

[Is Big Data a New Medium? An Interdisciplinary Symposium](#) [7-8 May 2018](#)

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Call for Papers

Date:

March 3, 2018

Location:

Singapore

Subject Fields:

Cultural History / Studies, Digital Humanities, Fine Arts, Philosophy, Sociology

Is Big Data a New Medium?

Interdisciplinary Symposium, LaSalle College of the Arts, Singapore, 7- 8 May 2018

The growing quantification of social behaviours changes those behaviours. Extensive data collection alters the way we view our bodies, habits, environments, relationships, and society at large. Big data architectures are increasingly determining classificatory systems in the social, political, and corporate realms, transforming political questions into 'technical management'. Promises of a cyborgian existence, free of patriarchal, capitalist, social, gender, and racial oppression (Haraway) here stand in stark contrast to the steadily proliferating forms of digital surveillance and control. Data, and their multiple arborisations, have become new epistemic landscapes. They have also become new existential territories (Guattari).

This two-day symposium seeks to consider the following questions: Can big data be viewed as a new medium in the way that photography and film, and, more specifically, the photographic/cinematic close-up were in the 19th/ 20th centuries? What might be the efficacy of this new medium? (according to McLuhan, it's not *what* we're watching on TV that matters - the news or a football match - but the fact we're receiving televised information passively). How does extensive data collection shape the unconscious? What is the aesthetics of this process? Does big data, with its predictive abilities, and aided by the increasing enslavement by debt, eliminate the future (Berardi)? Does it mark the end of 'free will' as we know it (Han)?

We invite proposals for 20 min papers or provocations from the fields of media and critical theory, cultural studies, artistic practice in any medium (or combination of media), philosophy and sociology that address but are not limited to the following topics:

- Big data and temporality
- Big data and spatiality
- Big data and materiality
- Big data, representation, and the digital 'folding' of reality (Berry)
- Big data and the emotional turn in capitalism
- Digital optics, HCI design, and the shaping of the digital unconscious

- The semantics of unconnected data; finding patterns where there are none (Boyd and Crawford)
- The poetics of correlation
- The fetish of objectivity
- Additivity (counting) versus narrativity (recounting)
- The collapse of the divide between 'surface' and 'depth' research (Manovich)
- New hierarchies of consumer ranking - from 'trash' to 'star' (Han)
- Digital obfuscation and other strategies of resistance

Please send a 300 w abstract and a 150 w bio with 'Is big data a New Medium?' in the subject field to **Natasha Lushetich**: natasha.lushetich@lasalle.edu.sg by 3 March 2018. Decisions will be communicated by 10 March 2018.

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