

Disrupting technology: Contextualising continuity and change in technology, work and employment

11-13 June 2023, Monash University Prato Centre,
Prato, near Florence, Tuscany, Italy

Call for Papers

Following earlier successful international conferences held by the Centre for Employment Relations, Innovation and Change (CERIC), and also by Monash Business School, we are pleased to announce a call for papers for an international conference on **Disrupting Technology**.

The Disrupting Technology conference is located in a context of increasing interest and debate on the impact of digital technologies on the world of work and employment. Much of the debate on recent technological shifts have focused on challenging technological determinism or potentially optimistic or pessimistic visions of the future of work. It is recognised, for example, that digital technologies can both create and displace jobs, and that the impact of new technologies on the nature of work is shaped by a variety of contextual factors, both at the workplace and beyond. Despite this, much of the debate on the technological future of work remains speculative, while contemporary developments, such as the rise of platforms, are often presented as overly novel and dislocated from historical patterns of capitalist development and employer strategy.

Against this backdrop, the Disrupting Technology conference calls for more careful, empirically grounded, theorisations of technology, its novelty and its impact on work and employment relations. Beyond the technology itself, what is genuinely novel and transformative about automation, AI, 'platformisation' and other digital innovations, and which more mundane technologies might we be missing from the analysis? We welcome contributions across the following and similar themes:

1. The state, regulation and new technology
2. Historical patterns of new technologies at work
3. Management, organization, and technology
4. Occupations, skills, professions, and technology
5. Inequalities (race, gender, (dis)ability, income) and technology
6. Management by algorithms and metric and new regimes of control
7. Resisting, negotiating and new social contracts of technology at work
8. Methods for studying work and technology – towards a research agenda
9. Ethical concerns in the use of artificial intelligence and data analytics in the workplace
10. Digital transformations and the future of work

We intend that contributions recognise the influence of conflicted interests and actions by managers, workers, the state and other social actors on the patterns, processes and outcomes of technological innovation. By devoting more attention to contextualising and historicising the relationship between technology and work, we ask contributors to develop more critical accounts of the extent of transformation and disruption, vis-à-vis entrenchment or continuity of existing social relations and employment relationships.

Submission process

Expressions of interest in presenting at the **Disrupting Technology** conference should be submitted in the form of an abstract to ceric@leeds.ac.uk by **28th February 2023**. Abstracts should be no longer than 500 words. Abstracts should include the paper title; core research question(s); contribution or debate; methods; key findings. We welcome theoretical, empirical and comparative analyse. There is no methodological preference. Early findings of ongoing research projects are encouraged.

Proposals for special panels within the conference are also welcome. Proposals should specify the rationale for such a panel and indicate the proposed speakers. We will confirm acceptance of conference papers by **10th March 2023**.

Organising Team

Research centres: The Centre for Employment Relations, Innovation and Change (University of Leeds), with the ESRC Digital Futures at Work Research Centre (Leeds and Sussex) and the Human Resources and Industrial Relations Research Interest Group, Department of Management, and the International Consortium for Research on Employment and Work (iCREW), Monash Business School, Monash University.

Team: Charles Umney, Ioulia Bessa, Xanthe Whittaker, Simon Joyce, Vera Trappmann and Mark Stuart (all University of Leeds); Greg Bamber, Fang Lee Cooke, Brian Cooper, Marjorie Jerrard, Tui McKeown (all Monash University). All conference enquires to be sent to: ceric@leeds.ac.uk

Duration

2 formal days (Mon. 12 to Tue. 13 June 2023) with arrival, visiting museums, galleries, churches etc. and informal learning and networking on the pre-conference day (Sun. 11 June 2023). Participants (or their institutions) are responsible for their own arrangements for travel, accommodation and other costs.

Prato, travel and accommodation

The venue, [Monash University Prato Centre](#), Palazzo Vaj is a lovely location. It is the European base for international research and education conferences for Monash University, Australia.

There are good-value flights to Italy, especially if they are booked well in advance. Airport options include (in order of proximity): Florence, Pisa, Bologna and Rome. There are also good connections by rail and road. Prato attracts many visitors in June, so it is advisable to book accommodation early. Participants in Prato conferences often stay on before or after the conference to explore the delights of Tuscany and other parts of Italy.

Prato is a picturesque and heritage-listed city in Tuscany, Italy. It is only 17 kilometres north-west of Florence. The city boasts important gastronomic, historical and artistic attractions, with excellent restaurants, museums and a great cultural legacy that started with the Etruscans and reached its peak with the Renaissance, when artists such as Donatello, Filippo Lippi and Botticelli left their testimonies in the city. The famous biscotti invented in Prato during the Middle Ages, are still produced by local traditional bakers. More recently, Prato's economy has been based on the textile industry. Prato has the second-largest Chinese population in Italy. It is the third largest city in central Italy (after Rome and Florence).

Forthcoming

Announcement of keynote speakers and conference booking fee to follow shortly.