video games and play
- Sonic renderings of the digital realm

Abstracts of up to 350 words and a short biography (up to 100 words) should be submitted to **digital-subjectivities@fu-berlin.de** by **31st December 2025**.

The conference will take place from **21st** to **22nd May 2026,** at Freie Universität Berlin.

If you have any questions about the submission guidelines or the conference, please contact us at **digital-subjectivities@fu-berlin.de**.

There is no registration or participation fee.