

CALL FOR PAPERS

Digital Inequalities Symposium for Early-Career Researchers

Organized by Sciences Po's [Center for Research on Social Inequalities \(CRIS\)](#)
in partnership with [the Open Institute for Digital Transformation \(TIERED\)](#)

The rapid proliferation of digital technologies - from computers, the internet and portable devices to social media, streaming devices and virtual reality, along with artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and algorithms - has transformed modern societies. Social inequalities both shape and are shaped by these digital tools, raising questions about the persistence, reproduction, and exacerbation of social inequalities. At the same time, an explosion of digital data and methods of analysis, from digital ethnographies to computational methods have broadened our understanding of how society operates in the digital era. Several lines of inequality research are key factors in the relationship between digital technologies and society:

(1) Digital inequalities around **access** is the most long-standing research on tech disparities. While scholars have largely moved on from classic “digital divide” research, much is still to be known about changes over time and place, especially with variation in constantly changing devices and connections. Equally important is understanding the persistence of digital content production and whose voices we are streaming and scrolling – and whose we are not. This research stream considers, for instance, inequalities based on country, social class, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, and migration background.

(2) More research is needed on information inequalities in the **use of digital technologies**, whether with social connections or news and media resources. More research is needed on the skills and the capacity to evaluate disinformation and AI-generated content. With costs and complexity of digital platforms exploding at the same rate as new apps, who is left out of the savvy and autonomous use of these tools is important to study.

(3) Algorithmic **bias and discrimination** research has been growing: how do these inequality mechanisms operate globally and intersectionally? What are other forms of automated inequalities that are understudied?

(4) How do digital technologies affect people’s life chances, for instance, with respect to education and labor market outcomes, earnings, or capacity for civic engagement and voting? To what extent, if at all, do social groups enjoy **different returns** to the use these tools?

(5) How do humans and machines co-evolve within different social environments and technical ecosystems? How do different **algorithmic** recommendation systems and AI-driven assistants shape concentration, polarization, inequality, and radicalization?

(6) How can the spread of AI and computational methods support researchers in revealing, understanding, and measuring phenomena traditionally analyzed in social science? How can qualitative and mixed-methods interact with digital methods?

(7) **Big Tech** companies are vertically integrated in society and are a growing source of political and economic **power**. How is this creating inequalities globally, locally, and in the tech job market itself?

(8) **Policy** implications: is access to & use of technology more or less unequal than access to and use of traditional media such as broadcast media, newspapers and magazines, telephones? Access to and use of DT is highly unequal, but does their spread represent a net increase or decrease in equality? How might regulatory policies affect digital inequalities?

About the Symposium:

In the context of the Tiered project, the CRIS aims to strengthen its expertise on the topic of digital inequalities. We invite **early career researchers** (PhD students and Post-docs from a variety of disciplines) working with a variety of theoretical perspectives and research methods to submit their papers and participate to the symposium. The event will take place on one day at Sciences Po (Paris). This symposium provides a platform to present groundbreaking research, engage in discussions, and collaborate with other researchers.

Submission Guidelines

- Papers should explore a topic within one of the eight research categories highlighted above, or any related topic that bridges digital technology issues with aspects of social inequality.
- Candidates should send a **one-page CV** detailing their current and previous affiliations, in addition to relevant published works and/or current projects.
- Submit an **extended abstract no longer than 2000 words** including references, outlining the research questions, the significance of the study, its methodology, key findings, and its contribution to the literature on digital inequalities.
- Please submit a **single** PDF document that combines all files following this order: CV, extended abstract, whether applying for support for travel costs, and a working paper/publication if available. Send the document to **allison.rovny@sciencespo.fr** with the subject line "*Submission for Digital inequalities symposium*"
- The organizers can cover the travel costs for a very limited number of participants. Please indicate in your submission if you want to apply for these funds.

Important Dates

Deadline for submission: 15 November

Notification of acceptance: 19 November

Event date: 19 December

Organizers

Committee: Carlo Barone, Emanuele Ferragina, Allison Rovny, Jen Schradie (Sciences Po-CRIS) & Jean-Philippe Cointet (Sciences Po-Medialab & TIERED).

Join us in this endeavor to bridge the knowledge gap and foster outstanding social science research on inequality and the digital transformation! We look forward to your contributions and insights. For queries, please contact allison.rovny@sciencespo.fr.