

Asia-Pacific STS Network – Member Newsletter 2016 issue 1

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From the Convenor – Jerome Whittington

Our memories of the wonderful Biennial Conference 2015 hosted by Dr Wen-Ling Hong in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, are still fresh in our minds. **Disaster, Controversy and Public Participation** was a resounding success and a true demonstration of the vitality of APSTSN.

I am very pleased to announce that the **Biennial Conference 2017** will be hosted by Darrin Durant at the University of Melbourne! Based on consultation with the Steering Committee, the dates have been set for 5-8 July, 2017. Darrin's eager engagement with APSTSN promises another exceptional event for our ever-growing network.

APSTSN now boasts **more than 400 members**. Please update your email address by submitting a new membership application—and remind your colleagues to do the same! If we don't have your correct email, you won't receive member news or conference notices.

Congratulations to **our newest Steering Committee** members! The latest round of elections for the 2016-2018 has brought six new members to the Steering Committee:

Amy Fletcher, Aotearoa New Zealand

Gonçalo Santos, Hong Kong

Jap Tji Beng, Indonesia

Mai Suzuki, Japan

Rey Tiquia, Philippines

Yi-Tze Lee, Taiwan

Particularly exciting is that APSTSN now has active membership in Hong Kong and the Philippines! We are also very excited that New Zealand once again has SC representation.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the Steering Committee members who will be stepping down: Wen-Ling Hong (Taiwan), Aiko Hibino (Japan), and Irfan Prijambada (Indonesia). Thanks for your dedication and service! Special thanks to Wen-Ling Hong for her masterful organizing of the 2015 Biennial Conference in Kaohsiung, Taiwan!

We received two nominations for the Indigenous SC position (from Yih-Ren Lin and Tariq Zaman). However, for the election, no votes were received. Because there are no provisions for this situation in the APSTSN by-laws, I will work with the SC to resolve the situation.

Lastly, APSTSN has gained many social media followers on its Google Group (currently 210), Twitter (102) and Facebook (94). Our engagement with our members and STS researchers in the region and beyond has been expanded through social media.

APSTSN Biennial Conference 2015: A Report



By **Youjung Shin**, PhD Student, Graduate School of Science and Technology Policy (STP), Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST)

The 2015 APSTSN biennial conference was held in conjunction with the EASSTS Conference from the 1st to the 4th of October in Kaohsiung, Taiwan. It featured three keynote addresses, two panels and 110 paper presentations. In the first keynote address, Professor Kobayashi Tadashi presented on his involvement in the deliberative opinion poll in Japan after the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster. Australian historian and philosopher of science Helen Verran delivered the second keynote speech titled 'How thinking through STS can contribute to Indigenous Governance and Modern Nation State Governance'. The third keynote was delivered by Kuei-Tien Chou from the National Taiwan University and was titled 'A Cosmopolitan Approach to Trans-boundary Risk Governance in East Asia'. The two panels featured lively discussions on the topics of 'Governing Disasters' and 'Revised Tradition or Collective Reinvention'. The conference also featured two fairs, an indigenous fair organised by the Kaohsiung Indigenous Affairs Commission and an STS fair. These showcased the important work of NGOs, community groups and STS scholars in integrating scholarship and public engagement.



The conference banquet was held at the Fong-Ping Temple, a location of special significance for the environmental movement of Taiwan, thus resonating with the conference theme of 'Disaster, Controversies, and Public Engagement'. The banquet featured a performance by local social activist, composer and artist Lin Sheng-Xiang.

APSTSN gives special emphasis to the study of indigenous knowledge and society, drawing on concepts and tools from STS. Delegates who participated in the 2009 New Zealand and 2011 Australian conference will remember the involvement of indigenous people at the conference. This emphasis is vital for Taiwan's STS scholars because Taiwan is very vulnerable to natural disasters, particularly in the area where indigenous people reside. The Indigenous Council of Kaohsiung City and Indigenous College collaborated with the conferencing organising committee to deliver a traditional opening ceremony, indigenous fair, and panel discussion. We hope this will be a springboard for continuing dialogue between scholars in STS and Indigenous Studies on the conference theme, Disaster, Controversies, and Public Engagement. The committee thanks the conference organisers and all who participated for a very successful, engaging conference!

Country News

AUSTRALIA

On March 1st, Anna Harris (originally from Australia, PhD University of Melbourne) started a new ERC (European Research Council) funded Starting Grant in the Department of Technology and Society Studies at Maastricht University, in the Netherlands. The project, entitled 'The birth of the digital doctor? A comparative anthropology of medical techno-perception' examines the role of technologies in how medical students learn the craft skills of their profession. For more about the project and related work, see Anna's website:

<https://annaroseharris.wordpress.com>

JAPAN

A series of joint lectures on big data and knowledge infrastructure with Prof. Geoffrey Bowker (UC Irvine) was held at the School of Arts and Sciences the University of Tokyo between December 2015 and February 2016.

