

**INSTITUTE FOR TECHNOSCIENCE & SOCIETY**

# **NEWSLETTER**



Credit: Zoran Svilar

## **Acknowledgements**

*We recognize that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region.*

## **Welcome to the new ITS newsletter!**

It's been a busy two years since ITS was founded. We finally appointed a Coordinator, Hazel Beecham, in January 2024 after a year-and-half without anyone. And Kelly Bergstrom took over from me as Interim Director while I was on sabbatical this academic year. After Kelly and Hazel's hard work (thank you both!), we're now in good shape to start new things like this newsletter. We want the newsletter to be a resource for ITS members, and we hope that you will all contribute something to it in the coming years – whether sharing a call for papers, or showcasing your recent publications, or offering advice or insight into a particular topic. To that end, please complete the [Request for information for the ITS Newsletter](#) with ideas or suggestions for content; in turn, Hazel will regularly approach you all for content.

Kean Birch, *Director, Institute for Technoscience & Society*

Contact: [techsoc@yorku.ca](mailto:techsoc@yorku.ca)

## **About the new ITS Coordinator**

Hazel Beecham is a Yorkie! Yes, she schooled and has worked at York for most of her working life. She did her Masters in Environmental Studies and also did her undergraduate degree at York. Prior to joining ITS, Hazel worked as the Graduate Program Administrator for the Graduate Program in Science and Technology Studies for almost 3 years. Hazel enjoys cooking and baking.

For assistance with events, you can reach her at [techno@yorku.ca](mailto:techno@yorku.ca).

June 2024

COME JOIN THE INAUGURAL

# STS North Summer School

Three days of intellectual debate, hands-on workshops, ethnographic field trips, and other fun activities.

Designed to meet the needs of emerging STS researchers in Canada.

**AUGUST 27-29, 2024**  
**CIRST AT UQAM, MONTRÉAL**

*Deadline for applications: Sunday, June 30*



## 2023-2024 In Review

One of my final tasks as Interim Director was to write the ITS Annual Report, which provided me the perfect opportunity to look back on this past academic year. I was reminded that we had a busy Fall semester including highlights such as offering multiple funding workshops, co-sponsoring a book launch for Lee McGuigan's *Selling the American People: Advertising, Optimization, and the Origins of Adtech*, hosting Kelly Fritsch and Anne McGuire as the first (of three!) Technoableism talks, and a lively roundtable to mark the 1-year anniversary of ChatGPT. We also became a co-sponsor for IRDL's *Get it Done, Together*; 134 people took part in the bi-weekly 3-hour pomodoro sessions this year. I am also pleased to report that we made significant progress towards our charter goal of supporting an intellectual environment for graduate students including hosting Nicholas Surber, a visiting graduate student from Chalmers University, launching the monthly *Graduate Student Writing and Publication Group*, and most recently, collaborating with colleagues at Université de Montréal and Queens University to launch *The STS North Summer School* (see page 3 for more details). Our numbers continue to grow across all three membership categories; I am especially proud to report the number of Graduate Fellows at ITS has doubled over the past year!

While we hosted many well-attended events in Fall and January—including the second Technoableism talk featuring Ashley Shew—the CUPE 3903 strike created a significant disruption across campus. Like many other ORUs, the ITS executive voted in favour of adopting a statement authored by the CFR that all events would be suspended for the duration of the strike, which meant postponing both Dr. Akil Fletcher's talk for Black History Month and the final installment of the Technoableism Speaker Series. The uncertainty surrounding the duration of the strike and remediation period led to the conference committee's decision to postpone our inaugural ITS research workshop and membership meeting to Fall 2024. New dates for all these events will be circulated in the next ITS newsletter.

I have also been working on administrative tasks behind the scenes, making sure ITS is poised to support your research and collaborations for years to come. The Institute for Technoscience and Society now appears in the list of grant administrators on SSHRC applications—please reach out if you would like to discuss how we can assist you with grant development and post-award administration. For folks who are planning events in the coming year, we can help with that too! ITS now has an Eventbrite, which makes handling seminar or event registration a breeze. And if you are looking to host a larger online event and are shocked at how much hosting a webinar costs, we can assist you with requesting access to the VPRI Zoom webinar license.

It has been a pleasure serving as the Interim Director for this past year, but I was certainly not working alone. I could not have done it without our Coordinator, Hazel Beecham, and Denielle Elliot, the amazing ITS Deputy Director. I am also fortunate to have spent this past year working with a supportive and engaged Executive Committee: Anna Agathangelou, Melanie Baljko, Kean Birch, Conor Douglas, Eric Kennedy, and Anthony Nairn. Thank you!

