**call for papers**

**ICOHTEC symposium Katowice, 22-27 July 2019:**

# *TECHNOLOGY AND POWER*

The International Committee for the History of Technology's 46th Symposium in Katowice, Poland, 22 – 27 July 2019

**Deadline for proposals is Tuesday, 15 January 2019**

Social theorists from Max Weber to Jürgen Habermas have argued that power relations are among the defining characteristics of every society, along with culture and economic relations. The main theme of this conference, Technology and Power, seeks to interrogate the various roles technologies have played in the development of power relations in the past, in different parts of the world. Political power (local, state, and inter-state) is the most obvious of these, but relations of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, labour, age, and so on, also include elements of power. Technologies have instrumental, mediating, undermining, reinforcing, and constructive roles in all of these relations. Some technologies have been used by elites, others have served the relatively powerless. Think of weapons as means of state power, but also as instruments of revolution; the printed word as a vehicle of state and church propaganda, but also as a disrupter of all kinds of authority; contraceptive devices and pills that have changed relations between the sexes and in families. Power is usually contested, and technologies often change the chances of those involved in these conflicts.

The recent interest in transnational history has extended the range of these topics and revealed their interconnectedness. Technological change is disrespectful of national borders: technical knowledge and technicians travel, and new technologies of communication and transport transform balances of trade and power on a worldwide scale. We have only begun to explore these global dimensions, and the symposium will offer the opportunity to push this project forward.

A broad but non-exhaustive list of possible topics for paper presentations follows. Proposals and presentations on a wide spectrum of topics related to the general theme are very much encouraged. Proposals outside the main theme will also be considered.

## 1. Technology and the State

*Engineers and architects in power*

- forms of technocracy across the world and in different times
- case studies of technocrats
- large technocratic projects (think of TVA or the post WWII dam building projects in the third world, and similar projects in earlier times)

*The State and the economy, from mercantilism to the present*

- energy politics
- technical education
- stimulating small companies, from crafts to modern start-ups

*State power and military technology*

- military technology and the rise of the modern nation-state
- technology-driven military revolutions
- war and technological change
- military and technological aspects of unconventional warfare
- military technology in non-military settings
- military-industrial (-academic) complexes (not only US)

*Technical forms of government*

- technologies of surveillance (as in border control, security services, public health)
- environmental governance
- managing populations by means of statistics or eugenics

*Technology and international relations*

## 2. Design as politics

*Urban planning across the world:* the design of city life, transit infrastructures, ecological urbanism

*Scripting the everyday:* attempts to shape life through the design of homes, offices and products for everyday use

*Design fantasies:* technological utopias and dystopias

*Design and political ideology*, from totalitarianism to neoliberalism; design activism (as in DIY and the 'maker movement')

**3. Power and the body**

*The rise of Big Pharma*

*Reproductive technology, gender and family relations*

*Self-monitoring technologies, the 'quantified self'*

*Resisting and rejecting modern medical interventions; alternative and non-western health care practices*

**4. Maintaining, repairing, and appropriating technologies**

*Repair and maintenance of large technological systems*

*Everyday cultures of maintenance and repair in developed and developing nations*

*Sites of repair: factories, workshops, maker-labs, and homes*

*Hacking and modifying digital and material things*

**Proposal Guidelines**

The symposium covers all periods and all areas of the globe. In keeping with a cherished tradition of the field, the meeting is open to scholars from all disciplines and backgrounds.

The conference language is English.

We especially encourage graduate students to submit proposals and to participate in the symposium.

INDIVIDUAL PAPER proposals must include: (1) a 300-word (maximum) abstract; and (2) a one-page (maximum) CV. Abstracts should include the author's name and email address, a short descriptive title, three to five key words, a concise statement of the thesis, a brief discussion of the sources, and a summary of the major conclusions. If you are submitting a paper proposal dealing with a particular subtheme in this CfP, please indicate this in your proposal. In preparing your paper, remember that presentations are not full-length articles. You will have no more than 20 minutes to speak, which is roughly equivalent to 8 double-spaced typed pages. For more suggestions about preparing your conference presentation, please consult the guidelines at the conference website. Contributors are encouraged to submit full-length versions of their papers after the conference for consideration by ICOHTEC's peer-reviewed journal ICON.

PANEL proposals must include (1) an abstract of the panel (300 words maximum), listing the proposed papers and a session chairperson; (2) abstracts for each paper (300 words maximum); (3) a one-page CV (maximum) for each contributor and chairperson. Panels should consist of three or four speakers. Several panels may be organized on one topic. We encourage the creation of panels which examine technology and power relations in different parts of the world, enabling international comparisons, and contributing to an emerging transnational historiography. We welcome especially contributions from beyond Europe and the United States, which so far have been less fully covered by historians of technology.

The programme committee reserves the right to relocate papers to different themes and add papers to panels.

POSTER proposals must include (1) a 300-word (maximum) abstract; and (2) a one-page CV. Abstracts should include the author's name and email address, a short descriptive title, a concise statement of the thesis, a brief discussion of the sources, and a summary of the major conclusions. Please indicate which of the symposium subthemes your poster refers to (if applicable).

The programme committee also encourages submission of ALTERNATIVE FORMATS for sessions: round tables, the presentation of an important book or film, etcetera.

Members of ICOHTEC pay a reduced fee.

**Proposal submissions**

The final deadline for all submissions is Tuesday 15 January 2019.

Please check updated instructions on submissions at our website: http://www.icohtec.org/.

Please submit your session, individual paper, or poster, online:

http://www.icohtec.org/annual-meeting/cfp-system/2019-katowice/

The submission form should guide you through the submission process, but if you need further explanation, you can find it in the pdf document 'Technical instructions', which you can download from the opening page of the submission form.

If you want to submit a proposal for a session in another format, please contact the chair of the Program Committee, Dick van Lente, at vanlente@eshcc.eur.nl.