Prof. Masato Fukushima, of the University of Tokyo, is conducting two new research projects. <http://ssu-ast.weebly.com/english-main.html>

1. 'Forecasting and Society' (with Prof. Tomiko Yamaguchi, ICU, Japan): a comparative study of the impact of various practices related to 'future making' (involving such cases as the issue of failed prediction in seismology, meteorological simulation, big data analysis and prediction market);
2. 'Smart Infrastructure' (with Prof. Geoffrey Bowker) on the issue of expected disruption of infrastructure in advanced countries.

SINGAPORE

Dr Jerome Whittington organized **Does Paris Make a Difference? Anthropogenic Climates and Global Order**, a symposium of interpretive social sciences and humanities, at the National University of Singapore, April 5, 2016.

Dr Connor Graham organized the conference **Homo Sapiens, Mortality & the Internet in Contemporary Asia**, at the National University of Singapore, 14-15 March, 2016.

Member Publications

NEW BOOKS

Chilvers, J. & **Kearnes, M.** (editors) (2016). *Remaking Participation: Science, Environment and Emergent Publics*. London: Routledge, 296 pages, paperback, ISBN: 9780415857406.

Changing relations between science and democracy – and controversies over issues such as climate change, energy transitions, genetically modified organisms and smart technologies – have led to a rapid rise in new forms of public participation and citizen engagement. While most existing approaches adopt fixed meanings of ‘participation’ and are consumed by questions of method or critiquing the possible limits of democratic engagement, this book offers new insights that rethink public engagements with science, innovation and environmental issues as diverse, emergent and in the making. This new way of seeing participation in science and democracy opens up alternative paths for reconfiguring and remaking participation in more experimental, reflexive, anticipatory and responsible ways.

Gelfert, A. (2016) *How to Do Science With Models: A Philosophical Primer*. Dordrecht: Springer, 148 pages, paperback, ISBN: 9783319279527.

Taking scientific practice as its starting point, this book charts the complex territory of models used in science. It examines what scientific models are and what their function is. Reliance on models is pervasive in science, and scientists often need to construct models in order to explain or predict anything of interest at all. The diversity of kinds of models one finds in science ranging from toy models and scale models to theoretical and mathematical models has attracted attention not only from scientists, but also from philosophers, sociologists, and historians of science. By exploring current debates on the use and building of models via cutting-edge examples drawn from physics and biology, the book provides broad insight into the methodology of modelling in the natural sciences. It pairs specific arguments with introductory material relating to the ontology and the function of models, and provides some historical context to the debates as well as a sketch of general positions in the philosophy of scientific models in the process.

Harris, A.; Kelly, SE. & Wyatt, S. (2016) *CyberGenetics: Health Genetics and New Media*. London: Routledge, 192 pages, hardback, ISBN: 9781138946514.

Online genetic testing services are increasingly being offered to consumers who are becoming exposed to, and knowledgeable about, new kinds of genetic technologies, as the launch of a 23andme genetic testing product in the UK testifies. This book critically examines the

intersections of new genetics and new media by drawing from three different fields: internet studies; the sociology of health; and science and technology studies. While there has been a surge of research activity concerning DTC genetic testing, particularly in sociology, ethics and law, this is the first scholarly monograph on the topic, and the first book which brings together the social study of genetics and the social study of digital technologies. This book thus not only offers a new overview of this field, but also offers a unique contribution by attending to the digital, and by drawing upon empirical examples from our own research of DTC genetic testing websites (using online methods) and in-depth interviews in the United Kingdom with people using healthcare services.

Hindmarsh, R.; Priestley, R. (editors) (2016). *The Fukushima Effect: A New Geopolitical Terrain*. Routledge, 312 pages, hardback, ISBN: 9781138830783.

The Fukushima Effect offers a range of scholarly perspectives on the international effect of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear meltdown four years out from the disaster. Grounded in the field of science, technology and society (STS) studies, a leading cast of international scholars from the Asia-Pacific, Europe, and the United States examine the extent and scope of the Fukushima effect. The authors each focus on one country or group of countries, and pay particular attention to national histories, debates and policy responses on nuclear power development covering such topics as safety of nuclear energy, radiation risk, nuclear waste management, development of nuclear energy, anti-nuclear protest movements, nuclear power representations, and media representations of the effect. This volume will add significantly to the ongoing international debate on the Fukushima disaster and will interest academics, policy-makers, energy pundits, public interest organizations, citizens and students engaged variously with the Fukushima disaster itself, disaster management, political science, environmental/energy policy and risk, public health, sociology, public participation, civil society activism, new media, sustainability, and technology governance.