Kelly Bergstrom

## NEWS

### New ITS Postdocs

The biggest news we have is that ITS will be welcoming six new Postdoctoral Fellows / Visitors this Summer. This is really exciting for ITS and its future. The new postdocs are:

1. Dr. Lina Pinto Garcia, supervised by Prof. Denielle Elliott & funded by Connected Minds.
2. Dr. Somang Nam, supervised by Prof. Shital Desai & funded by Connected Minds.
3. Dr. CJ Reynolds, supervised by Prof. Rob Gehl & funded by Connected Minds.
4. Dr. Mai Ibrahim, supervised by Prof. Kelly Bergstrom & funded by LA&PS Postdoctoral Fellowship.
5. Dr. Kennedy Opande, supervised by Prof. Denielle Elliott & funded by LA&PS Postdoctoral Fellowship.
6. Dr. Anetta Proskurovska, supervised by Prof. Kean Birch & funded by SSHRC.

We're planning to hold monthly Postdoc Research Meetings throughout the year to discuss and showcase their research, as well as support potential synergies and collaboration. ITS members will be welcome and we'll publicise dates and times from September 2024.

### Book Launch

ITS hosted the virtual launch of Prof. Kean Birch's new book [Data Enclaves](#), with discussant Prof. Koray Caliskan (The New School, New York), 22 May 2024.

### Visiting Scholar

Prof. Susi Geiger is a Full Professor of Markets, Organizations and Society at University College Dublin, Ireland. Prof. Geiger's expertise lies in the organization of markets, with a particular focus on pharmaceutical and data markets. Her current research focuses on issues of distributive justice and the collective good in these markets, for instance in issues of pricing, patenting, and access. She was recently appointed as a member of the WHO Technical Advisory Group in pharmaceutical pricing. Her research interests include, Market studies, Organization Studies, STS, Healthcare, Economic Sociology.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

*Grant Writing Workshop, 26 August 2024 @ 10am, online.* This workshop is for members applying to SSHRC's Insight Grant scheme. We have successful examples in the ITS Grants Database. Please contact Hazel to sign up, or to access the database.

*STS North Summer School, 27-29 August 2024, in Montreal (see flyer above, p. 3).*

*ITS Annual Research Conference*, rescheduling in progress, to be held in Fall 2024 at Keele Campus. Let us know your Fall availability by completing the [ITS Annual Conference Poll](#) by June 21, 2024.

*ITS Seminar Series*, Prof. Koray Caliskan (The New School, New York, USA), *Data Money*, 9 October 2024, at Keele Campus (in person).

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

### Books

Birch, K. (2023) [Data Enclaves](#), Palgrave Macmillan.

Elliott, D. and Wolf-Meyer, M. (eds) (2024) [Naked Fieldnotes: A Rough Guide to Ethnographic Writing](#), University of Minnesota Press.

Widmer, A. (2023) *Moral Figures: Making Reproduction Public in Vanuatu*, University of Toronto Press, [here](#).

### Journal Articles

Bergstrom, K., & Poor, N. (2023) [We have always been social: Comparing social expressiveness between single-player and multiplayer gamers](#), *Journal of Gaming & Virtual Worlds* 15(3): 247-266.

Ott, M., Apramian, T., Cristancho, S., & Roth, K. (2023). [Unintended consequences of technology in competency-based education: A qualitative study of lessons learned in an OtoHNS program](#). *Journal of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery* 52(55).

Gehl, R. W., & Zulli, D. (2023). [The digital covenant: non-centralized platform governance on the mastodon social network](#). *Information, Communication & Society*, 26(16), 3275-3291.

## SUMMER WRITING GROUP

After being paused for the duration of the CUPE 3903 strike, the *Get it Done Together* co-working event has returned! Faculty, graduate students, and post docs are all welcome. We will be meeting on alternating Wednesdays from 1-4pm at the Keele campus.

Please RVSP to Shelbey Walker ([skwalker@yorku.ca](mailto:skwalker@yorku.ca)) for a list of dates and meeting locations.

## MEMBER PROFILES

ITS regularly welcomes new members, and we want to introduce them (and existing members) to everyone through this newsletter.

### Technoscientific Injustices & Economies Clusters

*Fenella Amarasinghe, Graduate Fellow*

Fenella Amarasinghe is a PhD Candidate in the Faculty of Education, York University. Her research considers the ways that ethics as an attentive relationship to the human and more-than-human world is pedagogically-culturally constituted in engineering education. In addition, Fenella works with Dr. Jeff Harris on a cross-institutional study with colleagues from the University of Manitoba, Waterloo, and Memorial University, investigating the Tech Stewardship Practice Program launched by Engineering Change Lab and MaRS Discovery District. As well, she is collaborating with Dr. Alpha Abebe at McMaster University to investigate students' perspectives on generative AI technologies and higher education.



### Technoscientific Pasts & Futures Cluster

*Prof. Rob Gehl, Fellow*

Robert W. Gehl is a Fulbright scholar and award-winning author whose research focuses on contemporary communication technologies. He received his PhD in Cultural Studies from George Mason University in 2010. Before joining York University as an Ontario Research Chair of Digital Governance for Social Justice, he previously held an endowed research chair at Louisiana Tech. His books include *Reverse Engineering Social Media* (Temple UP), which won the Nancy Baym Book Award from the Association of Internet Researchers, *Weaving the Dark Web* (MIT Press), and *Social Engineering* (MIT Press).

