



CSA (2021) Call for Abstracts: ITDS Research Cluster

Presentation abstracts are now being accepted for the annual Canadian Sociological Association conference hosted by the University of Alberta, which will be held **virtually** from May 31 to June 4, 2021. The *Internet, Technology, & Digital Sociology (ITDS)* research cluster is affiliated with six sessions at the conference. Please see the session descriptions below or visit our [website](#).

Abstracts can be submitted [online](#) and must be received by **January 29, 2021**. Authors will be notified on the acceptance of their submissions by mid-February. Abstracts should be between 100-200 words in length. Check out the full [submission requirements](#) for more information.

ITD1 – The Digital Divide: Exploring the Impacts on Access and Use of Technology during COVID-19 *(organized by Michael Adorjan)*

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated already existing structural inequalities, including the digital divide, referring to both lack of access to technology and its proficient use. While scholarship has long identified a digital divide emerging with the advent of the internet, recent advances in high speed internet and ubiquitous smartphone access, coupled with the adoption of information communications technologies and social media in particular has driven a larger rift between those who are able to access these technologies (and the advantages they bestow) and those who are not. COVID-19 has amplified this rift even further in several areas, including children and young people's access to educational resources, especially for youth staying at home for school. Moreover, those residing in rural areas may be less likely to be able to access educational resources and other information related to health and safety during the pandemic. This session is open to those currently conducting research on the digital divide in general, and especially its present impacts during COVID-19. Theoretical pieces advancing conceptually the digital divide are also welcome. Sessions are not limited to those centered on children and youth.

ITD2 - Understanding Fake News: Misinformation, Disinformation, and the Sociological Imagination *(organized by Michael Adorjan)*

In the wake of the Cambridge Analytica scandal, where information disseminated online was used to manipulate voters during the 2016 United States presidential election, and more recently regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, concern has emerged over 'fake news' and its impacts, both online and offline. However, some argue that beyond the concept of fake news, it is important to distinguish between "disinformation" which refers to information that is false and deliberately created to harm a person, social group, organization or country," and "misinformation" which refers to "information that is false, but not created with the intention of causing harm". Indeed, how the online medium serves to fundamentally manipulate users based on the interpretation of what one consumes is still a nascent area in sociological research. This session invites empirical research and theoretical/conceptual developments in this emerging area.

ITD3 – Technology and Society: General Session *(organized by Andrew D. Nevin & Anabel Quan-Haase)*

The Internet and digital technologies have become increasingly important to our understanding of contemporary social life. As this area in sociology continues to grow, there are many questions that remain unanswered regarding the effects of such technology on social interactions, relationships, culture, community, individuality, and inequality. This general session invites all papers examining the social implications of the Internet and technology, broadly defined to include computers, social media platforms, information and communication technologies (ICTs), digital media, etc. We welcome empirical submissions using various frameworks and methodological approaches to investigate how digital technologies impact our everyday lives, both through research related to cyberspace and online environments, as well as outcomes in face-to-face interactions due to technological interventions. We are also interested in theoretical papers that aim to rethink classical and contemporary sociological theory and methods in light of the historical impact of digital technologies. We are especially seeking submissions that creatively and critically engage with the role of the technology in sociological inquiry as it pertains to Canada and abroad.

ITD4 – Sociological Insights on Cybercrime and Deviance *(organized by Ryan Broll & Dylan Reynolds)*

From communications to social media to the Internet of Things, there is little doubt that technology continues to occupy an ever greater space in our personal and social lives. As news stories and empirical accounts demonstrate, the continued expansion of technology represents both opportunities and challenges for Canadians. Cybercrime and deviance represent two broad categories of such challenges, and sociologists are among the foremost scholars investigating human-centric problems and solutions. This session aims to bring together those studying diverse topics at the intersection of the internet, technology, and digital sociology and criminology. This includes, but is not limited to, financial and security crimes, increasing surveillance and risk during the pandemic, cyberterrorism, hacking, online harassment and cyberbullying, sextortion, and the dark web. Theoretical and/or empirical papers focused on offending, victimization, or policy are welcome.

ITD5 – Internet, Technology, & Social Movements *(organized by Andrey Kasimov)*

The internet and other information technologies have become important staples in contemporary politics and social movements. For over two decades, online spaces have been able to provide security and refuge for political actors and groups facing censorship from their governments. The internet was a pivotal technology in anti-state movements such as the Arab Spring and Anonymous. At the same time, nation-states have attempted to employ information technologies to influence democratic processes globally to achieve their political ends. More recently the internet has also acted as a space where contested ideas of the far-right and alt-right have gained traction and seem to be growing. This session invites papers that broadly engage with how the internet and information technologies are being used by social movements, individual political actors, and nation states to meet their goals. We are interested in empirical contributions that engage with the variety of ways technology has come to shape and reshape political and ideological debates and involvement at both the global and local levels. Theoretical contributions that aim to develop new theory or extend contemporary theories via engagement with the internet and information technologies are especially encouraged. We are interested in high quality research that engages critically with the impact information technologies are having on our understanding of social movements and political sociology. The main goal of this session is to foster a space where social movement research and digital sociology intersect to the mutual benefit of both fields

GAS4 – Dating in the Digital Age: Sociological Studies of Digital Sexual Spaces (*organized by Alan Santinele Martino & Nicole Andrejek*)

****Cross-affiliated with the “Gender and Sexuality” research cluster*

In our contemporary erotic sphere, digital spaces have become central sexual arenas. We have witnessed the emergence and burgeoning of a variety of digital sexual spaces where sexual actors can consume pornography, meet romantic and sexual partners, and explore fantasies and fetishes. From Christianmingle.com to FeetFetishDating.com, digital spaces have opened possibilities for new sexual desires, practices, intimacies, subjectivities, and identities. This session aims to contribute to the empirical and theoretical sociological literature on dating and the erotic sphere in this digital age. We welcome submissions that aim to expand and re-imagine current theories to push our sociological imagination of sex and sexuality into the digital age. Submissions that offer potential research methods for empirically examining digital sexual spaces are also welcome. We are interested in papers that take critical and intersectional approaches, addressing how social locations, such as race, gender, sexualities, and class, with/in digital spaces affect the ways in which desires are structured and how ‘sexual actors’ navigate digital sexual spaces. We invite scholars to offer ways of understanding the mutual imbrication between sexual fields/spaces, sexualities, and technologies. Areas of theoretical and empirical investigation may include, for example:

- Social groups who are excluded from digital sexual fields or marginalized within them
- Forms of stratification and inequalities within digital sexual fields; negotiations of erotic capital
- Racism, colonialism, dis/ableism, sexism in digital spaces
- Hierarchies of desirability being negotiated in these digital sexual fields
- Niche online spaces for a variety of sexualities
- Sexual desires, and sexual practices
- The regulation of these sexual spaces
- Sexual harassment and violence in digital spaces
- The critical role of digital sexual spaces in enabling and constraining sexual preference structures based on age, race, class, body types, etc.
- The emergence of desires, subjectivities, and identities with/in online sexual spaces.