Pienaar, K. (2016). *Politics in the Making of HIV/AIDS in South Africa*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 176 pages, hardcover, ISBN: 9781137505002.

The HIV epidemic remains one of the most challenging of modern times, despite the enormous promise of anti-retroviral treatment. This timely book offers a novel rethinking of the dynamics of HIV/AIDS in South Africa, the country with the largest HIV epidemic in the world. Drawing on feminist science and technology studies and a close analysis of a range of textual sources, it tracks how the disease has been formed and transformed through political struggles. It illuminates the ways these struggles have also generated new selves for those living with HIV. In conducting this enquiry, the book addresses pressing questions about the politics of public health, the ethics of biological citizenship, and agency and the making of

neoliberal subjects. It should appeal to scholars and students with interests in the sociology of health and medicine, the body in society, science and technology studies and public health.

Priestley, R. (2016). Dispatches from Continent Seven: An Anthology of Antarctic Science. Wellington, New Zealand: Awa Press.

Since British explorer James Cook first circumnavigated Antarctica in the late eighteenth century, the white continent has exerted a powerful attraction. There is no permanent human habitation in this ice-bound wilderness, and no mercy from the raw, relentless elements, yet for nearly 200 years explorers and scientists from around the world have been drawn to work and sometimes risk their lives here. This landmark anthology brilliantly reveals the numerous scientific discoveries that have been made, from how sea creatures survive in the freezing waters, to the continent's extraordinary proliferation of meteorites, and the startling revelations of fossils, which show Antarctica was once covered in luxuriant forests teeming with creatures. In the early days, countries vied to establish a presence on the continent in order to try and claim its resources. Today scientists observe the arrival of particles from space, and examine ice cores, sea-floor sediments, and rocks hewn by glaciers to try and better understand the universe we live in, to uncover the complexities of climate change, and to understand how a land once covered in forests became a frozen desert.

Research Papers and Other Publications

Devi, WP & **Somokanta, T.** (2016). Gender, Technology and Work: Case of Women Employees in Selected Food Processing Industries in Manipur. *Gender, Technology and Development*, 20(1): 81-104.

Fukushima, M. (2015). Blade Runner and Memory Devices: Reconsidering the Interrelations between the Body, Technology, and Enhancement. *East Asian Science, Technology and Society*, early online.

Fukushima, M. (2015) Corpus Mysticum Digitale?: On the Notion of Two Bodies in the Era of Digital Technology, *Mortality* 20(4): 303-318. (Special issue: Death, memory, and the human in the Internet era).

Fukushima, M. (2015) Resilience in Scientific Research: Understanding How Natural Product Research Rebounded in an Adverse Situation. *Science as Culture*, early online.

Fukushima, M. (2016). Constructing 'Failure' in Big Biology: The Socio-technical Anatomy of the Protein 3000 Program in Japan, *Social Studies of Science* 46(1): 7-33

- Harris, A.** (2016) Listening-touch, affect and the crafting of medical bodies through percussion. *Body & Society*, early online.
- Pienaar, K. & Savic, M.** (2016). Producing alcohol and other drugs as a policy 'problem': A critical analysis of South Africa's 'National Drug Master Plan' (2013-2017). *International Journal of Drug Policy*, early online.
- Tiquia, R.** (2015). The Paradigm of Theory-as-Practice: Traditional Chinese Natural Studies and the Performance of the Cosmic Breath Qi in a New Global Spacetime System. *Journal of the Oriental Society of Australia*, 47.
- Whittington, J.** (editor) (2016). *Climate Transformations*. Special section, *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 39(1).
- Whittington, J.** (2016). Carbon as a Metric of the Human. *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 39(1).
- Whittington, J.** (2016). What Does Climate Change Demand of Anthropology? *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 39(1).
- Whittington, J.** (2016). "Carbon," Lexicon for an Anthropocene Yet Unseen. *Cultural Anthropology*, <http://culanth.org/fieldsights/840-carbon>
- Whittington, J.** (2016). Modernist Infrastructure and the Vital Systems Security of Water: Singapore's Pluripotent Climate Futures. *Public Culture* 28(2).
- Wyatt, S., **Harris, A.** & Kelly, SE. (2016) Controversy goes online: Schizophrenia genetics on Wikipedia. *Science and Technology Studies* 29(1): 13-29

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