

What is Special in Maintaining Communication Technologies?

Caring and Repair Human Connections

In recent years, studies and research on maintenance received considerable attention in fields such as the history of technology (Edgerton 2007, Vinsel and Russell 2020, Weber and Krebs 2021), science and technology studies (STS) (Denis and Pontille 2022), philosophy of technology (Young and Coeckelbergh 2024), and related disciplines.

This open session aims to intersect media and communication studies and the history of technology, exploring characteristics and relevance of maintenance practices for specific set of technologies: communication technologies. The session questions whether care and repair of technologies with the goal of connecting humans present or have presented unique challenges, idiosyncrasies, or practices which are different from other technologies. It explores the political, economic, social, and technological dimensions of communication technology maintenance, taking into consideration different geographies and temporalities.

We welcome abstracts that address or contribute to the following issues (among others):

- specificities of maintenance or repair for communication technologies and/or in media studies;
- political or economic factors or implications regarding maintenance or repair in this domain;
- different repairing “styles”, case studies, and “cultures” among communication technologies (e.g., one-to-one communication, broadcasting, ICT...);
- the role of maintenance in the evolutions of communication technologies;
- theoretical definitions and typologies of maintenance in communication technologies, which are radically different from other technological domains.

Reference

- Denis, J., Pontille, D. (2002) *Le soin des choses. Politiques de la maintenance*. Éditions La Découverte.
- Edgerton, D. (2007). *The shock of the old: technology and global history since 1900*. Oxford University Press.
- Krebs, S., Weber, H. (Eds.) (2021), *The persistence of technology. Histories of repair, reuse and disposal*, Transcript.

Vinsel, L., Russell. A.L. (2020), *The innovation delusion: how our obsession with the new has disrupted the work that matters most*. Currency.

Young M., Coeckelbergh M. (Eds.) (2024) *Maintenance and Philosophy of Technology. Keeping things going*, Routledge.

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