Call for Papers

“Techno-Topologies. Spatial Perspectives - Spatial Practices”

Final interdisciplinary conference organized by the Graduate School "Topology of Technology"

Darmstadt University of Technology
March 3. - 5., 2011
Deadline: October 31., 2010

Taking stock at the end of the first funding period, the Graduate School "Topologies of Technology", based at the TU Darmstadt, will host a final conference to reflect on current projects and develop future perspectives. Since October 2006 the School has been supporting doctoral and postdoctoral projects located in a diverse field of disciplines ranging from the humanities and social sciences to engineering, sports science and informatics. The projects are geared towards examining interrelations between space and technology from different disciplinary and methodological perspectives.

The research clustered at the School is focussed on investigating how technologically constituted spaces affect the experience and understanding of both space and technology. It is one of the premises of the research carried out in Darmstadt to conceptualize technology as a ‘material dispositive’ which shapes space and place, and many of the projects focus on the social effects and praxeological dimensions of spatial and spatializing technologies, and in particular of current and emergent technologies. Researchers working at the School engage in an interdisciplinary dialogue to explore the possibility of developing the common methods and categories required to formulate precise hypotheses.

The conference aims at intensifying the interdisciplinary cooperation characterizing the School's work by initiating contacts and debate between the Darmstadt researchers and colleagues working on similar topics. To discuss research projects the conference will be organized according to the format of a series of master classes: along the lines of seven topics researchers from Darmstadt and other institutions are invited to present their work in sections accompanied and chaired by two senior researchers. These researchers will form tandems consisting of invited specialists and supervisors based in Darmstadt, offering critical reflection, support and perspectives for future research.
Class topics

Section 1  *Incorporation and appropriation* will examine how technologies, perceptions and practices of space are internalized (perception of self and others, observation, mimesis, processes of transformation and translation, the history of consumption, logistics of goods, autonomy and coercion).

Section 2  *Normalization and subversion* will look at dispositions and ideological inscriptions of technologically constituted spaces (discourses and dispositives of power, reversal, dissolution and undermining of power relations, emergence, categories of evaluation).

Section 3  *Mobility and interaction* will analyze interrelations between social practices and mobilizing technologies (discourses of mobility, the shrinking of time and space, everyday mobility, migration, transmigration, multilocality, varimobility, air traffic and security).

Section 4  *Networking and developments of infrastructures* will explore dimensions and actualizations of the material structure of technological spatiality (visualization of networks and traffic infrastructures, modeling, mapping, network analysis, interdependent developments of infrastructures and spaces).

Section 5  *Persistence and discontinuity* will deal with procedural/temporal aspects such as the genealogies, coincidences and ruptures of technological spatiality (determinacy and contingency, intrinsic and extrinsic logics of processes, the dialectics of continuity and discontinuity, tradition vs. innovation, memory and commemoration).

Section 6  *Navigation and orientation* will address the perception of movement and practices of orientation in technologically constituted spaces (spatial orientation and the perception of movement in everyday lives, data based spatial information, virtual realities, "third space", direction of attention, learning movement and motion).

Section 7  *Imagination and construction* will discuss relations of fiction and reality in discourses on space and technology (cultural constructions, changing social perceptions, discursive construction, fictionality and mediality, imagining technologically constituted spaces, authenticity and staging).
Keynotes
The conference will be framed by two keynote lectures. The introductory keynote will be given by the philosopher Petra Gehring, who will reflect on the key concept of the "material dispositive" to reconsider the achievements and developments of interdisciplinary research on technology at the TU Darmstadt. In his final keynote, the historian Wolfgang König will discuss whether concepts taken from the field of the history of technology can be productively applied to research on the relations between technology and space.

Target Group
We invite doctoral and postdoctoral candidates to apply to the conference to present their work.

Information about the Graduate School
Further informations can be found on the Graduate School website:

Application
Please send a short CV, a description of your research project (max. 5 pages) and an abstract summarizing your paper (1 page).

Conference fee
There will be a conference fee of approximately 100,- Euros to cover meals.

Reimbursement of travel expenses
The Graduate School will provide funding covering accommodation and travel of lecturers according to the regulations of the DFG ("German Research Foundation").

Application deadline
Applications are welcome until October 31, 2010, please send them to:
topology2011@ifs.tu-darmstadt.de