



You are invited to join us in CCDW's Social Technologies Lab for an exciting double seminar on digital technologies and social research.

A/Prof. Heather Horst (RMIT) will discuss the innovative method of 'digital ethnography'

Dr Yolande Strengers (RMIT) will discuss researching smart energy technologies in everyday life

WHEN: Wednesday 4 November, 3-5pm

WHERE: Social Technologies Lab, Centre for Cultural Diversity and Wellbeing
Building T, Room T109, VU Footscray Nicholson campus

RSVP: kim.richardson@vu.edu.au (spaces are limited)

Throughout the world digital and networked media have inspired researchers across a range of disciplines to explore the possibilities of ethnography for studying a range of practices including online game communities, locative and social media, YouTube and mobile media. This talk will focus upon the development of 'digital ethnography' as an approach to understanding digital media and technologies in our everyday lives. Doing research with, through and in an environment partially constituted by digital media has led to the development of new and innovative methods. It has also inspired researchers to theorise the digital world in new ways, inviting us to revisit previous practices, media and environments, including theoretical concepts in social and cultural research.

Digital Ethnography: Understanding Digital Media in Everyday Life



Associate Professor Heather Horst is founding Co-Director of the Digital Ethnography Research Centre and Director, Research Partnerships, in the College of Design and Social Context at RMIT. Her books include 'The Cell Phone' (2006), 'Hanging Out, Messing Around and Geeking Out' (2010), 'Digital Anthropology' (2012) and 'Digital Ethnography' (2015).

Smart meters, devices and homes are increasingly touted as a solution to energy problems. Through demand response and behaviour change, smart technologies are expected to create energy literate, informed consumers, who manage their energy demand. This talk critiques this vision for smart technologies and presents an alternative understanding of how energy is consumed in the home and how it could be reduced, both with and without smart technologies. Drawing on research with Australian households, I focus on the 'curious consumers' present in the home, such as babies and pets. Theories of social practice are used to understand the practices performed within the home (such as laundering and heating) and how they constitute energy demand. I conclude by suggesting alternative demand management strategies that may reduce the energy associated with these practices.

Smart Energy Technologies in Everyday Life



Dr Yolande Strengers is a Vice Chancellor's Senior Research Fellow in the Centre for Urban Research at RMIT, where she co-leads the Beyond Behaviour Change research program. She is the author of 'Smart Energy Technologies in Everyday Life' (Palgrave 2013), and recipient of an ARC DECRA (2015-2018) for the project 'Automating the Smart Home: An Investigation of Automated Cooling Practices'.