Attention: An Interdisciplinary Workshop

Session 1: What Is Attention?

14th of September 2022 – 2:20pm to 3:30pm

The workshop will begin with a series of papers exploring the nature of attention, a term that appears to have a plain and obvious meaning, but which on closer inspection evades easy definition. The presentations and subsequent discussion will investigate whether attention is a coherent analytic category

Session 2: Studying Attention in the Lab and in the Wild

14th of September 2022 – 4:00pm to 6:30pm
(inc. short breaks at 5:00pm and 5:45pm approx.)

Building on prior discussions about the nature of attention, the presentations in this session will explore how attention can be studied. The presentations draw directly from empirical research conducted in the laboratory and in the real world, examining how elusive aspects of attention can be unlocked through particular and novel methodological approaches. The subsequent round table discussion will elaborate on these elements, foregrounding cross-disciplinary disjunctions and synergies, revealing assumptions embedded -1 (i) -ssu-1 (t) -4 (assum) 1 (p

Session 4: The Attention Economy: An Impending Crisis?

15th of September 2022 – 3.50pm to 6:20pm
(inc. short breaks at 4:30pm and 5:30pm approx.)

The present moment is one of deep anxiety about attention and its potential manipulation by technologies old and new. The final session brings together scholars from a range of disciplines - from law to economics through anthropology, philosophy and literary studies - to interrogate the present 'crisis of attention'. As such, the session will incorporate divergent perspectives on the attention economy and technological distraction. This includes papers that seek to understand the perceived crisis, its causes and possible solutions, as well as papers that take a more deflationary approach, looking for value in states of inattention and employing a longer historical framework. This will provide a varied foundation for the final round table discussion, creating a fertile environment for novel interdisciplinary syntheses and understandings of the contemporary moment.

Presentations:

From Data to Attention Infrastructures: Regulating Extraction in the Attention Platform Economy
Elettra Bietti
NYU School of Law and Digital Life Initiative at Cornell Tech

Reading Attention in Contemporary Literary Studies
Alice Bennett
Department of English – Liverpool Hope University

A Brief Introduction to Rational Inattention
Mark Dean
Department of Economics – Columbia University

Personalization: Building Attention Subjects within the Digital Attention Economy
Eva Iris Otto
Copenhagen Center for Social Data Science (SODAS) – University of Copenhagen

Distraction Reconstructed
Marion Thain and Edmund Sonuga-Barke
Centre for Attention Studies at King's (ASK) – King's College London