Technology's Temporal Regimes: Past, Present and Futures
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This workshop brings together research/ers from history, sociology, communication sciences, and philosophy to tackle the question of temporal regimes inscribed into or attributed to technology through materiality, discourse, or practices. The term "temporal regimes" of technologies puts the time dimension center stage in our thinking about technology. We argue that past, present, and future technologies cannot be treated as distinct entities. Rather, societies have been, are, and will be confronted with a complex set of technologies which pertain to different and diverse temporal regimes and in which past, present and future are superimposed in hybrid ways. Among others, this includes phenomena such as technology forecasting and communicating technology futures, or the persistence of "old" technology and the environmental challenges of technological legacies. The workshop will focus on three temporal topics:

First, technology is and has been object of predictions on society's future, be it inside past and present future research or scenario making, technology assessment, or popular and medialized technological imaginations. Such "socio-technical imaginaries" (Jasanoff), or "technology futures", as we call them, are still poorly understood, in particular in respect to the continuous interaction of verbal and visual discourse and sensual experiences that shape expectations on technological developments in daily life.

Second, technology and the related practices of knowing and doing necessarily include temporal processes. Technologies trigger processes of acceleration, stagnation or retardation. Furthermore, technologies "age", and we attest them to be either "modern" or "obsolescent", for instance in accordance to their proper "lifecycles" and so called "innovation cycles". Moreover, technology's material agency might extend into previously unknown or ignored future time periods, as in the case of toxic waste.

Third, inside the humanities' reflection on technology, conceptualizing its links to time has changed over time. Deterministic narratives of technology development once put forth the idea of technology as history's main driver; today's innovation imperatives as well as popular histories of technology to some extent still reflect that line of thought. In current social thinking, technology is said to co-shape globalization dynamics and acceleration processes. The emerging transformation studies argue for "disruptive" technologies and "exnovation". And inside the current Anthropocene concept, technology and "techno-fossils" have turned into main indices for historical periodization.

Taken together, questioning technology's temporal regimes is a timely endeavor. The workshop will explore current and emergent thinking on past and present technology futures and on the temporal sediments inside past and present technologies. It will compare these new strands of conceptualizing the time/technology relation to previous time-based concepts and will bring them into exchange with artistic statements which acknowledge such a polychronic approach to technology. This endeavor shall thus serve as an initial step towards developing new questions and theoretical frameworks on the temporal sediments of our technological world and the way we interact with them.