Knowledge ownership: Sociomaterial pasts and modern scholarship

This open panel invites contributions that tackle historical trajectories and regimes of ownership of knowledge in their tensions with modern historical scholarship. Knowledge ownership and the role of science and law are a well-studied topic, but technology historians have yet to explore the many dimensions of past sociomaterial practices of knowledge ownership. The aim of this panel is to stimulate a critical engagement with a scholarship that has emphasized the intellectual and conceptual history of knowledge ownership – and the globalization of patents, IP, branding or Intangible Cultural heritage – and at the same time observed how other cultures and times “owned” knowledge through rhetoric, ritual, social relationships or formats such as habits or even more simply, through performance and use. It is our aim to address this imbalance also with regard to an increasing importance of material science studies for our understanding of the past; that is, for example, how archeology and other disciplines approach questions of regional origin or genealogy when studying the artefacts of human activities or museums approach material practices when, at the same time, are part of living traditions.

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