

Open Session Proposal

Open session title:

Interconnected kitchens: Technologies and everyday knowledge of food and eating

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ERC Project - A Global History of Technology, 1850-2000

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Despite changes the last decades, the history of technology still tends to focus mostly on abrupt transformations, R&D, and the engineering profession. In these narratives, the domestic and daily experiences of users and consumers who exercise technical and empirical knowledge remain in the minority. For example, relatively few historians of technology have paid attention to the topic of food consumption, cooking, and eating. The kitchen is more than an “innovation junction” (Wit et al., *T&C* 2002); it also links domestic and public life, consumption and production, mundane and ritual, local and global.

The paradigmatic study in this area is, of course, *More Work for Mother* (1983) by Ruth Schwartz Cohen, which showed how the transformation of technology in the home was as revolutionary as the one in industry. Since then, further studies have explored the issue in the United States and Europe, but fewer studies have focused on Global South cases. In the same way, more in-depth analyses of how we cook, eat, and feed ourselves offer possibilities for incorporating the stories of underrepresented actors like consumers and users, but also of everyday knowledge and household technologies.

The proposed session investigates the intersection of food studies and the history of technology to demonstrate the benefits of focusing on daily needs and practices, both in the Global North and the Global South. It will present case studies that focus on the material culture through cooking, circulation of technical knowledge, the users' agency in the food industry, the hybridization of culinary practices, and local and global foodways.