Call for Papers and Author Workshop:

**Disability, Technology and Change**

Adjusting, hacking, and repairing as practices of inventing

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Recently, we see a growing scholarship in design, art, technology, and science regarding their relationships with disability and thus exploring issues of materiality as well as complex embodiment and cognitive difference. In opposition to previous narratives, these novel and critical accounts center disability as a creative force, an embodied experience that fosters innovation and allows for new affordances of already known and circulating objects, practices and knowledges. These works [e.g., Hamraie 2017, Hamraie, Fritsch 2019, Dokumaci 2020, 2023] delivered by scholars with and without disabilities, academic allies and engaged research practices expose the agency, political force, and creativity of people with disabilities, thus opposing discourses that presented them as recipients of technological solutions provided by able-bodied professionals, for whom they have served as challenge or as an inspiration [Jackson, Williamson 2019].

The access and participation of people with disabilities in the processes of co-creation of technological arrangements and designing the world around us in novel and unexpected ways, is in fact a political issue, which is why scholarship currently intersects with activism and takes the form of manifestos thereby raising issues of the politics of interdependence as well as disability justice (Hamraie, Fritsch 2019). Speculating and fabulating about more just and crip futures (Kafer) are at the heart of many interventions in this moment of multiple crises.

Also, writing on the entanglements of disability and the history of technology is proliferating [e.g., Virdi 2020, Williamson 2019, Jones (ed.) 2017] and may serve to reconsider how encounters of bodily or sensory difference with technologies took place and how their effects were crucial in shaping the world around us in conceptual and other ways. These novel disability histories engaging thoughtfully with the wandering paths of technological change, innovation politics or technoableism [Shew 2023] challenge the notion of disabled bodies as silent, passive objects of interference, management and treatment. They provide a critical perspective on the historiography and theory of technology, science and design.

The purpose of this call is to further expose crip-epistemics (knowledge and practice based on embodied experiences of disability) and to make space for disability-centered narratives on innovation, repair, hacking and re-adjusting. In consequence, we hope that the contributions to this thematic issue will allow us to re-think, re-configure, and re-organise the existing knowledge about diverse and heterogeneous societies and the established histories of technology, and to ‘write back’ to discourses, that have too often failed to include the lived experiences and testimonies
of disabled experts, innovators and those who do not fit the scripts inscribed by artefacts directed at the “preferred user” [Ellis, Kao, Pitman, 2020]. Hence we aim to challenge and suggest to pluralise the established notions of the normal, normalcy or normativity in the history and theory of technology and design. Applying a critical disability studies perspective allows for a different reading of technological change too often centered on questions of innovation and progress and focused on the global North. Hence, we propose to consider the messy arrangements of assistive and inaccessible mainstream technologies on a global scale where a differentiation in techno-poor and techno-rich is noticed by some scholars [Wolbring 2009]. We encourage authors to reflect on the impact of these technical objects and infrastructures since the 19th century in shaping politically, materially, and socially the diverse techno-sensory and embodied modes of co-existence across cultures and national borders [Friedner 2022].

We invite scholars to scrutinize and challenge the traditional historiographies surrounding technology, medicine, science, design and art from a critical disability and crip perspective. We especially invite scholars working in global disability (Asian, African, South American settings) and technology studies and history to contribute to this issue.

The range of possible topics includes, but is not limited to:

- rewriting the history of technology from a disability perspective
- disability technical knowledge making and sharing
- disability epistemic practices on technologies and using technologies
- visual media as tools for science, medicine and treatment
- historical and contemporary practices of repair, re-designing, co-creation addressing disability, bodily and sensory or cognitive difference
- commoning of proprietary technology, open source practices regarding assistive technologies
- histories of the re-appropriating or re-purposing of mainstream technologies for people with disabilities
- strategies challenging and countering costly technoableism
- past and present of the politics of artefacts with regard to the exclusion of people with disabilities and in the context of the disability rights movement

Please send an abstract of max. **300 words**, with one page CV including institutional affiliation to: robert.stock@hu-berlin.de and magda.zdrodowska@uj.edu.pl

Accepted paper submissions will be discussed during a workshop hosted by the Department of Cultural History and Theory, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. The workshop will take place on **15 November 2023**. We are going to circulate article drafts beforehand (first version to be submitted by **30 September**). We particularly encourage scholars with disabilities and scholars from southern regions to apply. We are planning to make the workshop an inclusive and accessible event, which we envision as an in-person event with a hybrid option. When submitting abstracts provide us with an estimate of travel costs (or indicate if own funding is available) so
that we can calculate the overall budget. Furthermore, please make us aware of access needs (CART, ASL, wheelchair or neurodiversity access or other) so that we can include this in planning.

After the workshop, we will be further working on the texts as they are planned to be part of a special issue of a peer reviewed journal or an edited volume with an international publisher.

**Time line:**
Deadline for sending abstracts: **15 February 2024**
Acceptance/rejection notification: 29 February 2024
Deadline for draft of texts: 30 September 2024
Workshop: 15 November 2024
Deadline for full texts: 15 March 2025