

Historical Materialism Athens 2023
20-23 April 2023 Panteion University, Athens

**Call for Papers for the Technology, Digital Labour & Class Struggle
stream**

Deadline for abstracts: 31 December 2022

<https://conference.historicalmaterialism.org/event/4/>

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In recent years, the dominant narrative of techno-optimism has been widely disputed as technology seems unable to address issues of climate change, public health crisis and overall societal turmoil. Whilst techno-optimism serves the other side of the same coin, techno-pessimism gains ground in public debates and pop culture trends; technology is now decried as the driving force behind alienation, climate collapse, fake news and a growing list of mental disorders. This shift is indicative of the profound inability of techno-determinist discourse to conceptualise technological transformations as part of a wider, societal context.

On the other hand, the recent rise of resistance and struggle by workers in the tech industry, seemed to be followed by the articulation of emancipatory Marxist theories by critical scholarship that opened up new roads to overcome this impasse. The growing unionization of major companies of the tech industry, coupled with struggles by platform/precarious workers have undermined hegemonic narratives of “innovation” and “entrepreneurship”. By placing focus on workers’ experiences, this wave of mobilizations has shed light onto issues of recomposition of the labour process, opening up questions of proletarianization and potential class alliances that could shift relation of forces within sectors that comprise the Holy Grail of contemporary capitalism. As an overall, this transformation of the labour process in the tech sector, affects the notions of surplus value and class stratification. Within this context, a renewed interest in digital labour theory and radical approaches to technology emerges along with multinodal collaborations between critical political economy, social movements theory, and media studies. Consequently, we want to invite contributions on the following topics, though our list is indicative and not exhaustive:

- Value extraction and exploitation in the digital realm
- Data-Driven Economy: Issues of value, labour and infrastructure
- Platform economy: platform labour, and emerging unionisation efforts
- Playbor, algorithmic management and forms of recomposition of the labour process
- Digital workers’ inquiry as a methodology and as means for engaging in unionization
- Automation’s politics and the future of labour

We welcome submissions for panels and individual papers. Abstracts should be under 300 words and be sent to the Historical Materialism Athens 2023 call for papers (<https://conference.historicalmaterialism.org/event/4/>), indicating that it is a submission to the “Technology, Digital Labour & Class Struggle”. We stress that the conference will be in person. Panel chairs should be clearly indicated where appropriate.

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