

Open Panel Proposal for Society for the History of Technology (SHOT)

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## **Circulation and use of expert knowledge**

*Organizers:*

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In this session, we invite papers that explore the creation, circulation and use of expert knowledge in different times and places. We want to discuss the circulation, view on and role of expert knowledge outside the expert community; how expert knowledge has affected the daily practices of its many users, and how it has changed through time and space.

One field of interest is the materiality/mediality of knowledge. Expert knowledge has circulated differently from almanacs and their advices on correct agricultural methods over illustrated news magazines and their visualizations of technical devices to Youtube channels disseminating practical knowledge as well as knowledge that challenges established expert knowledge.

Another field of interest is the (in)visibility of knowledge. Steven Shapin (2016) has described a McDonalds restaurant as a site of embedded science. Not only have the products been subjected to extensive scientific and technical inquiry. Also, the electric wiring, lightning, heating, ventilation, refrigeration system etc. have been designed, tested and monitored for efficiency and safety by technical experts. In short, in modern society expert knowledge form the often unnoticed background for everyday life warranting basic routines.

However, at the same time, politicians challenge the knowledge of climate experts and some parents follow the advice on Youtube instead of the vaccination program recommended by health authorities. Expert knowledge has never been an uncontested field.

Generally, we expect papers to be based on empirical studies relevant for e.g. history of engineering, ICT, infrastructure, environmental history or other branches of the history of technology field. Potential themes for papers could be:

- The (in)visibility of expert knowledge. E.g. how expert knowledge has changed and affect daily life in the form of standards, labels (e.g. eco-labelling), technical specifications and/or limit values
- Knowledge and materiality. E.g. how expert knowledge has circulated outside the expert community in almanacs, leaflets, popular magazines, handbooks, manuals, encyclopedias, radio, TV, on the Internet etc.

- The mediality of knowledge. E.g. the relationship between media and legitimate/ illegitimate knowledge: How has different media shaped, formed, and helped sorting out knowledge as legitimate / illegitimate?
- The definition of expert knowledge and the relation between expert knowledge and power (the 'doing' of authority).
- The geography of expert knowledge and its circulation between places. We especially invite papers that explore the circulation and role of expert knowledge in non-western countries, compare different geographies or explore the circulation of knowledge between places.

The session takes its outset in the recent developments in the history of knowledge field, which emphasize knowledge as a historical phenomenon that is created, circulated and used in specific historical settings and which is always in some way materially based (Sarasin 2011, Heidenblad 2015 and Secord 2004). Another point of departure is the interest in expert knowledge inside the history of technology field (see e.g. Kohlrausch & Trischler 2014 and Kaiser & Schot 2014). A third is the STS emphasis on non-human actors as discussed by Bruno Latour and many others (see e.g. Saye 2014).

*Please send proposals to [louise.skyggebjerg@fysik.dtu.dk](mailto:louise.skyggebjerg@fysik.dtu.dk) no later than March 25, 2019. Proposals must include a one-page abstract (maximum 500 words) and a one-page CV including current contact information (maximum 300 words). The two pages should be submitted as one pdf file named name\_proposal.pdf (e.g. smith\_proposal.pdf)*